

MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Local Escapes: Decoding the Staycationer Mindset Across Generations

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Abstract:

Background: Staycation, a tourism trend emerging in response to changing lifestyles, global crises, and increasing sustainability awareness, is transforming traditional vacation habits. Although vacations close to home were once perceived as less exciting, they have become an attractive alternative for many, but specific, travelers.

Purpose: This study analyses consumers' attitudes, motivations, and preferences toward staycations as a vacation alternative, highlighting both their appeal and the skepticism surrounding them across generations.

Method: A qualitative research design was adopted, based on 20 in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with participants recruited through purposive sampling. Diversity was ensured across age, gender, and travel habits, with participants categorized into Generation Z and Millennials. Guided by a lifestyle (AIO) perspective, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by QDA Miner, following an iterative coding process to identify recurring themes and cross-generational patterns.

Findings: The qualitative data analysis revealed four prominent market segments, each characterized by unique preferences, expectations, and travel behaviors. The results demonstrate that while staycations are valued for their psychological benefits, convenience, affordability, and environmental consciousness, perceptions of excitement and novelty vary across segments.

Conclusions: The present research demonstrates that staycation has evolved from a proximity-based travel option into a differentiated form of tourism consumption. The identification of four lifestyle-based segments reveals marked generational differences, where Generation Z tends to associate staycation with stimulation and novelty, whereas Millennials emphasize psychological detachment and quality time. These results demonstrate that staycation adoption is shaped by lifestyle orientations and psychological considerations rather than by spatial or economic constraints.

Research implication: This study contributes theoretically by integrating the Benefits Theory of Leisure Wellbeing and Psychological Capital theories to extend staycation beyond crisis-driven tourism and to position it as a lifestyle-based approach for sustaining wellbeing. From a managerial perspective, this research provides actionable insights for tourism marketers to develop tailored staycation packages targeting the identified consumer segments.

Keywords: consumer lifestyle, generation z, market segmentation, millennials, staycation, tourism

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This research examines staycation as an emerging form of tourism that echoes modern lifestyles and wellbeing priorities. Based on a cross-generational qualitative study, the findings show that staycation is valued not only for convenience, practicality and affordability but also for its psychological benefits. The study demonstrates how Generation Z and Millennials experience staycation differently and provides practical insights for tourism marketers on designing oriented staycation experiences for the identified profiles.



1. Introduction

In contemporary society, tourism has evolved beyond the traditional idea associated with traveling far from home or abroad to seek excitement, relaxation, and well-being. Today, people are increasingly embracing local experiences as viable alternatives to traditional long-distance travel, seeking to spend their leisure time in ways that align with their lifestyles, time constraints, and personal values (Saidin et al., 2024). This transition toward "proximity-based travel" has been fueled by recent global pressures, starting from the COVID-19 pandemic, rising living costs, environmental concerns, and geopolitical crises (Moscardo, 2024).

Although these factors initially increased interest in proximity-based tourism, it remains unclear how local travel is embedded in individuals' lifestyles, psychological needs, and expectations of well-being, independent of crisis conditions. This study addresses this gap by examining the attitudes, motivations, experiences, and generational differences that shape individuals' engagement with staycations, providing both conceptual clarity and empirical insights into this emerging tourism phenomenon.

The dynamic nature of tourism, driven by changing consumer behavior and interests, makes it adaptable to the modern lifestyle (Zhang et al., 2024). Indeed, lifestyle is a critical determinant of tourism behavior, shaping not only what individuals do but also why they choose certain activities. Staycation, this trend of domestic tourism, merges "stay" (staying locally) with "vacation," describing a vacation taken close to home (Rosu, 2020). This new form of tourism is gaining interest among people seeking well-being and convenient alternatives for visiting local destinations and making the most of available resources to create memorable experiences (Saidin et al., 2024). Indeed, the global staycation market was valued at \$375.6 million in 2024 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 8.2% through 2032 as travelers seek "convenient and cost-effective" alternatives (Credence Research, 2024). This sustained growth of the staycation market demonstrates that it is not merely a pandemic- or crisis-era byproduct that ended with the lifting of travel restrictions. Instead, it has evolved into a conscious lifestyle choice of modern consumers.

On the other hand, this trend of intraregional tourism creates opportunities for innovation and sustainability in tourism offerings. Indeed, various studies have highlighted the significant effect of staycations on a local destination's sustainable development by supporting its local communities and resources, boosting its local economy, and reducing long-distance environmental impacts (Moscardo, 2024). These sustainability benefits influence modern consumers' attitudes and motivations, as many individuals increasingly value environmentally and socially responsible tourism practices when choosing their leisure activities (Gomez-Camara et al., 2026). However, despite the global commitment of various countries to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and despite this growing trend among people looking for local experiences to escape the routine of their daily lives, tourism marketers still underestimate the potential of staycation as they perceive it lacks excitement in comparison with broader and international destinations (Rosu, 2020).

Previous research has predominantly focused on crisis-driven interpretations of staycation choices, framing them as temporary or reactive during periods of disruption, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Geremew & Kleyhans, 2025; Lin et al., 2021; Saidin et al., 2024). While these studies provide valuable insights into immediate responses to external

constraints, they simplified the complex psychological and lifestyle drivers that shape staycation choices in normal, non-crisis contexts. Furthermore, existing literature lacks a solid theoretical foundation for explaining the emergence of staycation, as prior studies have not adequately addressed the psychological drivers underlying individuals' choices. Specifically, earlier research tends to focus on practical constraints or broad leisure motives, while overlooking how individual psychological resources and perceived leisure benefits shape the decision to engage in a staycation. To address this theoretical gap, the present research draws on Psychological Capital Theory and the Benefits Theory of Leisure Wellbeing to explain how individuals' psychological resources namely hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy as well as their perceptions of the hedonic, social, and functional benefits of local travel, influence motivations for engaging in staycation (Luthans et al., 2017; Sirgy et al., 2017).

Besides the psychological drivers, lifestyle plays a central role in shaping individuals' tourism and leisure choices, as it reflects not only observable behaviors but also underlying values, interests, and motivations (Fernández et al., 2007). In the staycation context, various studies have explored consumers' motivations, attitudes, and behavioral intentions (Saidin et al., 2024; Moon & Chan, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). However, this is not sufficient for effectively targeting staycation offerings in a heterogeneous tourism market.

Different motivations, interests, and psychological drivers inevitably result in diverse staycationer profiles, which may respond differently to the same tourism offerings. In this vein, Fernández et al. (2007) shed light on the importance of an individual's lifestyle in driving their tourism choices using the Activity, Interest, and Opinions (AIO) framework. Psychographic segmentation, based on lifestyle, enables a more nuanced understanding of these differences, allowing marketers to identify distinct consumer segments, tailor offerings to specific needs, and design strategies that resonate with both hedonic and functional motivations (Kopřivová & Matušínková, 2023). Certainly, the AIO model is effective at identifying trends and segmenting people into lifestyle-based groups; however, we believe that applying this model in its quantitative form oversimplifies individuals' lifestyles and fails to truly understand their opinions and motivations. This application of the AIO model lacks depth as it focuses on what people do rather than why they do it.

The lack of an integrated psychological and lifestyle-based framework has limited our understanding of staycations as a contemporary consumer behavior phenomenon. While prior research has acknowledged the rise of staycation and its contextual drivers, it has not sufficiently explained why individuals choose staycation based on their psychological resources, lifestyle orientations, and motivations. This study addresses these gaps in the literature by developing such a framework, bringing the psychological perspective that guides people's choices. Indeed, lifestyle is shaped by personal experiences, social influences, and psychological resources. Thus, lifestyle practice, including the choices of activities, developed interests, and opinions, is deeply rooted in one's psychosocial makeup; it is not simply about what we do, but about why we do it.

To deepen and enrich the existing knowledge, we need to capture the psychological drivers of consumers' choices. Different marketing research studies employed lifestyle segmentation in various contexts, such as consumer purchase behavior, tourism studies, and brand preferences (Rahmah & Satyaninggrat, 2023; Wang et al., 2024; Jiang & Veg-Sala, 2025). By identifying distinct lifestyle-based segments, researchers linked

psychographic characteristics to very specific behaviors and consumption patterns. That's why this research aims to extend the existing literature and provide richer insights and a deeper understanding of people's interests, opinions, and motivations toward staycation, shaped by their lifestyles.

On the other side, age and generational cohort constitute important determinants of lifestyle orientations and tourism behavior. Generational theory (Strauss & Howe, 1997) suggests that individuals belonging to the same cohort share formative socio-economic, technological, and cultural experiences that shape their values, psychological needs, and consumption patterns over time. Generational analyses of tourism behavior demonstrate significant differences in destination evaluation criteria, activity preferences, information source usage, and future travel intentions, reflecting variations in life stage, risk perception, and lifestyle constraints (Li et al., 2013). These findings support the tourism consumption systems framework (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002), which emphasizes the interdependence of psychological, situational, and contextual factors in shaping travel decisions.

Some research considered the millennial generation to be the driver of the staycation trend, overlooking the preferences of other age groups (e.g., generation Z) and the heterogeneity in travelers' profiles (Moon & Chan, 2022; James et al., 2017). Looking more closely at family contexts, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the growing divergence among family members, belonging to different generations, is evident in their vacation preferences and expectations. Indeed, while Millennials, most of the time, are parents of Generation Z, consider nearby destinations as an opportunity for rest and quality family time, younger family members may not be fully enthusiastic toward such experiences. This observation raises a key question about the psychological drivers influencing staycation acceptance across generations, which the present research addresses.

On the other hand, other research compared Gen Z and Gen Y in terms of their social media usage behavior while traveling (Şchiopu et al., 2023). However, in this fast-changing world, we believe that both generations exhibit distinct lifestyles shaped by various factors, such as technology, economic conditions, and values (Agustina et al., 2024). While we believe in the significance of psychographic segmentation of the tourism market, this research considers age as an important factor in shaping tourists' preferences. In this research, we build on previous studies' findings and extend their scope by asking the following research question: how do consumers' lifestyles and generational differences (Generations Y and Z) shape their motivations and preferences for staycation travel offerings?

This study aims to enrich the existing literature and develop a comprehensive segmentation of local tourists based on psychographic (lifestyle) and demographic (generation) characteristics. This would help us deepen previous research findings and generate detailed insights that will help marketers to effectively promote and target staycation offerings in such a heterogeneous market. From a theoretical perspective, this research extends existing post-pandemic-focused research on staycations by demonstrating that well-being and life satisfaction functions persist beyond crisis situations. Also, this study contributes to the existing literature by grounding staycation in the theories of PsyCap and Benefit of Leisure Wellbeing, and by combining lifestyle with generational differences, allowing for a deeper understanding of staycation choice across various market segments.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Staycation

Staycation is defined as “*a short period of time, sometimes a vacation, for being homebound, or staying in a neighborhood by establishing the atmosphere of a conventional holiday-making.*” Wixon (2009). Some papers employ the terms domestic/local or proximity tourism, all of which refer to local vacations close to one’s home (Arbulú et al., 2021; Boto-García & Mayor, 2022; Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Taking vacations at nearby destinations is a new and challenging concept for the tourism industry (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2018). Indeed, the unattractiveness and familiarity of local places lead to an underestimation of staycations and to considering them a “failure of mobility” (Germann Mol, 2009). Indeed, traveling has long been associated with exploration and novel experiences, which is why vacations to nearby destinations are considered lacking in excitement. From a more positive perspective, Dickinson et al. (2011) described travel beyond physical distance, but as a whole experience, engagement with place and people, and meaning-making. It is about mental distance from daily life concerns (De Bloom et al., 2017).

Indeed, the staycation has emerged since the COVID-19 pandemic as a form of restorative tourism. Beyond the modern life context, this research examined the theoretical basis that illuminates how individuals choose their leisure and well-being experiences to better understand the roots of the staycation phenomenon. First, the shift of modern consumers’ interests prioritizing wellbeing and meaningful experiences aligns closely with the four pillars of Psychological Capital Theory (PsyCap), named Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism (HERO) (Luthans et al., 2017). In general, these psychological resources shape lifestyle orientations and influence how individuals think, feel, and behave. In the staycation context, psychological capital theory is highly relevant for understanding how people navigate contemporary and daily challenges, and it helps explain why they value well-being and pursue quality-of-life-oriented decisions (Wong et al., 2023).

Indeed, hopeful individuals tend to reframe existing constraints (e.g., time scarcity, financial limitations) not as barriers but as opportunities to explore alternative forms of fulfillment. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to focus on experiences that offer control, convenience, and customization. Resilient and optimistic individuals have the capacity to adapt positively and to focus on potential benefits rather than perceived limitations. Taken together, the four PsyCap dimensions shape lifestyle orientations by influencing individuals’ activities (how leisure time is spent), interests (what types of experiences are valued), and opinions (how staycation is evaluated as a travel alternative). These orientations encourage openness to alternative travel forms, such as staycations. This perspective of individuals’ preference for leisure activities that reduce stress, maximize comfort, and boost overall life quality and satisfaction aligns well with Sirgy et al.’s Benefits Theory of Leisure Wellbeing (2017). Indeed, according to this theory, individuals are driven by activities and experiences that meet various fundamental growth needs, such as, safety, hedonic pleasure, escape, relatedness, etc.

Staycation, as accessible and low-risk tourism experience, would be appealing for people with high psychological resources as it can fulfill various needs highlighted by Sirgy's et al. theory that reinforce life quality. Both of these theories contribute to shaping individuals' lifestyles as they influence how they cope with challenging times and constraints, how they allocate their time and resources, and why they seek quality over quantity leisure experiences.

Moreover, staycation applies sustainable tourism approach in meaningful way. Indeed, it fosters local economies by supporting local and small businesses, minimizes environmental impacts with short-trips and incites outdoor activities which motivate people to explore their surroundings and appreciate the natural resources. The staycation phenomenon positively influences local economies, for example, local farmers in UK applied this new concept to develop rural and Agri-tourism offers (Pawłowska-Legwand & Matoga, 2016). In the same vein, staycation is an opportunity to develop local leisure tourism by boosting local and luxurious hotel room occupancy. This was the case of the French start-up "Staycation" offering discounts for luxury hotel stays, mainly, during Sundays, which made high-end experiences affordable and more accessible (Hamladji, 2018). Staycation is also a key aspect of community-based tourism through authentic experiences that deepen staycationers' bond to local culture (e.g., local and regional events, artisan craft workshops). Staycation does not only support sustainable tourism but it supports people's wellbeing and psychological sustainability as well (Wong et al., 2023), mainly, after going through hard times and crisis such as pandemics.

2.2 Staycation Market Segmentation

Tourism market is very heterogeneous, involving people from various demographic characteristics (age, income, profession, etc.) with different needs, preferences and behaviors (Fernández et al., 2007). Market segmentation is crucial to understand and address these differences in order to successfully target the tourist offer to the right people at the right time. This is the key to efficient marketing strategies. There are various criteria for market segmentation. In tourism sector, various research highlighted the effectiveness of lifestyle segmentation as it allows deeper understanding of the evolved individual's behavior, preferences and motivations (Scott & Parfitt, 2012; Wang et al., 2024). This form of psychographic segmentation goes beyond the observable factors of demographic segmentation to create more consumer-centric strategies and experiences, taking into account their values, lifestyle, interests, motivations, and attitudes.

William Lazer (1963) defined lifestyle as "*a distinctive or characteristic mode of living in its aggregative and broadest sense, of a whole society or segment there of*". Lifestyle reflects the "how" and "why" of people lives. It was considered as a determinant factor of consumer's attitude influencing his decision process (Kaže & Škapars, 2011). When considering potential staycation market, we assume the need to understand people's lifestyles that will impact their choice of staycation for their vacations. Building on the developed theoretical roots of staycation, we admit that PsyCap theory (Luthans et al., 2017) contributes to the shaping of individuals' lifestyles. Indeed, individuals with higher hope, resilience, efficacy, and optimism would adopt lifestyle patterns that prioritize wellness-oriented activities, accessible leisure options, restorative experiences, and low-risk and low-stress travel choices.

In the literature, various studies employed the AIO model (Activity, Interest, Opinion), developed by Wells and Tigert (1971), to segment the tourism market. James et al. (2017) employed AIO model among students for staycation market segmentation and, as a result, to develop well-tailored staycation packages. The authors asserted the effectiveness of the AIO model to deeply understand people's opinions and motivation toward a new and unfamiliar offer, which aligns well with staycation's originality.

From a practical side, the AIO model uses a measurement scale containing a set of questions regarding their activities, interests, and opinions to understand and segment people's lifestyles based on their answers (Akkaya, 2021). Employing AIO model helps in revealing the potential segments interested in staycation offers and the ones who are unlikely to choose staycation for their vacations. This would help save time and money for marketers by focusing and targeting the most effective segments (James et al., 2017).

Besides psychographic segmentation, the basic consumers' sociodemographic characteristics are helpful to deepen our understanding and to provide another layer of consumer knowledge (Zamborita et al., 2024). Generation is defined as an *'identifiable sect of people who share common birth years, experience similar life events and grow up in comparably alike environment with equal resources, opportunities and challenges'* (Thangavel et al., 2022). Given that each generation is shaped by common experiences, beliefs, values, and even personality traits, this causes differences between both previous and subsequent generations. We take as examples the differences between millennials (born between 1980 and 1994), or generation Y, and generation Z (born between 1995 and 2010) (Naumovska, 2017). The latter is identified as the tech-savvy generation; the internet, smartphones, and social media are integral parts of their lives. That's why Gen Z's choices and decision-making are highly influenced by social media trends (Zhang et al., 2023). Millennials, described as experience-driven, endorsed the technological transition and the development of digital technologies and social media (Zamborita et al., 2024). These generational differences affect people's values, preferences, attitudes, behaviors and lifestyles. When it comes to tourism choices, both of these generations differ enormously. Gen Z travelers focus on personalized and cost-effective experiences with technology-driven solutions facilitating their journeys, which is different from Gen Y travelers who value leisure, convenience, and organized tours and established destinations (Aina & Ezeudji, 2021).

3. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the general conceptual framework guiding this study. The model explains that people's engagement with staycation is grounded in psychological drivers and lifestyle orientations, which are further conditioned by generational context. Indeed, at the foundation of the framework, the interaction between the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Theory and the Benefits Theory of Leisure Wellbeing explains how individuals' psychological resources influence their wellbeing priorities, and openness to alternative and meaningful forms of leisure and travel experiences that deliver hedonic, social, restorative, and functional benefits.

These psychological drivers are translated into observable patterns of lifestyle orientations concretized through actual travel behavior, the way people spend their time, the activities they choose during their leisure time, their interests and opinions about leisure and travel alternatives based on the extent to which these experiences satisfy hedonic, social,

restorative, and functional needs. Lifestyle orientations, in turn, shape individuals' motivations and attitudes toward staycation, including perceived benefits (e.g., wellbeing, affordability, sustainability, convenience) and barriers (e.g., familiarity, lack of novelty, limited offerings).

The framework incorporates generational cohort (Generation Z and Millennials) as a contextual lens influencing how psychological drivers, lifestyle orientations, motivations and attitudes toward staycation are expressed. The interaction between psychological drivers, lifestyle orientations, and generational context ultimately leads to the emergence of distinct staycationer profiles, which constitute the study's primary analytical and theoretical contribution (Figure 1).

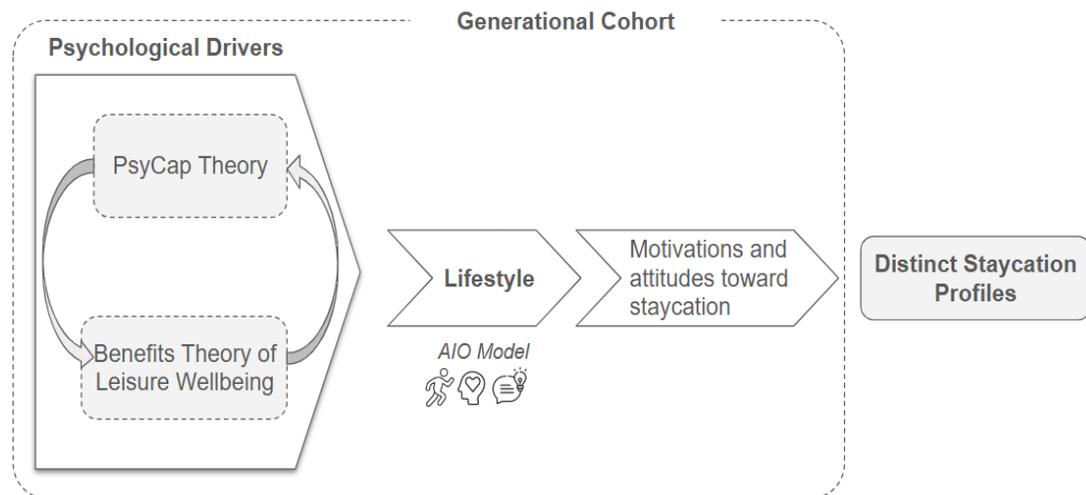


Figure 1. Conceptual framework understanding the staycationer mindset across generations

4. Methods

4.1 Research Design

This study employed qualitative research through semi-structured interviews to facilitate our understanding of the travelers' lifestyles, motivations, and behaviors regarding staycations. As stated earlier, staycation remains a concept that is not clearly interpreted by tourism practitioners and travelers alike. While the AIO framework has been traditionally adopted in quantitative studies to identify travelers' patterns through a structured survey, we believe that this method wouldn't be sufficient to explore and understand the intricacies of travelers' perceptions and behavior toward staycation. Indeed, the AIO framework relies on structured measures that capture *what* activities individuals engage in, rather than *how* these activities are subjectively interpreted or *why* they are meaningful in a staycation context.

In particular, standardized AIO scales are limited in their ability to capture the meanings and the psychological reasoning underlying staycation-related behaviors. At this study's stage, we prioritize context exploration and understanding over quantifying travelers' lifestyles. Therefore, this research adopts the AIO framework as a foundation for developing the interview guide questions to explore participants' lifestyles and to discover lifestyle patterns among two different generations. Accordingly, the AIO framework is employed as an analytical foundation for developing the semi-structured interview guide. Each AIO dimension (activities, interests, and opinions) informed the formulation of open-

ended questions aimed at eliciting participants’ travel and leisure practices in local contexts, travel-related interests, and evaluative beliefs about local travel. This approach enables the identification of lifestyle patterns and generational differences while preserving the depth and flexibility required to explore staycation motivations.

4.2 Sampling

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling, prioritizing availability and diversity across age, gender, and past travel behavior. The sampling strategy aimed to ensure variation in lifestyle profiles across two generational cohorts rather than representativeness. Inclusion criteria required participants to be members of Generation Z or the Millennial generation and to have experience with leisure and travel decision-making in their daily lives. The participants were recruited based on their previous staycation experiences and their availability. However, prior staycation experience was not mandatory, as the study sought to capture both individuals who had engaged in staycations and those who had not, in order to explore perceptions, motivations, and potential barriers toward staycation.

Diversity was further ensured in terms of gender, marital status, and family situation (single, married, with or without children), as these factors are known to shape leisure preferences and travel-related choices. A total of 20 participants were interviewed, comprising 10 individuals from Generation Z and 10 from the Millennial generation. Consistent with the inductive methodological orientation of the study, sample size was treated as adaptive rather than predetermined. Data collection and analysis (e.g., theme development) were conducted concurrently, and sampling continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Saturation was assessed through ongoing coding and comparison of interview data and was observed after approximately the 16th interview, with subsequent interviews confirming existing lifestyle patterns and motivational themes rather than generating new analytical insights. The final sample, therefore, reflects methodological adequacy for lifestyle-based segmentation rather than numerical representativeness. The following Table 1 describes this study’s sample.

Table 1. Sample description

Participant	Gender	Generation	Travel habits	Staycation Frequency	Marital	Occupation
Participant 1	Male	Z	Frequent traveler	Rare	Single	Student
Participant 2	Female	Z	Occasional traveler	Never	Single	Student
Participant 3	Male	Y	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Married with children	Employee
Participant 4	Female	Z	Frequent traveler	Sometimes	Single	Content creator
Participant 5	Female	Y	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Married	Employee
Participant 6	Female	Z	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Single	Master Student
Participant 7	Male	Y	Frequent traveler	Never	Single	Employee
Participant 8	Female	Y	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Married with children	Employee
Participant 9	Male	Y	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Married	Employee

Table 1. Sample description (Continue)

Participant	Gender	Generation	Travel habits	Staycation Frequency	Marital	Occupation
Participant 10	Male	Y	Frequent traveler	Usually	Married with children	Businessman
Participant 11	Female	Y	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Married	Employee
Participant 12	Female	Z	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Single	Master Student
Participant 13	Female	Y	Frequent traveler	Rare	Married with children	Professor
Participant 14	Male	Z	Frequent traveler	Usually	Single	Content creator
Participant 15	Female	Z	Occasional traveler	Never	Married with children	Employee
Participant 16	Female	Z	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Single	PhD student
Participant 17	Male	Y	Frequent traveler	Usually	Married	Professor
Participant 18	Female	Z	Frequent traveler	Never	Married	Employee
Participant 19	Male	Y	Occasional traveler	Sometimes	Married with children	Businessman
Participant 20	Male	Y	Occasional traveler	Never	Single	Employee

4.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews that allowed participants to freely express their previous tourism activities and staycation experiences. A great part of the developed interview guide was based on the AIO framework, complemented by questions addressing participants' travel motivations and decision-making process. Specifically, the first section explored the "activity" and the "Interests" components of the AIO framework and how participants typically spend their leisure time, weekends, and holidays. Specifically, this section examined participants' favorite holiday activities, engagement in local experiences and outdoor activities, their interests, preferences, and priorities when planning travel experiences. As examples of questions, "Can you describe the types of activities you typically engage in when you take a short local getaway? "What types of local experiences or aspects of a short getaway are most important to you? For example, do you value relaxation, adventure, cultural immersion, family bonding, or wellness activities?"

These questions aimed to capture habitual and situational leisure behaviors embedded in participants' daily lives, which helped us frame their diverse lifestyles. The second section introduced the staycation concept and focused on participants' "Opinion" toward this form of traveling, including the conditions under which staying in their local area could generate a genuine "vacation feeling," and comparisons with long-distance travel. Besides these questions, this section explored participants' motivations, experiential expectations, essential elements of a satisfying local stay, and preferred travel formats (solo, group, or family).

Finally, a dedicated section addressed the travel decision-making process, exploring the role of digital platforms (e.g., social media, online reviews, influencers, blogs, etc.) in shaping participants' information search and destination choice. Also, this section explored the digital behavior during traveling times (e.g., sharing photos on social media). This allowed us to discern participants' contemporary lifestyle orientations and their variation across generational cohorts. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and online between January and March 2025, depending on participants' availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with informed consent. All recordings were transcribed verbatim. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached.

The interview guide was initially tested through preliminary interviews to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. The study was conducted across multiple locations in Tunisia, combining both touristic destinations (e.g., Hammamet) and non-touristic areas (e.g., Sfax). This diversity of locations allowed us to capture a broad spectrum of staycation experiences and motivations.

4.4 Data Analysis

For data analysis, QDA miner was employed to organize, code, and retrieve the qualitative data systematically, supporting the identification of patterns across participants and generational cohorts. An inductive thematic analysis approach was adopted, allowing themes to emerge directly from the data rather than being imposed by pre-existing theoretical categories. The analysis followed a multi-stage coding process: open coding was conducted independently with another researcher to identify initial codes, followed by axial coding to group codes into broader categories and examine relationships between them. Final themes were constructed iteratively through discussion and comparison across transcripts to ensure they accurately reflected participants' perspectives, including categories such as ideal vacation, preferred activities, motivations, opinions on local getaways, and perceived benefits. To enhance credibility and reduce potential bias, an independent researcher reviewed a subset of coded transcripts, the coding framework, and our analytical decisions. Some revisions were made regarding theme identification based on the researcher's reviews to derive meaningful insights.

5. Findings

5.1 Ideal Vacation Perceptions and Time-Off Constraints

The interview guide started with a general question to ease participants into the conversation by asking them about their perception toward an "ideal vacation". The results showed that for most of the participants an ideal vacation is first and foremost about relaxation, well-being and disconnection from the busy daily life: "*the perfect vacation for me is all about relaxation and self-fulfillment, enjoying a peaceful retreat in a comfort and cozy hotel.*" (Participant 9, Gen Y). Also, exploration and discovery are just important as relaxation: "*A great vacation would be a total immersion in a completely new and different place. I imagine visiting a major international city, like Tokyo or Berlin, to explore its culture and discover its unique atmosphere.*" (Participant 1, Gen Z).

Moreover, several participants acknowledged the importance of visiting a new destination, either national or international, as a central factor of an ideal vacation. In this vein, they shared various emotions such as, excitement (91.7%), immersion in different activities (66.7%) and happiness (75%) feelings. Then, we shifted the conversation to contextualize their habits of taking time to relax in their daily lives routine. This question helped in laying the ground for introducing staycation as a way to break the routine without the need for an extensive travel. Most of the participants revealed that it is not frequent to have a time-off (75% Gen Z) due to their work/study constraints. But also, many of them highlighted the importance of going out in their home place, trying to disconnect, break the routine, and to relax at least twice a month: *“It is very important to disconnect and recharge ourselves to keep progressing in this stressful and demanding life.”* (Participant 17, Gen Y).

From the analysis, we assume that the home region itself can influence individuals' motivation to engage in local getaways. Indeed, the “not frequent” participants (50%) shed the light on constraints related to their home place (lack of attractions, absence of outdoor activities, absence of activities matching their interests etc.) preventing them to have a local getaway that meets their desires *“I can't stay at Sfax and enjoy my time-off! there is no dynamic and intense activities that matches my interests.”* (Participant 2, Gen Z) *“there's not much to do in Sfax”* (Participant 9, Gen Y). However, this wasn't the case for our participants living in a tourist destination: *“Without leaving Hammamet, I often take time for myself usually once or twice a month. This can include a spa day, playing Golf with my friends or simply spending time with my family in a boat trip. These activities offer a refreshing escape from my daily routines while taking full advantage of Hammamet's exceptional leisure offerings”.* (Participant 10, Gen Y).

5.2 Leisure Activities and Staycationers' Lifestyle Patterns

In order to develop our understanding of staycationers' lifestyle, we start analyzing their activities during their weekend and days off without leaving their home places. The results revealed distinct generational lifestyle patterns. Indeed, there's a clear preference of Gen Y participants for nearby destinations and local outdoor activities (e.g., hiking in nearby park, picnic, city walks, attend local events, shopping). This reflects their desire for balancing convenience with the opportunity of having a quality time without the need for extensive planning or travel: *“I spend my weekends with my family. We often do simple but enjoyable activities, such as outings to the nearby beach and creating sandcastles. Sometimes, I treat myself by going to SPA to relax and recharge both of my body and my mind.”* (Participant 15, Gen Y).

For Gen Z, several respondents prefer passion practice (e.g., Sport, photography, gaming, crafting) and entertainment activities with their friends (e.g., attending local events (e.g., cultural or social events), adventurous activities, biking, etc.): *“a gaming evening with my friends will be the perfect way to disconnect”* (Participant 1, Gen Z). *“I prefer to explore hidden or forgotten places, meet locals, and practice photography in unusual natural or urban landscapes”* (Participant 4, Gen Z). *“My weekends are often filled with spontaneous outdoor adventurous activities like hiking, biking, or sports with friends, anything that gets me moving and pumps my adrenaline a little.”* (Participant 2, Gen Z).

Regarding participants' interests during their vacations, respondents highlighted: *"places that combine relaxation and discovery are particularly appealing"* (Participant 19, Gen Y), *"Every trip must be an opportunity to discover something new"* (Participant 11, Gen Y). Novelty, exploration, and discovery are priorities of participants across both generations. What differs is balancing exploration with relaxation and well-being for Gen Y participants, whilst, mixing discovery, passion practice and adventurous activities for Gen Z: *"I want every trip to challenge me to discover a new aspect of the world, whether it's a place, a culture, or a perspective. This helps me to enrich both of my photo library and my mind."* (Participant 4, Gen Z). *"The ideal thing is to have a memorable adventure."* (Participant 1, Gen Z).

5.3 Local Exploration and The Search for Novelty

Another emerging theme is the exploration of nearby and overlooked places when they had the chance as various participants from Gen Z highlighted their study/work constraints *"Most of the time, I spend my weekends catching up on my university projects or making progress on my professional tasks."* (Participant 16, Gen Z). That's why, they prefer to experience novelty and discovery of their surroundings: *"When hiking with friends, I explored a new place, like "virgin" and hidden spot, nearby just one hour walking with a fantastic sea view"* (Participant 1, Gen Z). Participants from Gen Y demonstrated an inclination to exploration during their days off as well, but with interest in cultural and historical discovery: *"I went to local museums with my family. It was really enriching experience exploring new insights into the history, culture, and identity of my community. I felt a deeper connection to my roots and I felt local pride when diving into our heritage."* (Participant 5, Gen Y). This demonstrates that we can have rewarding experiences in local regions, especially when considered with an open mind and curiosity.

5.4 Opinions toward Staycation: Value, Limits, and Trade-Offs

Reaching participants' opinions toward staycation, the results demonstrated that the feeling of "being on vacation" even when it is near "home" is related to having the *"feeling of escape"* (Participant 1, Gen Z), the possibility to *"disconnect"* (Participant 7, Gen Y), *"the feeling of immersion in new and different activities"* (Participant 4, Gen Z), *"quality time"* with family and friends (Participant 3, Gen Y), *"relaxation and changing surroundings"* (Participant 9, Gen Y). Participants' answers prove that their beliefs toward a "vacation" are not totally related to physical distances, but to the meaningful experience it provides. However, as shown in Figure 2, when we compared staycation to traveling far/abroad, 91.7% of participants highly value international travel: *"Staycation is not a vacation"* (Participant 2, Gen Z), *"Staycations can't offer the same level of satisfaction as international travel. I associate my vacations with real disconnection, and that requires a total change of environment. Staycations lack the sense of escape I'm looking for."* (Participant 7, Gen Y).

Most of the beliefs (91.7% of participants) highlighted that staycation lacks novelty due to participants' familiarity with the local environments (natural, cultural, historical) which reduces the sense of escape, exploration, adventure and discovery that participants (mainly Gen Z) are looking for: *"You can't escape the familiarity"* (Participant 10, Gen Y). Still, many participants believe that staycation is a functional and convenient option to break the routine of our daily lives, discover our surroundings and culture and spending quality time on budget: *"Staycations are enriching in their own way"* (Participant 12, Gen

Z), “It can be beneficial to decompress rapidly while saving time and money.” (Participant 11, Gen Y).

5.5 Digital Behaviors in Travel Planning

Both of Gen Z and Gen Y place higher importance on social media and other digital platforms (e.g., Tripadvisor) when planning for vacations and during their stays but with different objectives. Mainly, Gen Z showed higher engagement by actively sharing their travel experiences on their social media accounts (19.1% vs. 8% for Gen Y) to stay connected with their friends and followers. Both generations find inspiration from social media, though Gen Z focuses more on influencers/bloggers' recommendations than Gen Y. (7.4% vs. 2.3% Gen Y). From practical side, Gen Y relies more on social media as a source of information (10.2% vs. 7.4% for Gen Z), but, when looking for authentic recommendations, they rely more on their close social networks (e.g., friends, families) “Social platforms are great sources of inspiration. But, I also prefer authentic recommendation from my close friends and network.” (Participant 5, Gen Y). These differences show that for Gen Z, the digital engagement is highly interactive, immersive, and socially driven, while for Gen Y, it is more functionality and usefulness driven (see Figure 2).

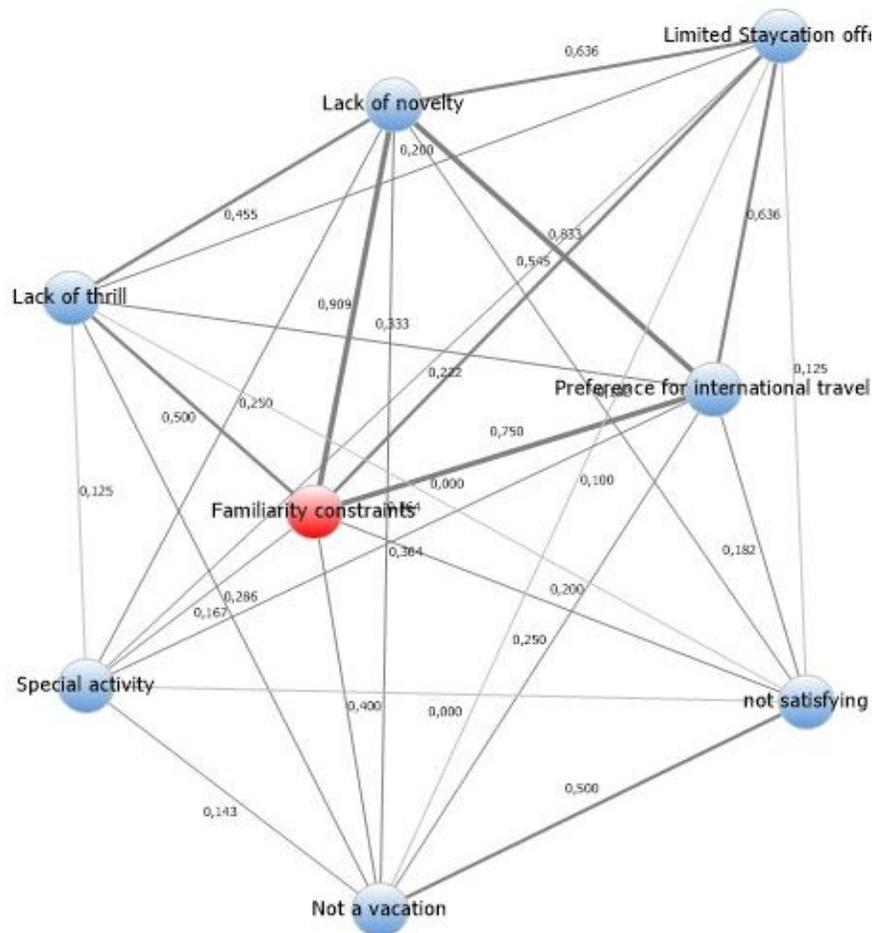


Figure 2. Participants' opinion toward staycation

5.6 Motivations toward Staycation

The analysis of participants' diverse motivations toward staycation showed mainly two positions; whilst some participants were motivated for choosing the staycation option for vacations thinking of its value in discovering local hidden gems, of its practicality and affordability, *"The idea of adventure doesn't need a plane ticket; it's all about to uncover the extraordinary in the ordinary."* (Participant 14, Gen Z) *"I will choose staycation for its simplicity and practicality without complex planning. Also, it encourages me to value local beauty and to discover our hidden gems."* (Participant 17, Gen Y), many hesitated due to limited staycation offers, the high familiarity of the home place and lacks of uniqueness and novelty. Indeed, several participants highlighted the importance of the availability of unique and novel experiences to be motivated to choose their home region for vacation: *"If my region offers activities that give me a thrill, I'll be motivated to stay."* (Participant 2, Gen Z). As a way to overcome the barrier of familiarity, some participants indicated that the distinctiveness of a local vacation is also related to what the destination offers in terms of luxury, relaxation and opportunities for special activities: *"Taking a vacation in Sfax is not motivating at all!. Everything seems familiar where is the novelty I am looking for during my vacations! However, I might be interested in a local hotel of very high standing with an exceptional spa as an opportunity to relax and recharge myself"* (Participant 7, Gen Y), *"Access to exceptional and exclusive services, like spending a day on a yacht with my family and friends"* (Participant 10, Gen Y).

As shown in Figure 3, both generations match up in seeking novelty and exploration of the local region's hidden gems and culture through an affordable getaway: *"This would be fun if I'm looking for a quick and affordable solution"* (Participant 6, Gen Z), *"If I find a unique place to photograph or a fascinating local story and traditions to explore, it might encourage me to stay close to home."* (Participant 14, Gen Z), *"The possibility of discovering nearby villages or landscapes that I haven't yet explored is always a good reason."* (Participant 5, Gen Y). However, the surrounding's familiarity and lack of youth-centric activities, as well as, the absence of the sense of escape and excitement as they could experience in a new destination (either national or international) hinder the engagement of Gen Z toward staycation: *"when local vacations include unique discoveries or exciting experiences, they can be rewarding."* (Participant 12, Gen Z).

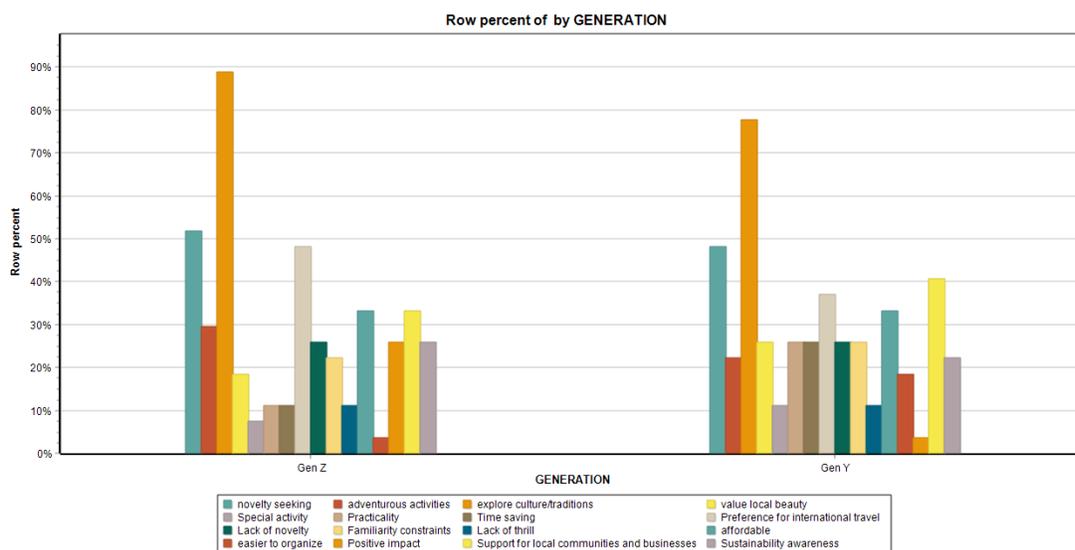


Figure 3. Motivations and barriers toward staycation across generations (Gen Z vs. Gen Y)

On the other hand, participants from Gen Y balance between novelty, relaxation and practicality seeking: *“Simplicity, low cost and practicality. There’s no need for complex planning which is relaxing and time saving. Sometimes there are hidden gems nearby that we overlook because they’re too familiar.”* (Participant 11, Gen Y). They are more willing to choose staycation if they find the meaningful, rewarding and novel experience nearby. These results align with Agustina’s et al. (2017) research in the context of culinary tourism and in which they emphasized that travelers’ decisions are primarily influenced by the overall quality of their tourist experience and the service provided, whereas the destination’s location holds comparatively less importance. This indicates that travelers are driven more by the experiential and emotional values than by the actual distance of their travel.

Both generations have high sustainability awareness: *“It allows me to contribute to the local economy while immersing myself in an authentic experience”* (Participant 8, Gen Y), *“It gives deeper meaning to my travels, especially by supporting local businesses or taking part in environmentally-friendly activities.”* (Participant 1, Gen Z). Most of the participants highlighted their support of local businesses prioritizing local artisans and restaurants. Also, their interest in activities promoting traditions and cultural heritage education *“I also love taking part in local workshops, like learning to cook a typical dish or trying out traditional craft techniques”* (Participant 6, Gen Z), as well as, activities with low environmental impacts (e.g., biking, hiking, visiting natural parks, etc.) demonstrates participants’ sustainability values. Figure 3 exhibit that Gen Z participants are more engaged in having positive impact through their travels. This could be a driving force for staycationers to choose local surroundings for vacations to explore and appreciate their home place’s culture and traditions while contributing positively to local economy and to the environment preservation.

5.6.1 Staycationers’ Profiles and Corresponding Staycation Packages

The analysis of participants’ lifestyles, motivations, and preferences toward staycation revealed different profiles of staycationers. At the first stage of the profiling process, visual mapping of participants’ attitudes and motivations was used to explore patterns among them. The results of the thematic analysis shown in Figure 4 revealed four different groups; the first one covers staycationers interested in local experiences filled with outdoor adrenaline pumping activities, excitement and exploration (culture, history and social) all with relaxation and well-being, the second group defines staycationers interested in sharing valuable moments with their family, the third group characterizes staycationers interested in comfort, luxury and personalized experiences; the fourth group identifies work-leisure staycationers who aim to balance between productivity and enjoyment. While this visual representation provides valuable insights into these groupings, we further refined the clustering as we noticed overlapping groups, which could affect the clarity of the identified profiles.

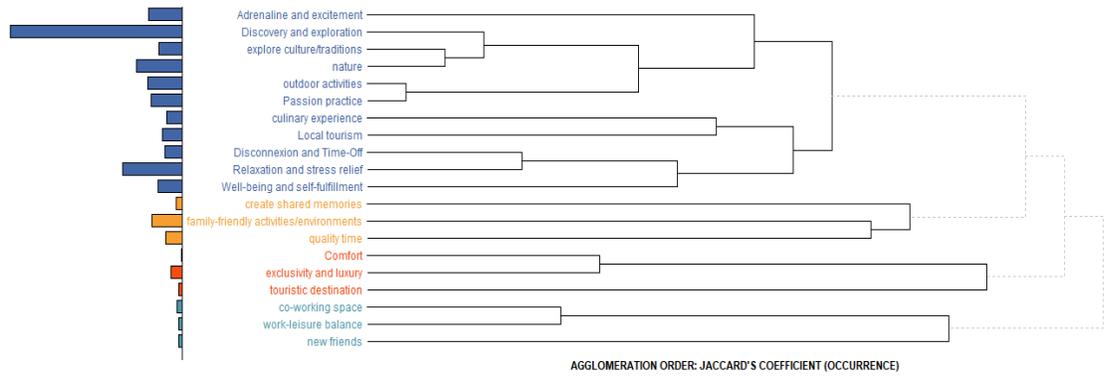


Figure 4. Staycationers clustering

5.6.2 Wellness seekers

Staycationers within this category prioritize their mental, physical and emotional well-being through their getaway experiences (see Figure 5). Most of them belong to Gen Y. They are professionals and entrepreneurs who are looking to totally disconnect from their demanding jobs and their busy lives. Wellness staycationers are seeking relaxation and peaceful retreat through self-fulfillment and immersive experiences that engage their mind and body (e.g., massage, SPAs). As some of their behavioral patterns, they yearn for outdoor activities in nature (sea, mountains, forests) as this helps them to get the feeling of “escape” from stress and recharge their soul and mind. Their destination choice is based on its unique and serene environment and the amenities they offer in terms of relaxation and mindfulness activities.

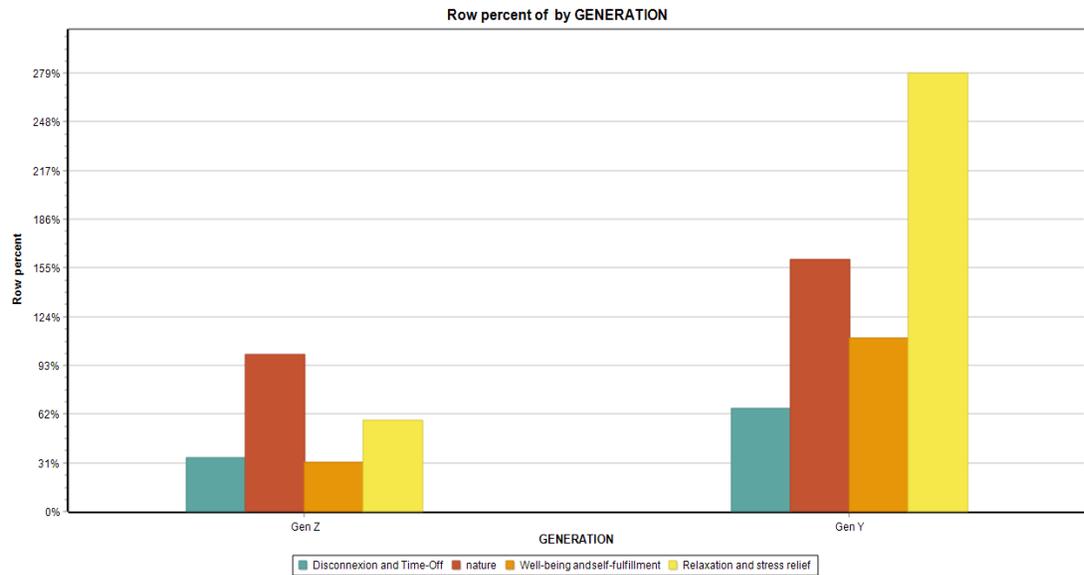


Figure 5. Wellness seeker profile

Within this category, we identified a subgroup of luxury seekers who share the wellness seekers broader motivations and preferences but place additional emphasis on comfort, exclusivity, premium and personalized experiences. In this subgroup, staycationers prefer tourist destinations for sophisticated and relaxing getaways. Mainly, this category involves business owner and professionals, belonging to Gen Y and who have disposable income

allowing them to invest in high-end experiences. The goal of their staycation is to disconnect from the pressure of their work and daily life, that's why, they are looking for places with spectacular nature, comfortable and luxury accommodations where they can relax, recharge, practice their passions (e.g., playing golf, shopping, reading) and trying new refined and authentic restaurant. Luxury staycationers usually rely on their network's recommendations, also, some of them, are interested in special offers as this make luxury hotels and exclusive experiences (e.g., private excursion, spending a day on a yacht, etc.) more accessible.

5.6.3 Family-Centric Travelers

This category involves typically married staycationers with kids. All of them belong to Gen Y (see Figure 6). They prioritize having quality time with their families and they are seeking experiences and activities that help in creating bonds and great memories. This category's members are working parents who are often looking for opportunities to reconnect with their kids and partners. That's why, family-centric staycationers are looking for family-friendly destinations and environments to meet all the family members' needs. Indeed, they typically choose destinations that offer mix of entertainment and adventure activities for all ages and relaxation as well for parents to unwind. As for experiences, family-centric staycationers look for memorable experiences, such as local festivals or historical exploration with a guided tour that the entire family can enjoy and broaden their knowledge together. Their key destinations are amusement parks, entertaining and immersive experiences, natural parks, and destinations that balance entertainment and educational opportunities (such as historical sites, cultural festivals, museums, etc.).

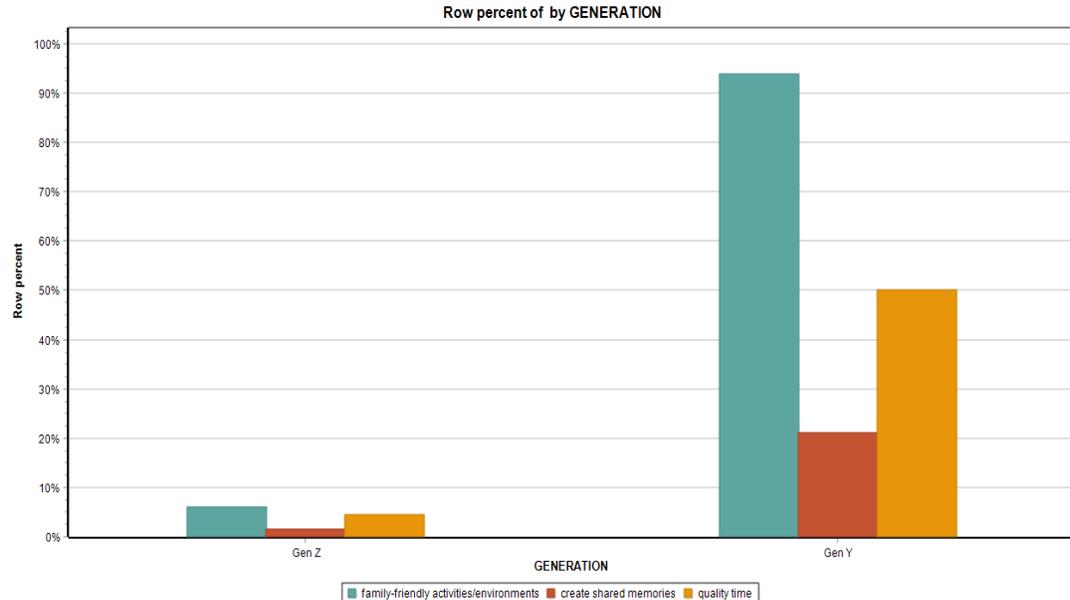


Figure 6. Family centric profile

Within this category, we identified a subgroup of culture enthusiasts who share the broader family-oriented motivations but place stronger emphasis on meaningful cultural learning experiences. Culture-enthusiastic family staycationers seek to engage deeply with their home destination's history, traditions, and local identity through activities such as visiting historical sites, attending cultural events, and participating in guided heritage tours. Both

of Gen Z and Gen Y individuals belong to this category but with different interests. Gen Z individuals are more interested in interactive and hands-on activities to connect with locals such as, creative artisan workshops, pottery workshop, traditional clothing weaving, etc. with the presence of local storyteller to deeply dive into the traditional lifestyles. Gen Y individuals are more interested in local tourism experiences (e.g., visiting olive groves and traditional or modern mills for olive oil tasting, tours of old towns, museums, culinary experiences, etc.)

5.6.4 Adventure and Exploration Enthusiasts

Staycationers belonging to this category have high adventurous and exploration spirit. They are seeking immersive, unique and thrilling experience. This category is mainly motivated by outdoor activities that are both physically and mentally stimulating. While they belong mainly to Gen Z, an adventure and exploration enthusiast could belong to Gen Y if he/she maintains this challenge spirit as long as he/she finds the right and suitable activity (see Figure 7). They are curious and highly motivated by the opportunity to explore hidden gems and to experience adrenaline-fueled activities (e.g., diving, mountains hiking, etc.) that give them the sense of achievement. When planning their getaway experience, they often rely on social media platforms, like-minded influencers and travel bloggers to choose the right destination and activity. They value group travel as a way to connect and meet people who share similar interests.

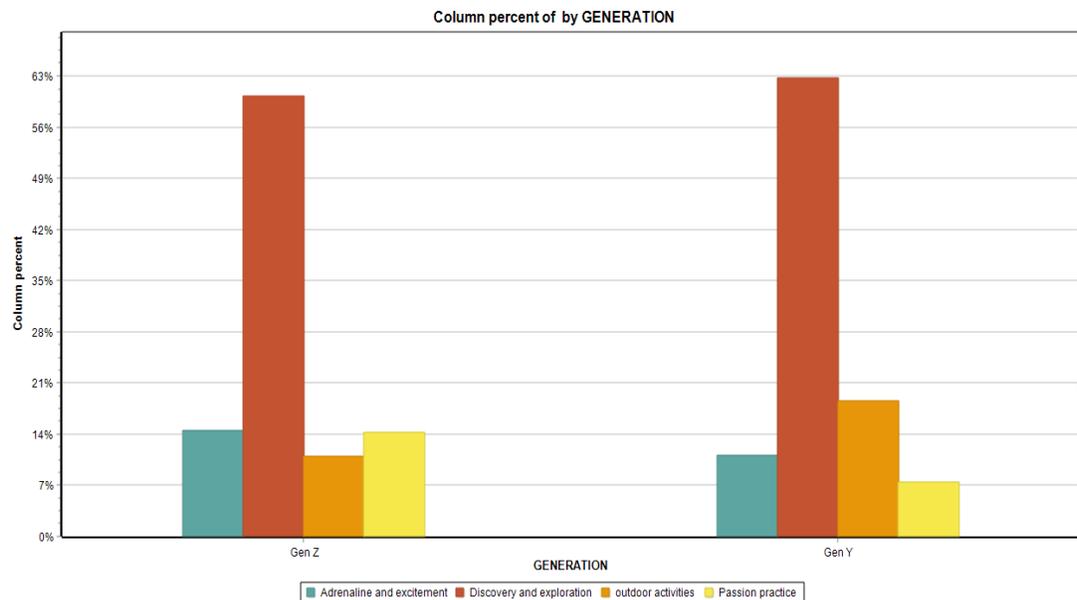


Figure 7. Adventure and exploration profile

5.6.5 Work and Play Travelers

This category of staycationers is looking for time-off and relaxation while staying on top of productivity and professional responsibilities. Work and play travelers are mainly from Gen Z who are remote workers with flexible jobs (e.g., digital nomads, freelancers, entrepreneurs with flexible schedules). They choose destinations combining opportunities to work from inspiring places (e.g., well-equipped co-working spaces, hotels with proper working places) with opportunities for leisure, social activities, and exploration of natural surroundings. They are interested in flexible and short getaways as they aim to integrate

both work and leisure into their days. After work, they prioritize outdoor activities in the surrounding natural environment (e.g., hiking, biking) and experience something new during their time-off. They rely on social media platforms to gather recommendations and reviews of the destinations they are meeting their needs for great work-leisure plans.

6. Discussion

This research yields three principal findings that enhance our understanding of staycation as a contemporary tourism practice. First, this study reinforces prior research, conducted during and post the COVID-19 pandemic, which has highlighted the well-being-enhancing effects of staycations in times of crisis. However, these research findings asserted that staycation is not a temporary response to external constraints such as mobility restrictions, but it turned out to be an enduring alternative tourism choice defined with its psychological wellbeing and contribution life satisfaction (Lau et al., 2025; Li et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2023; Misra et al., 2024). Indeed, our empirical results demonstrated that people's choice of staycation is not a simple preference for a proximity travel option, rather, it's deeply related to their lifestyles, psychological needs for short-term mental disengagement from work and daily routines, preferences for meaningful experiences, and quality time. The findings demonstrated that, for most of participants, an "ideal vacation" is not about the geographical distance, but it is all about the experiential values and emotional outcomes including the feeling of escape, stimulation and fulfillment, which are traditionally associated with longer trips. Therefore, beyond crisis-driven interpretations, this study extends existing consumer and tourism research by demonstrating that staycation is increasingly embedded in individuals' lifestyles as a proactive wellbeing-oriented choice.

Second, we demonstrated that staycation's wellbeing outcomes vary according to the generational differences in terms of lifestyle orientations and psychological needs which endorse Vašaničová's and Melnyk (2025) research. Indeed, while most of the participants appreciate the practicality, affordability and sustainability of staycation options, the results also underlined an important experiential gap in relation to the high familiarity of their home regions, subsequently, the lack of the sense of adventure, discovery and novelty, particularly among Gen Z. Aligned with Sirgy et al. (2017) research, the findings further indicate that Gen Z, with high escape and stimulation needs, derives wellbeing from staycation through stimulation- and thrill-oriented leisure activities, distinguishing them from Millennial participants who tend to prioritize restoration and balance. Indeed, this study demonstrated that staycation experiences that incorporate sensation-seeking elements, such as adventure-based activities, novel local experiences, or socially vibrant settings, are especially well-being-enhancing for Generation Z. In contrast, Millennial participants in this study more frequently associated staycation with relaxation, psychological detachment, and recovery-oriented benefits, suggesting lower reliance on stimulation for wellbeing outcomes.

Third, lifestyle patterns play a central role in shaping staycation engagement, beyond age-based segmentation alone. The identification of four staycationer profiles, wellness seekers, family-centric travelers, adventure and exploration enthusiasts, and work-and-play travelers, demonstrates that staycation participation results from the interaction between lifestyle configurations and contextual constraints. This insight advances existing staycation literature by integrating lifestyle-based segmentation with generational perspectives, offering a more nuanced explanation of heterogeneous staycation

motivations (Vašaničová & Melnyk, 2025). This key insight helps local tourism marketers in designing more differentiated and experience-rich staycation offerings. In light of these results, we developed the following guidelines where we translate the identified profiles into targeted staycation strategies.

The primary value of this research is theoretical and conceptual by providing a refined framework for understanding how localized tourism experiences generate differentiated wellbeing outcomes. Indeed, this research endorses the premises of the Benefits Theory of Leisure Wellbeing recognizing that leisure experiences are more likely to enhance wellbeing through perceived psychological and experiential benefits when they align with individuals' preferences, needs, and capabilities (Sirgy et al., 2017). From a Psychological Capital (PsyCap) perspective, Millennials' staycation choices reflect wellbeing-maintenance strategies grounded in quality time with family, social connection, and engagement with local nature and cultural exploration. Individuals with higher psychological capital are more likely to invest in leisure experiences that sustain emotional balance, fulfill basic psychological needs, foster meaningful relationships, and support long-term life satisfaction rather than short-term stimulation (Dirzyte et al., 2022; Lau et al., 2025). Also, the fact that Millennials hold more favorable perceptions of staycations than Generation Z could be understood from their lifestyle perspective. Indeed, with their broader life context, professional responsibilities, and need for balance, staycation appear a convenient gateway option that fits seamlessly into their daily lives.

6.1 Guidance on Marketing and Outreach Strategies

Since we identified four different staycationer segments, it's necessary to develop guidance on how to approach them with the right marketing strategy. Beginning with wellness seekers segment who most of them belong to Gen Y and prioritize self-care and well-being experiences. Based on their preferences and behavioural patterns in terms of searching and collecting information when planning their gateways, local tourism agencies should focus on various alternatives to capture their interests as they are present but not very engaged on social media channels. For instance, they could collaborate with SPAs, wellness retreats, nature resorts, eco-lodges, and gyms to promote their staycation offers through their offline and online networks. This segment prioritizes in-person recommendations; hence, local tourism agencies could develop referral program and encourage satisfied and happy guests to refer friends through exclusive offers and rewards. While they don't rely on influencers' recommendations, trusted wellness experts, nutritionist and well-being instructors could promote wellness staycation package among wellness seekers segment through their blogs, social media accounts and health and well-being podcasts.

As this segment involves professionals and entrepreneurs looking to totally disconnect from their demanding jobs, local tourism agencies could develop corporate wellness programs and collaborate with companies' HR departments to invest in employee well-being programs and help employees reduce stress and prevent burnout, which would improve overall workplace engagement. To effectively attract the luxury seeker subcategory, local tourism agencies should emphasize on exclusive, high-quality, personalized and sophisticated services when developing their luxurious staycation packages. As this subsegment is primarily composed of business owners and professionals from Gen Y who are present but not very active on social media for leisure, we suggest direct marketing strategies focusing on exclusive networking events with digital presence through luxury

lifestyle publications. In addition, collaboration with five-stars hotels, high-end spas, starred restaurants and luxury brands would elevate the staycation experience and appeal to this segment's demand for elegance, relaxation and privilege close to home. To build loyalty, private club membership for VIP and personalized offers would enhance luxury staycationers' engagement.

Regarding family-centric segment prioritizing convenience and diverse activities tailored for both children and adults, the effective marketing strategy should focus on family-friendly experiences and itineraries. Often, parents make their decisions based on emotional factors (e.g., creating lasting memories, nostalgia, joy, building connections with their kids, etc.). In order to effectively reach this segment, local tourism agencies should focus on emotional factors when communicating their family-friendly staycation package by evoking feelings of emotional connections and family values while being together. Convenience, safety, and quality time were the main motivator factors for this segment as well. Hence, to appeal to parents, local tourism agencies should focus on improving the whole family well-being and highlighting the practical benefits of the family-centric staycation as an alternative vacation. To connect with families on a deeper level, local tourism marketers should identify the roles of moms, dads and kids in the purchase process of a family-centric staycation package. This is an important starting point for the communication strategy as, historically, marketing messages address to moms in what comes to family entertainments decisions. However, recently, dads are taking active role as well and today's children are key influencer in their families' purchase decisions more than ever given their online active presence. Therefore, crafting the right marketing strategy for this segment requires deep understanding of the desires of both parents and children. In terms of marketing channels, local tourism agencies could reach this segment through online networking with family-oriented groups and partner with mom bloggers and influencers on Instagram and TikTok to communicate about their real staycation experiences.

As culture enthusiast sub-category prioritize immersive and meaningful experiences rich with history, culture and heritage of their home destinations, an effective marketing strategy should emphasize storytelling, hands-on cultural engagement and authenticity. Both of Gen Z and Gen Y travelers belong to this sub-segment, yet, with different and specific interests. To effectively reach this specific audience, marketing efforts should focus on digital contents through social media platforms, mainly, Facebook (for Gen Y), Instagram and TikTok with short-videos showcasing the immersive and authentic experiences with local historians and communities. The messaging should emphasize both discovery and deep connection with their home destination's heritage through meaningful experience.

The adventure and exploration enthusiasts are driven by the thrill of outdoor activities stimulating both of their physical and mental health. Therefore, we suggest that experience-based marketing strategies would work effectively to address this segment where we emphasize excitement and adrenaline rush discovery. As both Gen Z and Gen Y adventurers belongs to this segment and they are using social media platforms to get inspiration from like-minded influencers and bloggers, we assume that Instagram, TikTok and YouTube are ideal for promoting and showcasing these thrilling yet accessible outdoor activities close to home. To expand reach and reinforce credibility, local tourism agencies could collaborate with travel and adventure influencers and outdoor brands to showcase adventure and thrill-packed staycation packages. Gamified and interactive exploration can

encourage and enhance engagement, mainly among Gen Z staycationers. Local tourism agencies should highlight these meaningful and unforgettable staycation experiences through short-form videos and user-generated content.

When it comes to work and play travelers, we need to position the staycation offer as a great opportunity to blend work and relaxation without the need for long-distance travel. As this staycation segment is mainly represented by Gen Z remote workers, freelancers and digital nomads with flexible schedule, messaging has to emphasize on work-life balance and convenient access to leisure activities close to home. To attract work and play staycation segment, local tourism agencies could collaborate with hotels and guest houses offering well equipped working spaces alongside well-being and relaxation activities and after-work social networking events, all this to cater to this segment's professional and personal needs. Corporate partnerships would attract this staycationers profile further. To enhance visibility, reach and engagement, digital marketing with targeted and sponsored content on various social media platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram and X) would certainly promote work and play staycation packages.

6.2 Managerial Implication

This research provides several practical insights for tourism and hospitality marketers and destination planners. First, this paper helps in innovating local tourism offerings and in designing more targeted offers that resonate with distinct staycationers profiles. Second, understanding the motivational drivers to choose staycation as a getaway option allows marketers to highlight emotional and psychological outcomes (e.g., wellbeing, stress relief, quality-time, relaxation, surrounding exploration) when communicating their targeted offers, beyond functional benefits like affordability or proximity. This enhances communication relevance and increase the perceived value of staycations, which contributes to more sustainable local tourism.

6.3 Theoretical Contribution

This research offers different theoretical contributions to the academic literature on tourism and consumer behavior. First, by developing the theoretical foundation explaining the raise of staycation phenomena based on both Psychological Capital Theory and the Benefits Theory of Leisure Wellbeing, we moved beyond previous studies that highlighted the motivational and contextual drivers of this tourism trend. Second, integrating the core of these theories with the AIO lifestyle model, helped us enriches our understanding of the key role of consumer's lifestyle as a psychological factor shaped not only by observable behaviors including activities, interests and opinions, but also by internal psychological resources and perceived wellbeing benefits. This provides a more holistic understanding of tourism choices. Third, this study enriches the generational studies in tourism by demonstrating how lifestyle orientations differ across Gen Z and Gen Y and influence their corresponding leisure preferences.

6.4 Limitations

Although this research offers valuable contributions, we acknowledge several limitations. First, the sample size is relatively small, which limits statistical generalization. Future studies could test and strengthen this study's findings with large-scale quantitative designs to validate the identified profiles. Second, as we were limited to two generational groups, we believe that exploring cross-cultural differences and other psychographic segments

would enrich the staycation research stream. Third, this research relied on self-reported experiences and perceptions. Subsequent studies might integrate observational methods or digital trace data (e.g., online reviews and UGC reflecting staycation experience, netnography study, etc.) to assess staycationers behavior in more objective way.

7. Conclusions

The study reconceptualizes staycation as a proactive wellbeing-oriented tourism practice embedded in everyday lifestyles, rather than a reactive or crisis-driven travel alternative as demonstrated in previous research. By integrating the Benefits Theory of Leisure Wellbeing and the PsyCap theory with generational and lifestyle-based differences, this research extends existing tourism and consumer behavior literature and provides a refined framework for understanding how proximity-based tourism experiences generate differentiated wellbeing outcomes.

This research came out with four staycationers' profiles that would help tourism marketers to know how to target and position their staycation packages. While there were profiles combining both generations but with distinct interests, we found that other profiles such as luxury seekers and work and play travelers were mainly presented by people from a specific generation. The common factors encouraging people to choose staycation for their vacations are the accessibility, proximity and uniqueness of the staycation experience that overcome home region's familiarity.

This study highlights that a home region could be barrier for its own resident to choose it for vacation when it is considered lack excitement and novelty. Despite these various challenges, marketing campaigns can promote staycation as an engaging and meaningful experience emphasizing on authenticity and sustainability to start shift perceptions when we employ effective advertising strategies. This shows the importance of the destination's tourism stakeholders, private business sector and local governments to collaborate to offer new and different experiences that helps in breaking the monotony and familiarity of a home destination. This also helps in developing tourism competitive offers based on citizen-centered view that induces a destination's sustainability.

8. Recommendation

Future studies should focus on staycation development from both managerial and theoretical avenues. One of the promising research avenues is to explore the impact of destination branding in developing staycation choice among local tourists. Moreover, in the aim to broaden this study's results, we encourage future studies to bring in insights from generation X as they represent a financially stable and convenience-seeking segment that would have specific motivations and interests toward staycation offers. Finally, it would be also very interesting to delve into the impact of staycation on a destination's sustainable development.

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