



PREFERENCE AND PARTICIPATION GENERATION Z IN URBAN TOURISM EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the characteristics of Generation Z in terms of their preferences and participation in urban tourism experiences. The study uses a qualitative methodology with a design thinking approach, involving interviews with Generation Z and the DKI Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with tourism stakeholders. In addition, this study includes observation and data collection related to urban tourism, including exploration of tourist destinations, analysis of consumer behavior (especially Generation Z), and strategies for maintaining the sustainability of tourist destinations in the urban area of DKI Jakarta. The author examines the behavior of Generation Z in the context of tourism, preferences for information media, and their level of involvement. Observations of tourism stakeholders were conducted to understand the vision and mission of the DKI Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, strategies for increasing tourism attractiveness for Generation Z, and challenges faced in dealing with consumers from the digital generation. The research questions focused on Generation Z's preferences and participation in urban tourism experiences. The study results show that Generation Z is highly interested in urban tourist destinations, with social media significantly promoting and introducing tourism. In addition, innovation and application of technology are needed to increase the attractiveness of urban tourist destinations, especially for Generation Z. By leveraging innovative technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and gamification, the DKI Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency (Disparekraf DKI Jakarta) can effectively engage.

Keywords: Generation Z, Preference, Participation, Urban Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development is an integral part of national development. Therefore, the objectives of tourism development are based on several things, namely increasing the economy, strengthening identity, advancing national culture, fostering a sense of love for the homeland, and aiming to strengthen national unity and increase brotherhood between nations (Ardika, 2018). Referring to the objectives of tourism development, urban tourism is one type that can support achieving these objectives. According to UNWTO, Urban Tourism is a type of tourism activity that occurs in urban areas with inherent characteristics, characterized by non-agricultural economic sectors such as administration, manufacturing, trade, and services, and functions as a transportation hub. Urban destinations offer a variety of experiences and products in various aspects of culture, architecture, technology, society, and nature, both for recreational and business purposes (UNWTO, 2018).

Urban tourism holds significant potential to drive the socio-economic development of cities and nations, aligning closely with the objectives of the New Urban Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, it supports SDG 8, which emphasizes formulating and implementing sustainable tourism policies that foster job creation, promote local

culture, and enhance local products (Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, 2020). Tourism is inherently interconnected with urban development, influencing and shaping the city's growth while contributing to improved living conditions for residents and visitors. Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in directing urban development strategies and enhancing the overall welfare of stakeholders involved in the tourism ecosystem (UNWTO, 2018).

Urban tourism is a significant driving force for economic and social development in many cities, including DKI Jakarta. The city is evolving into a burgeoning megacity that reflects global urban life. The processes of advancement, transformation, and modernization are positioning Jakarta as a global city while retaining the distinctive cultural identity of Indonesian society. The planned relocation of the national capital to East Kalimantan will unlikely hinder Jakarta's progress. On the contrary, it presents an opportunity for the city to solidify its status as a globally recognized economic hub. Consequently, Jakarta's transformation into a global urban destination is a strategic opportunity to increase domestic and international tourist arrivals (Toana et al., 2023).

Based on the 2017 Indonesian tourist market data (Baharudin et al., 2017), the number of tourists visiting destinations in Indonesia based on age can be seen in Figure 1. Regarding tourist market data (2017), it is shown that the distribution of the number of Indonesian tourist trips based on age is divided into six parts, namely (1) tourists aged under 15 years, as many as 23.23%, (2) tourists aged between 15 - 24 years as many as 15.64%, (3) tourists aged 25 - 34 years as many as 15.18%, (4) tourists aged 35 - 44 years as many as 18.64%, (5) tourists aged 45 - 54 years as many as 15.65% and (6) tourists aged over 54 years as many as 11.66%. Suppose the age of the tourist market listed in the data is connected to the age based on generation (Lusianingrum & Pertiwi., 2022). In that case, it can be concluded that the number of tourist markets from Generation Z (8-23 years) is 38.87%, and the number of tourist markets from the Millennial generation (24-39 years) is 15.18% so when combined the two become 54.04%. Indicates that the Indonesian tourist market in 2017 was dominated by Generation Z and Millennials, namely the digital generation, which had different characteristics and behaviors than the previous generation (Fitri et al., 2023).

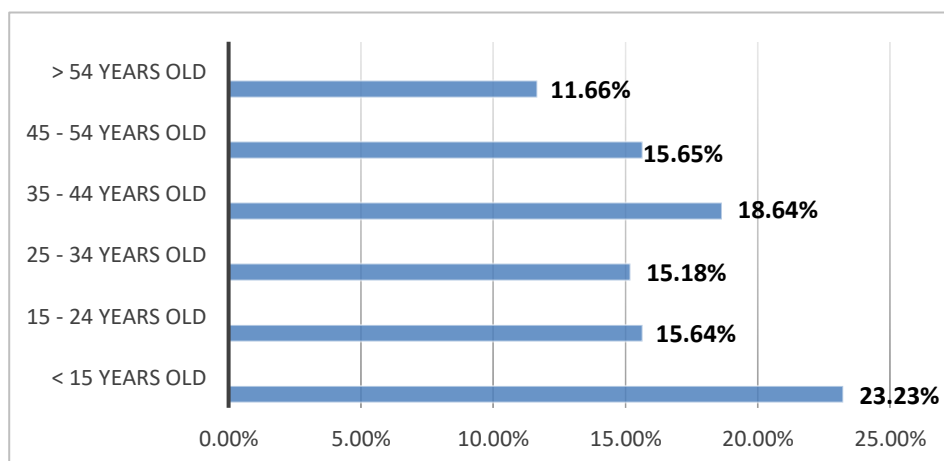


Fig. 1 Distribution of the number of Indonesian tourist trips by age

Aligned with the tourism as mentioned above market data, a 2022 study by the IDN Research Institute on Generation Z in Indonesia revealed that approximately 55% of Generation Z respondents expressed readiness to travel. Their travel preferences predominantly focus on nature-based tourism, culinary experiences, urban tourism, and staycations. Preliminary interviews conducted by the author with Generation Z regarding their preferences and interests in urban tourism indicated a preference for activities such as exploring culinary destinations, visiting museums, attending exhibitions, or simply spending time at shopping malls. This phenomenon reflects not only the growth of the tourism industry but also a shift in consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z, who are expected to play a significant role in shaping the domestic tourism market. While this demographic currently represents a potential segment of domestic tourists, they hold the potential to become active participants in Indonesia's domestic tourism sector. Therefore, understanding and accommodating the preferences and characteristics of this generation are critical for developing effective tourism strategies tailored to their interests. Therefore, understanding this aspect is crucial and will be a key focus of this research.

Based on the details above, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are Generation Z's preferences in tourism experiences?
2. How does Generation Z participate in tourism experiences?
3. What strategies do urban tourism stakeholders employ to communicate urban tourism promotions to Generation Z?

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research methodology utilizing a design thinking approach. Design thinking is an iterative and participatory method (Yassierli et al., 2023). The iterative nature of this approach enables dynamic and responsive development, ensuring that the solutions generated are better aligned with user needs. The research is framed within pragmatism, emphasizing practical, implementable solutions and prioritizing beneficial outcomes. In this context, the goal is to achieve sustainable urban tourism, particularly among Generation Z. The study is flexible and focused on identifying the most effective means to develop models tailored to user needs. Design thinking is an intuitive methodology that integrates engineering, business, design, and social sciences elements, typically within a multidisciplinary team framework. This approach fosters innovation in products or services, enhances customer experiences, and facilitates new consumer communication methods (Pokrzycka, 2018). This research uses the design thinking approach, specifically the empathize stage, to explore Generation Z's preferences and participation in urban tourism experiences.

In the Empathize phase, the researcher conducted observations, data collection, and interviews related to urban tourism and the gamification of the tourism sector. These activities involved both Generation Z and tourism stakeholders. The observations and data collection on urban tourism encompassed the exploration of tourist destinations, consumer behavior (particularly Generation Z),

and efforts to ensure the sustainability of urban tourism sites, with a focus on the metropolitan area of DKI Jakarta. During this phase, the researcher also examined the behavior of Generation Z, both in general and specifically within the context of urban tourism in Jakarta. It included their preferred information channels, interest in games, knowledge of gaming, and level of engagement with gamification elements. Simultaneously, observations and data collection related to tourism stakeholders in Jakarta were carried out to understand the vision and mission of the DKI Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency in developing urban tourism. It also included identifying strategies to enhance the appeal of urban tourism for Generation Z and addressing the challenges posed by the digital-savvy consumer base.

The researcher employed purposive sampling to determine the study sample. This method involves selecting participants based on predefined criteria relevant to specific research questions (Wahyuni, 2023). The criteria for Generation Z participants included individuals aged 18–23 years residing in DKI Jakarta. Meanwhile, participants representing tourism stakeholders were drawn from the DKI Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency. The selected informants for participation in the study are as follows:

Table 1 Informant Data

No	Participants	Criteria	Rationale	Question criteria
1.	Gen Z's	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Age in 18 – 23 years old 2. Student 3. Residing in Jakarta 	Gen Z participants became the research subjects to further explore urban tourism behavior patterns, presenting tourism themes with an immersive approach.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gen Z's interest in urban tourism 2. Gen Z's tendencies in urban tourism
2.	Stakeholders related to the tourism industry: Department of Tourism and Creative Economy of DKI Jakarta Province	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Head of Research and Development Sub-Group 2. Research and Development Processor 3. Research and Development Administrator 4. Tourist Informant Center Officer (Digital Media) 	Tourism stakeholders from the DKI Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency have the authority to provide perspectives on the future of urban tourism, focusing on Generation Z visitors and the media used to attract Gen Z as tourists.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The future of urban tourism 2. Gen Z as city tourism visitors 3. Media and channels used in promoting city tourism

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Urban tourism, characterized by a concentration of non-agricultural sectors and serving as transportation hubs, offers diverse experiences, from cultural heritage and events to contemporary attractions. As cities evolve into complex systems, they present unique opportunities for tourism development. Urban tourism aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

particularly SDG 11, fostering inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements. Given the significant demographic shift, with Gen Z constituting a substantial portion of Jakarta's population, understanding their preferences and behaviors is crucial for sustainable urban tourism. This generation, deeply connected to technology and social media, exhibits distinct characteristics that align well with gamification and digital experiences. By leveraging these traits, policymakers can create engaging and immersive tourism experiences. Integrating gamification into urban tourism presents a promising avenue for attracting and retaining Gen Z tourists. Gamified experiences can enhance visitor satisfaction, foster a sense of community, and promote sustainable tourism practices. By aligning tourism initiatives with Gen Z's digital preferences and social values, Jakarta can position itself as a leading sustainable urban tourism destination. The research findings are comprehensively depicted in Figure 2.

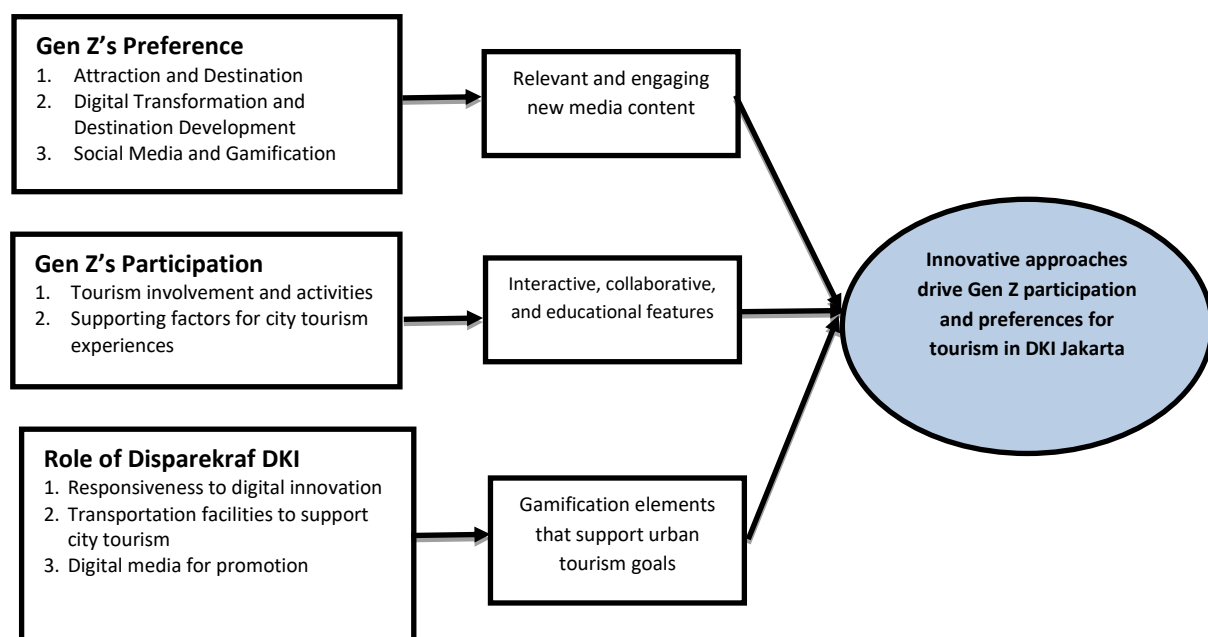


Figure 2. Innovative approaches drive Gen Z participation and preferences in urban tourism

Gen Z's Preference in Urban Tourism

Unique attractions, digital influence, and experiential desires drive Gen Z's urban tourism preferences in DKI Jakarta. Popular destinations include malls, theme parks (Dufan, Atlantis Water Adventure), and modern spaces like M Bloc and Pos Bloc. Cultural sites like Taman Mini Indonesia Indah and museums with AR features also attract Gen Z. Island getaways, particularly Pulau Bidadari and Pulau Onrust, which are less frequent but still sought. Culinary experiences are a significant part of Gen Z's tourism, with a preference for unique cafes and restaurants influenced by social media. Night rides around the city center, especially in areas like Semanggi and Senayan, are popular for Gen Z. To cater to Gen Z's preferences effectively, urban destinations must prioritize unique, authentic experiences and integrate technology to enhance the overall tourism experience. This destination map can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Gen Z's appeal and preferences for urban tourism

The digital age has significantly transformed urban tourism, particularly for Gen Z. This generation's evolving preferences and technological advancements have created a unique landscape where digital experiences and physical destinations converge. Our research involves interviews with Gen Z individuals and the Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency. Gamification and immersive technologies, such as augmented and virtual reality, have emerged as key strategies to engage Gen Z travelers. By integrating game-like elements into tourism experiences, destinations can enhance visitor engagement, promote local economies, and create memorable experiences. Game developers highlight the importance of high-quality graphics, immersive technologies, compelling narratives, and social interaction features in designing successful tourism-themed games. While Indonesia has yet to fully capitalize on this trend, neighboring countries like Singapore have demonstrated the potential of gamified tourism. As Gen Z continues to seek novel and technologically-driven experiences, integrating digital elements into urban tourism offers a promising avenue for destinations to cater to their unique preferences and drive sustainable growth. This result can be seen in Figure 3.

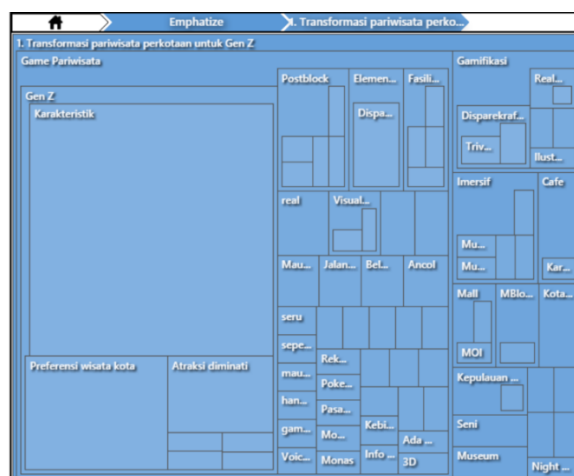


Figure 3 Urban tourism transformation findings for Gen Z

Gen Z's preferences significantly influence urban tourism strategies. Their affinity for technology, unique experiences, and social interactions necessitates innovative approaches. Our research indicates that leveraging social media, promoting sports tourism, and developing tourism-themed games can effectively engage this demographic. Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are crucial in shaping travel trends and influencing Gen Z's decision-making. Additionally, integrating gaming into tourism experiences offers a promising avenue, with game developers expressing confidence in creating engaging and immersive tourism-themed games. Government support, as exemplified by policies like Indonesia's Regulation No. 19 of 2024, further facilitates the development of the gaming industry and aligns with the growing interest in tourism-themed games among Gen Z. This result can be seen based on Figure 4.

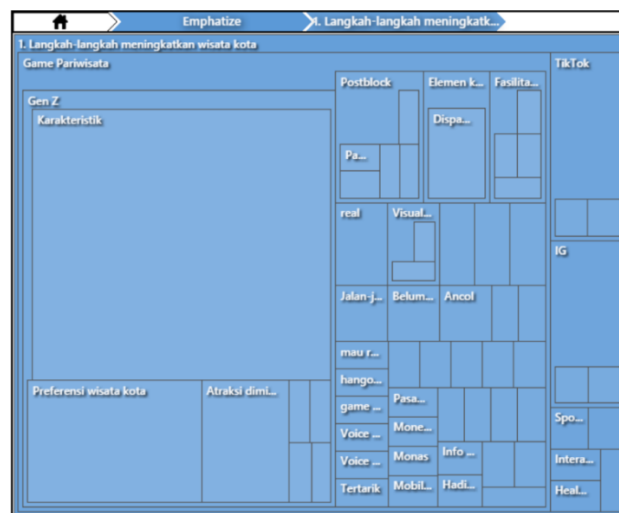


Figure 4 Findings on urban tourism enhancement strategies that appeal to Gen Z

Gen Z Participation in Urban Tourism Experiences

Social media profoundly shapes Gen Z's urban tourism experiences in DKI Jakarta. These platforms are primary tools for information gathering, planning, and sharing. Gen Z utilizes platforms like Instagram and TikTok to discover destinations, read reviews, and seek recommendations from peers. The visual nature of these platforms, emphasizing aesthetics and unique experiences, aligns with Gen Z's preferences in urban tourism. Moreover, social media facilitates user interactions, fostering community and influencing travel decisions. By leveraging social media, Gen Z actively participates in co-creating tourism experiences and influencing tourism trends. This result can be seen in Figure 5.



Figure 5 Findings on the role of social media in urban tourism experiences for Gen

Gen Z's participation in DKI Jakarta's urban tourism is multifaceted, driven by spontaneous exploration and intentional planning. Their motivations extend beyond mere recreation, encompassing the desire for novel experiences, social interaction, and self-expression. Social media is pivotal in shaping their travel decisions, from discovering destinations to sharing experiences. The frequency of their urban escapades varies based on individual preferences and constraints, but overall, Gen Z exhibits a strong inclination toward urban exploration. Their participation in tourism is not merely consumptive; it is a form of active engagement contributing to the city's cultural landscape. This result can be seen in Figure 6.

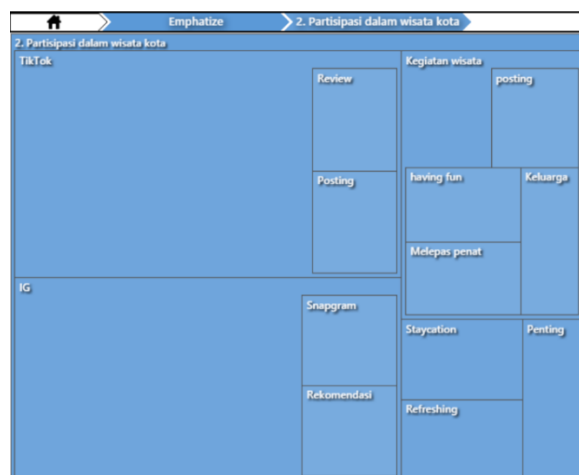


Figure 6 Findings on Gen Z involvement and participation in urban tourism

Various factors, including the diversity of urban destinations, the influence of digital platforms, and the incorporation of innovative technologies, shape Gen Z's urban tourism experiences in DKI Jakarta. The city's vibrant culinary scene, particularly Instagram-worthy cafes, and the availability of public spaces cater to Gen Z's social and aesthetic preferences. Technological advancements, such as mobile applications and social media platforms, facilitate information gathering, planning, and sharing experiences. Moreover, government initiatives, including developing tourism-themed games

and integrating technology into urban planning, enhance the overall tourism experience. Continued efforts are needed to attract Gen Z further to address safety concerns, maintain cleanliness, and create more engaging and interactive experiences. This result can be seen in Figure 7.

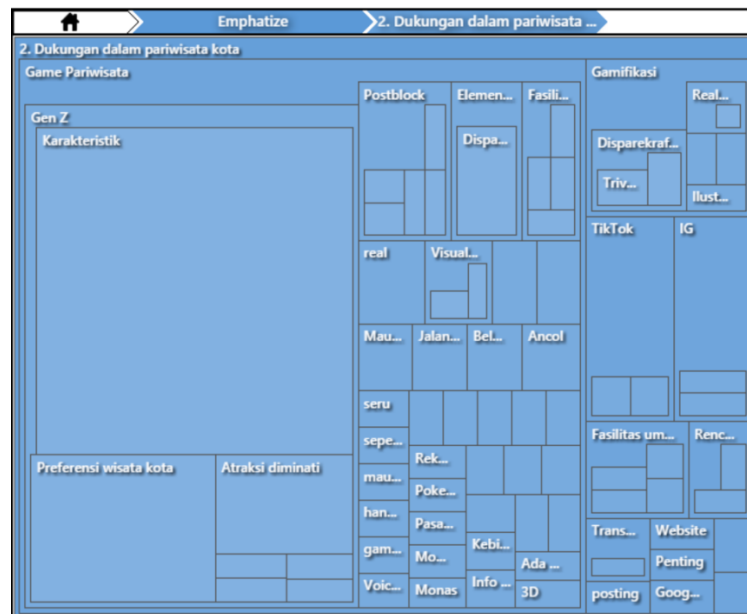


Figure 7 Findings of factors that support urban tourism experiences for Gen Z

Approaches implemented by the DKI Tourism and Creative Economy Agency (Disparekraf DKI) and the central government to disseminate information about urban tourism to Gen Z

To cater to Gen Z's digital-first preferences, the Disparekraf DKI has implemented innovative strategies, including developing the Djaki app and gamification initiatives. Djaki, a mobile application, offers real-time public transportation information, enhancing tourist accessibility. Furthermore, the agency has integrated gamification elements into its marketing campaigns, such as the "Tangkap Tangan Ondel-model" Instagram game, to foster engagement and promote tourism destinations in a fun and interactive manner. These efforts align with the central government's broader digitalization policy in the tourism sector, as outlined in Regulation No. 19 of 2024, which emphasizes the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy's role in driving digital innovation.

Disparekraf DKI Jakarta has implemented various innovative digital marketing strategies to anticipate the digital trends favored by Gen Z. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X as the main communication channels have enabled the agency to reach audiences effectively. Through engaging visual content, such as reels, stories, travel guide videos, and relevant hashtags, Disparekraf has succeeded in creating high engagement among Gen Z. In addition, collaboration with influencers and community-based campaigns have strengthened Jakarta's position as an attractive tourist destination for the younger generation.

The Disparekraf DKI is undertaking a multifaceted approach to bolster Jakarta's urban tourism appeal among Gen Z. By expanding the functionalities of the Djaki app to include e-commerce

features, the agency aims to streamline the travel experience for this digitally-native generation. Furthermore, the Disparekraf is cultivating partnerships with local communities to create more authentic and engaging promotional campaigns. The development of diverse tourism segments, including culinary tourism, recreational activities, and health tourism, is intended to offer a wider range of experiences tailored to Gen Z's interests. This result can be seen in Figure 8.

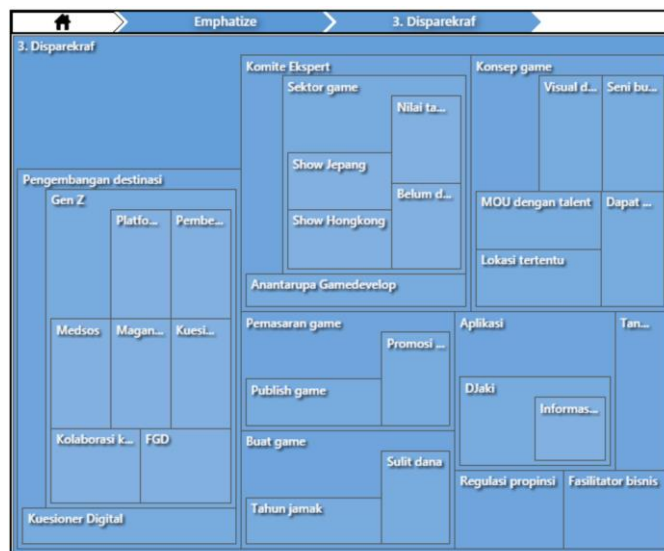


Figure 8

Findings of the DKI Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency's (DKI Jakarta) Steps in Communicating Urban Tourism Promotion to Gen Z

CONCLUSION

Generation Z, a cohort deeply immersed in digital technology, strongly prefers unique and interactive experiences. Social media platforms significantly influence their decision-making processes, with reviews and recommendations crucial in shaping their travel choices. By leveraging innovative technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and gamification, the DKI Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency (Disparekraf DKI Jakarta) can effectively engage this generation. AR-powered experiences can enhance the appeal of historical sites and cultural attractions, while gamification can transform mundane activities into exciting quests. By incorporating these elements into urban tourism, Jakarta can solidify its position as a dynamic and engaging destination for the digital age.

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