

UDC 338.48

JEL L83

## HEALTH TOURISM TRENDS: EXPECTATIONS AND MOTIVES OF GENERATION Z BASED ON UKRAINIAN STUDENTS' SURVEY

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**Summary.** *The study was conducted within the DAAD project «The Health Tour» framework, which aims to exchange pedagogical and research experience between universities from Germany, Hungary, Croatia, Georgia, the Czech Republic, and Ukraine [12]. It also includes mutual acquaintance with the latest scientific achievements of their scientists and as a result realizing joint educational course «Medical, wellness and SPA tourism». The course was taught for students of the countries participating in the project, including Master students of the educational and professional program «Tourism Activities» of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv in the second semester of 2022-2023. The lectures were conducted alternately by professors from six universities – Budapest Metropolitan University (BMU), Caucasus International University (CIU), Universität Rijeka (UR), Kherson State University (KSU), Prague University of Economics and Business (VSE), Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (IFNUL) under umbrella of the Deggendorf Institute of Technology (DIT). The purpose of the course was relevant to new trends in tourist services: to provide not only a tourist's rest but also an opportunity to improve his/her well-being[10]. The course ended with the Winter School on Health Tourism on 9-13 October 2023 in Pfarrkirchen, Germany. The Winter School was attended by the most motivated students and professors from all countries involved in the project. Participation in the project allowed scientists to observe the behavior of Generation Z for a long time, to compare the characteristics of their behavior with representatives of other generations, and to distinguish the characteristics of representatives of different countries inside the generation. Accumulated empirical material and scientific research with the help of a survey of a wide range of Ukrainian students provided material for this article. The processed results of the survey will serve as guidelines for representatives of the tourism business because the surveyed generation Z is the most quantitative today, so it is necessary to consider its opinion for the transformation of the work of the entire tourism industry.*

**Keywords:** *health tourism, wellness, generation Z, trends.*

**Statement of the problem.** Generation Z (Gen Z) is the demographic cohort also known as Post-Millennials, the iGeneration, or the Homeland Generation. Referring to individuals

born roughly between 1997 and 2012, are the youngest consumers, students, colleagues, and voters. Understanding them is a key aspect. In the context of hospitality and tourism, Gen Zers represent the future in human resources, and service production and consumption. This article focuses on the aspirations, expectations, preferences, and behaviors related to individuals within this demographic.

Health tourism is a new concept that appeared recently and is a consequence of globalization. Every year health tourism is gaining momentum, and more and more people around the world are discovering new opportunities related to it. Thus, health tourism performs, first of all, important social functions related to the treatment and prevention of diseases, as well as various measures aimed at protecting the health of the population. From an economic point of view, for the country, the introduction of new types of tourism is what makes it possible to enter new markets of tourist services and, accordingly, to receive higher revenues. However, even though in Ukraine, and in particular in the Lviv region, there are all the prerequisites and factors for the development of health tourism, this area is not yet sufficiently analyzed and developed, especially from the point of view of the younger generation, especially the generation Z. The complexity of the topic and the lack of its study led to the choice of such a topic, which confirms its relevance.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Considerable attention is paid by foreign scientists to the characteristics of Generation Z compared to other generations, in particular, their attitude to tourism and hospitality. Many articles are published in special blogs and are interesting to read, but there are not so many scientific developments. A fundamental article by V. M. Robinson and H. A. Schänzel «A tourism inflex: Generation Z travel experiences» (2019) can be singled out [15]. Also widely cited is the 12-paragraph work «Marketing and Management in Tourism and Hospitality» (2021) by the Hungarian team of authors N. Stylos, R. Rahimi, B. Okumus, and S. Williams [20]. In the book, in a logical sequence, from the point of view of Generation Z, all issues of management and marketing of tourism and hospitality are revealed. In particular, in chapter 4, E. D. Olson and H. Ro discuss Generation Z tourists and their perceptions of wellbeing within the context of hospitality and tourism experiences, focusing on the following areas of well-being: physical, mental/health, social, technology, and environmental [11].

The first study of the Ukrainian Generation Z based on a survey of 2,000 respondents was the work «Ukrainian Generation Z: values and guidelines» (2017) created by a collective of authors D. Gaidai, K. Zarembo, L. Litra, O. Lyamar, S. Misenashvili, S. Solodky, O. Todoriuk, N. Beleskov, I. Volosevych, T. Konoplytska [4]. Also, among Ukrainian scientists who studied the issue of internal motivation of Generation Z in the post-pandemic era, a group of authors can be distinguished: N. Chala, O. Poplavska, N. Danylevych, O. Ievseitseva, R. Sova [1] with their article «Intrinsic motivation of millennials and generation Z in the new post-pandemic reality». Although the literature examining how Gen Z perceives and engages with tourism and hospitality has grown steadily over the past few years, Gen Z's perception of wellness tourism itself has not been explored in the scholarly literature. As Generation Z can play different roles in the tourism economy – for example, as visitors, guests, consumers, employees, and entrepreneurs, we seek to capture the individual aspirations, expectations,

preferences, and behaviors of the Gen Z interviewees to offer key insights and improve our understanding of the important contribution they make to this sector.

**Statement of the task.** In our research, we sought answers to the following questions: do Ukrainian representatives of Generation Z correspond to global trends and what motives and expectations does Ukrainian Generation Z have concerning health-oriented tourism?

**Presentation of the main material.** From the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, there was an intense growth of commercial activity in the field of medical services, and cross-border trips «for health» crystallized into a new direction of the tourism industry.

The direction of medical and health tourism includes tourist trips, in which the main motivating factor of tourists is the desire to achieve (or to maintain) the condition defined by the complex concept of «health». It should be noted that the meaning of the term «health» in modern interpretation is much broader than the generally accepted idea of health as a state of the body, free from diseases, physical defects, and dysfunctions. In the charter of the World Health Organization (WHO), health is defined as «a state of complete physical, spiritual and social well-being, and not only the absence of disease and physical defects» [2].

In foreign literature, the term «health-related tourism» exists to define the direction of tourism aimed at improving health. In addition, both in domestic and foreign scientific literature, regulatory and legal acts, and business practice, a sufficiently large number of terms are used to define the types of activities covered by the concept of «health-related tourism». Among the widespread are health tourism, medical tourism, sanatorium-resort tourism, holistic tourism, medical tourism, wellness tourism, and spa tourism. At the same time, the formal definitions of the above phenomena are often ambiguous, and sometimes even contradictory.

For the general name of the described direction of tourist activity, the most relevant is the term «health tourism». This choice is explained by the fact that this term includes the widest possible range of concepts related to activities related to the provision and consumption of services to improve and preserve health. At the same time, such services are provided outside the usual environment of the individual. It is important that in this context both people with various diseases and clinically healthy people are considered as tourists.

Health tourism as a separate type of tourism is highlighted in the Law of Ukraine «On Tourism» [21], but, unfortunately, the definition of this type is not given in the law. The dominant of this direction of tourism synthesizes two concepts related to health: treatment and recovery. Treatment is a set of measures aimed at alleviating, and eliminating symptoms and manifestations of diagnosed disorders of vital activity, normalizing the disturbed processes of vital activity. Rehabilitation is a complex of effects on the body to improve well-being and strengthen health, which goes beyond the scope of treatment.

Depending on what is the basis of the activity – health improvement or treatment, two types of health tourism are distinguished:

1. Recreational tourism takes place when the goal of improving and ensuring the stability of health characteristics is pursued through non-medical effects on the body. In the case of health tourism, as a rule, it is difficult to single out the main (one or several sequentially connected) manipulations. Consumers of health tourism services, in addition to people with various dysfunctions, and deviations from the norm of health, can also be clinically healthy

individuals. American scientists started a special direction of health tourism – wellness tourism, which aims to improve the general condition of an individual. Per definition by the American physicians Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper («The Father of Aerobics») and Halbert Dunn (approx. in the 1960th). The term «wellness» comes from the fusion of two English words «well-being + fitness» or «well-being + happiness». Lifestyle «wellness» addresses wellbeing, fun, and good physical condition.

2. Medical tourism takes place when the main purpose of the trip is the treatment of diseases and other deviations from the healthy state of the body.

Medical tourism, in turn, is divided into the following types:

- sanatorium-resort tourism, which involves treatment in sanatoriums using medical non-surgical or minimally invasive surgical procedures;
- medical (clinical) tourism, which involves receiving medical services provided outside the patient's usual environment in specialized medical facilities (hospitals, clinics, medical centers). A characteristic feature of medical tourism is the existence of one or more interrelated medical manipulations aimed at the treatment of a specific disease, which is the primary goal of the entire tour.

The latest trend is the combination of medical and wellness tourism and the formation of medical wellness.

According to the Medical Wellness Congress, held in Berlin in the year 2007: «Medical Wellness contains health-scientific accompanying measurements – for the sustainable improvement of life quality and – the individual health sensitivity by the way of – own-responsible prevention and – health support as well as motivation for a self-reliant lifestyle» [14].

So, let's focus on the differences in concepts: Wellness – Medical Wellness – Cure tourism.

- «Wellness» – The guest decides which treatment he/she wishes (consultation by the wellness therapist; maybe after a consultation with a doctor);
- «Medical Wellness» – The guest can choose between general treatment packages/programs with a medical background (after consultation and underlying supervision by a doctor);
- «Cure» – The doctor creates the treatment program for the guest to follow a health target (under-recognition of health aspects).

Products in Medical Wellness:

- Fasting and Nutrition (Schrothkur, Fasting and hiking);
- Antistress, Burnout-Prevention, Regeneration;
- Fit & active (fitness, Yoga, etc.);
- Weight Loss in Holidays;
- Health prevention travels;
- Cures: European Cure, Thalasso, Forest Therapy, Kneipp, Ayurveda, TC;
- Health travels specifically to indications (obesity, diseases of the airways, etc).

It used to be thought that health tourism mostly attracts the older generation, but the trend towards rejuvenation of diseases and the desire of the younger generation to prevent certain

diseases has caused a significant interest of Generation Z in health therapy facilities around the world. In general, Gen Z tends to travel, and today there is an interest in wellness travel.

Among the general features that characterize Gen Z tourists are:

1. The most ethnically diverse generation.
2. Constantly connected – digital natives.
3. Supportive towards hospitality organizations that are doing good.
4. «Ultimate wellness consumers»: holistic health approach.
5. Concerned about the sustainable impacts of tourism.
6. Frequent travelers.
7. Expecting an extraordinary and authentic experience.

Trends of Gen Z tourists are:

1. Workations.
2. Pop culture / Fandom tourism.
3. Instagrammability.
4. Sustainability and environmental awareness.
5. Travel therapy/wellness tourism.
6. Bleisure (Business + Leisure).
7. Solo Travel.
8. The Experience.
9. Authenticity / Uniqueness.
10. Technological Convenience [11; 16].

70% of Gen Zers describe their current state as healthy, despite living through one of the biggest pandemics in our history. Emotional health is at the core of their identity, and a pivotal belief in how they think about health and wellness as a whole.

66% of Gen Zers prefer some sort of in-person experience regarding their health. Gen Zers are spending more time and money on preventative health rather than episodic reasons.

Over half of Gen Zers are using wearables to monitor their health. Of those, over 40% of them want some sort of guidance on making health decisions using the data from their wearables.

Haptic experiences – ones that blend the offline and online experience – will resonate with this generation. Quality of care isn't about concierge services, it's about nurturing relationships. [5]

In our research, we tried to compare the behavior of Ukrainian representatives of Generation Z with the relevant world trends and to clarify the expectations and opinions of Ukrainian Gen Zers regarding health tourism.

To get answers to our questions and expand the understanding of Ukrainian Generation Z, we interviewed students born between 2000 and 2005. 307 people took part in our survey, 78.5% of them were female and 21.5% were male. For the most part, these were students of the Department of Tourism of the Faculty of Geography of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv and their peers: 55.2% of the respondents are currently studying, 39.2% combine study with part-time employment, which is widespread in Ukraine and only 6.6% of respondents work full-time.

The main values of the surveyed Gen Z students are traditional: like family, friendship, and human relations – 50.8% of the respondents. 24.4% of respondents are focused on material wealth and career, and the remaining 24.8% of respondents identified health, peace of mind, and harmony with themselves and the world as their most important values.

In addition to the general characteristics of Generation Z, Ukrainian representatives felt the impact of military operations. Traditional values began to be valued more with the beginning of a full-scale war by 37.8% of respondents, for 15.6% the war had no particular effect on values, and 46.6% of respondents became more nationally conscious.

Ukrainian students spend their free time more conservatively than Gen Zers in Europe. Only 10.7% of respondents like to be in large companies and noisy gatherings, while the main part – 61.2% spend time with loved ones in evening walks around the city. A small percentage of respondents (28%) spend their free time on gadgets, watching videos or movies.

The total time spent on gadgets by the majority of respondents (57.3%) is about 3–6 hours per day. 28.7% spend from 6 to 10 hours in the gadget a day. The smallest part of respondents (14%) use gadgets 2–3 hours a day. However, the respondents are aware of their dependence on gadgets and in the process of recreating (vacation), 86.6% of respondents consider it appropriate to limit their time using gadgets, and only 13.4% would not part with gadgets even during recovery.

Among the surveyed Gen Zers, only 14.7% are actively involved in sports, while the majority of 68.7% are moderately active and 16.6% prefer a passive lifestyle.

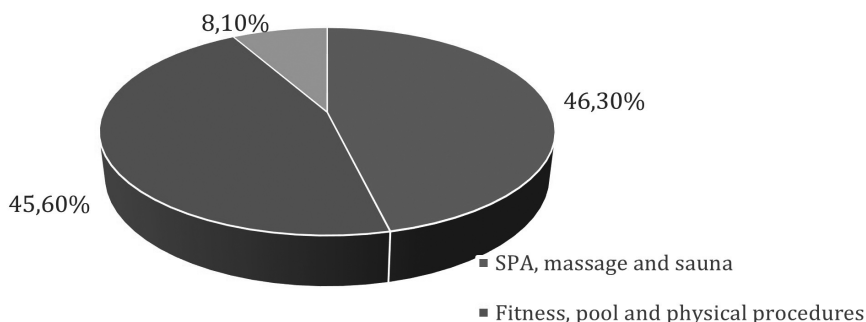
As for nutrition, the surveyed students mostly do not pay much attention to balancing their diet – 60.9%. However, a significant part of respondents who monitor their diet and have a balanced diet stands out – 38.8% of respondents. About 4% of respondents are vegetarians or vegans.

The opinions of respondents regarding the choice of types of health tourism can be combined into three groups of the most common services. The first group includes SPA, massage, and sauna, and these services are provided mainly in all hotels of the highest category and were chosen by 46.3% of respondents. Also very common are the services of the second group (45.6% of respondents): fitness, pool, and physical procedures, which require more expensive equipment and the presence of qualified trainers and are more active and aimed at improving the physical condition of the body. The last group of services requires special natural resources, which are available only in specially designated areas – resorts, and only 8.1% of respondents chose such services (Fig. 1).

The choice of vacation destination among Ukrainian representatives of Generation Z leans towards the sea. The sea coast attracts 57.3% of respondents, 37.8% like to rest actively in the mountains, and about 5% like sanatoriums regardless of where they are located.

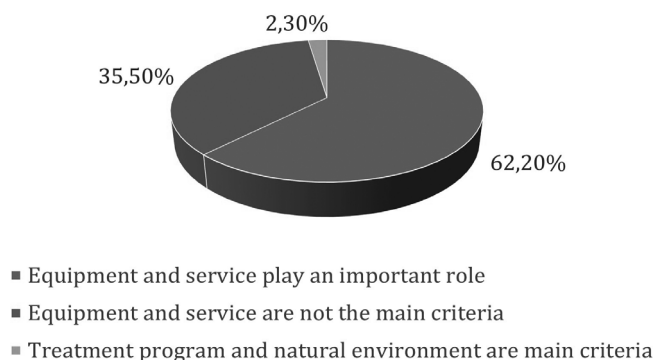
The main criteria for choosing a health resort for the Ukrainian Gen Zers are both the price and the reputation of the establishment, 45% each, and only 10% are interested in the special services provided in this place.

The most important thing for Generation Z is the equipment and service of a health facility – 62.2% of respondents chose this criterion, because they always want to stay online, so the availability of Wi-Fi service is one of the main requirements. Availability of equipment



**Fig. 1. Choice of health tourism types by Ukrainian Generation Z**

and service is not critically important for 35.5% of respondents, but Wi-Fi services must be available. And only 2% are ready to give up all the demands of civilization and focus on the health program (Fig. 2).



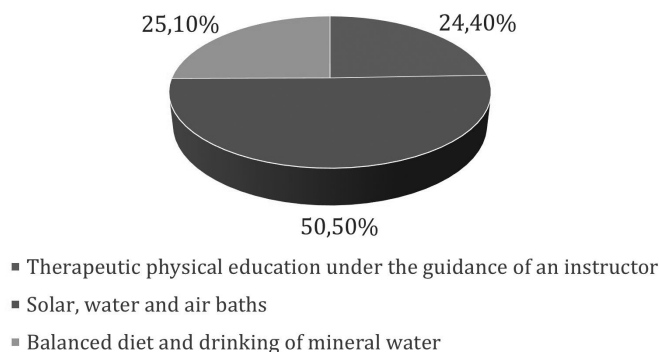
**Fig. 2. Criteria for choosing health facilities by Ukrainian Gen Z**

Regarding the duration of stay in health facilities, the opinion of respondents is inclined to short-term rest: 23.1% want to get better in less than a week, 38.1% of respondents chose one week, and 38.8% – one or two weeks.

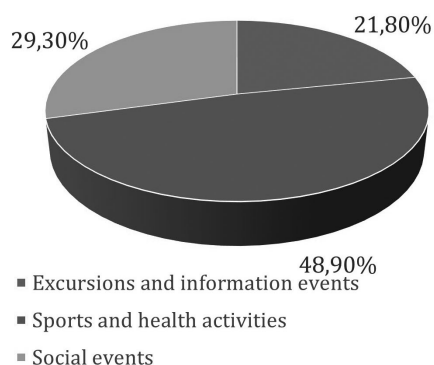
The specific services of the wellness program are of relatively little interest to Gen Z. They prefer just being on the beach and socializing there – 50.5% of responses. 24.4% of respondents are interested in physical exercise under the guidance of an instructor, and 25.1% of respondents are interested in balanced nutrition and drinking mineral water (Fig. 3).

During the wellness program, Gen Z would like to spend time actively: 21.8% of respondents would attend sightseeing and information events, 48.9% – additional sports and wellness events, and 29.3% – social events (Fig. 4).

The vast majority of respondents (62.2%) believe that the ultimate effect of staying in health facilities is an improvement of their mental and emotional state, 28.7% of respondents would like to improve their body and 9.1% would like to restore their ability to work.



**Fig. 3. Choice of health and wellness services by Ukrainian Gen Z**



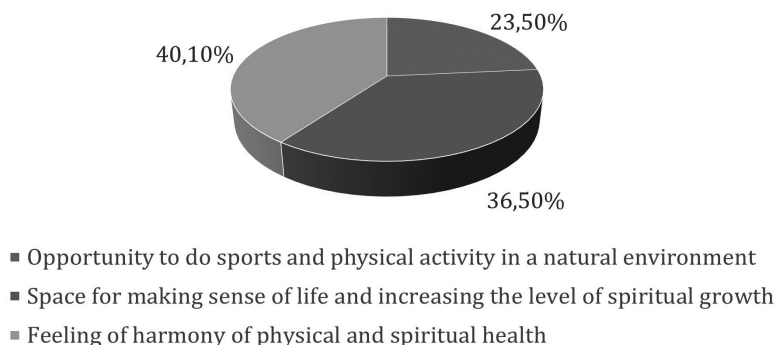
**Fig. 4. Additional activities to the health program**

The main value of health tourism is considered by 40% of Ukrainian Gen Zers to be a sense of harmony between physical and spiritual health, 36.5% – a space to make sense of life and increase the level of spiritual growth, and 23.5% – the opportunity to engage in sports and physical activity in a natural environment (Fig. 5).

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** As a result of the analysis of the questionnaires collected by an online survey among students of the Faculty of Geography born in 2000–2005, we managed to find several extremely valuable conclusions for the further improvement of the functioning of all tourism activities and the field of hospitality, especially for such an important type of tourism as medical and health tourism. Until recently, this type of tourism was considered the exclusive prerogative of the older generation, but the COVID-19 pandemic, and especially the Russian aggression, which provoked the demand for medical and wellness procedures of the younger generation, today presented us with challenges that need to be solved immediately.

The first conclusion concerns classic spas with mineral water pumps, where only the basic needs for vacationers' accommodation are provided. Such classic resorts are not attractive to





**Fig. 5. The value of health tourism for Ukrainian Gen Z**

Generation Z, as only 8% of respondents would choose them. Instead, 46.3% of the respondents would choose special health spa salons with massage rooms, and 45.6% of the respondents would like a fitness room, swimming pool and physical procedures aimed at improving the physical condition of the body. Therefore, the first recommendation for the transformation of traditional resorts is to equip them with additional health infrastructure. According to the processed questionnaires, most representatives of generation Z would choose the seacoast, therefore the priority for the revival of health infrastructure should still be reclaimed coastal territories.

The second conclusion is formed regarding the service of the resorts, which is the most important for generation Z since this generation is very picky about the service. They grew up in better conditions compared to millennials, there was no shortage and lack of certain types of services for them, and the development of the latest technological developments led to a constant need for uninterrupted Internet. Therefore, one of the main requirements is the availability of Wi-Fi service with sufficient speed.

The third conclusion concerns tourism enterprises that develop travel programs for their consumers. Since Generation Z are active people who cannot afford a long-term stay at a resort, it is necessary to develop weekend programs or short-term programs of up to one week, which will be in the greatest demand among them. Such programs should be active, considering that their participants are young people who want to travel, swim on watercraft, fly on aircraft, descend into caves, climb mountains, etc. Therefore, tourism enterprises must provide them with these opportunities and appropriate support.

Therefore, the formed conclusions should be taken into account by representatives of the tourism business at various levels for the gradual improvement of the functioning of such a vital type of tourism as health tourism.

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## ТРЕНДИ ОЗДОРОВЧОГО ТУРИЗМУ: ОЧІКУВАННЯ ТА МОТИВАЦІЯ ПОКОЛІННЯ Z ЗА РЕЗУЛЬТАТАМИ ОПИТУВАННЯ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ СТУДЕНТІВ

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**Анотація.** Дослідження проводилося в рамках проєкту DAAD «The Health Tour», метою якого є обмін педагогічним і дослідницьким досвідом між університетами Німеччини, Угорщини, Хорватії, Грузії, Чехії та України. Проєкт також передбачає взаємне ознайомлення з останніми науковими досягненнями вчених і, як наслідок, реалізацію спільного навчального курсу «Медицинний, оздоровчий та SPA-туризм». Курс викладався для студентів країн-учасниць проєкту, зокрема для здобувачів освітнього ступеня «магістр» освітньо-професійної програми «Туристична діяльність» Львівського національного університету імені Івана Франка у другому семестрі 2022–2023 років. Лекції по чергово читали професори з шести університетів – Будапештського столичного університету (BMU), Каукаського міжнародного університету (CIU), Університету Ріски (UR), Херсонського державного університету (ХДУ), Празького університету економіки та бізнесу (VSE), Львівського національного університету імені Івана Франка (ЛНУ) під егідою Деггендорфського технічного інституту (DIT). Мета курсу відповідала новим тенденціям у сфері туристичних послуг: забезпечити не лише відпочинок туриста, але й можливість покращити його добробут [10]. Курс завершився проведенням Зимової школи з оздоровчого туризму 9–13 жовтня 2023 року в м. Пфарркірхен, Німеччина. У Зимовій школі взяли участь найбільш вмотивовані студенти та викладачі з усіх країн, залучених до проєкту. Участь у проєкті дозволила науковцям протягом тривалого часу спостерігати за поведінкою покоління Z, порівняти особливості їхньої поведінки з представниками інших поколінь, а також виокремити характерні риси представників різних країн всередині покоління. Накопичений емпіричний матеріал та наукові дослідження за допомогою опитування широкого кола українських студентів стали матеріалом для цієї статті. Опрацьовані результати опитування слугуватимуть орієнтирами для представників туристичного бізнесу, адже опитане покоління Z є найбільш кількісним на сьогоднішній день, тому необхідно враховувати його думку для трансформації роботи всієї туристичної галузі.

**Ключові слова:** оздоровчий туризм, велнес, покоління Z, тренди.

*Стаття надійшла до редакції 07.05.2024*

*Прийнята до друку 01.07.2024*