

Conjoint Analysis on Millennials' Choice of Tourist Destination

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of social media on millennials' preferences for tourist destinations using a two-phase mixed-method approach and conjoint analysis. The qualitative phase identified key destination attributes—price, location, safety and security, perceived value, and online reviews—based on insights from millennial travelers.

The quantitative phase involved 250 graduating students from Urdaneta City University and used metric conjoint analysis to evaluate the relative importance of these attributes. Findings reveal that online reviews and social media presence hold the highest utility in destination selection, followed by perceived value and safety. Millennials tend to rely heavily on digital content and peer-generated information when making travel decisions. Theoretical frameworks such as Cue Utilization Theory, Social Proof Theory, Diffusion of Innovation, and Cognitive Dissonance Theory guided the interpretation of results. The study also explores trade-offs millennials make between different destination attributes, showing that while price remains significant, digital visibility and perceived experiences often outweigh traditional factors. These insights provide strategic implications for tourism marketers aiming to appeal to the millennial demographic

Keyword: - social, media, destination, approach, attributes ,millienial, tour

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Evans et al. (2021), social media is an online communication platform that allows users to share ideas and opinions as well as get information. Social media is a big part of people's everyday life these days, especially for the younger generation. Social media has had a big impact on almost every major industry in the globe, but the travel and hospitality sectors have profited from it more than any other. Many people use social media platforms to find holiday destinations, where they can read positive evaluations from past travellers. The most trustworthy kind of advertising is earned media, like referrals from friends and family.

Gabrielova (2021) asserts that the term "millennials" typically refers to the group of people who were born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. Millennials are those who were born into the first digital era, especially in terms of technology and social media. Millennials were raised in a technologically dependent society that was increasingly online and socially connected, as demonstrated by Prakash and Tiwari (2021). They are the group that marketers have focused on the most. They are frequently tolerant of differences because they are the generation with the greatest cultural diversity. The Millennial age is confident and outspoken about their perceptions, and they use social media to express their views and thoughts (Chatzopoulou, 2021)

Additionally, user-generated content has a significant impact on millennials' perceptions of potential travel destinations. Sincere posts from other tourists provide a more trustworthy and relatable perspective than standard advertising, which could be perceived as biased. Millennials perceive user-generated content to be a very useful tool when making decisions since they are inclined to trust suggestions from peers and influencers. For instance, social

media influencers and travel bloggers usually discuss their experiences visiting various locations and offer insights on the local cuisine, attractions, and way of life. This authenticity appeals to millennials, who are searching for real experiences that align with their values. Social media makes travellers feel closer to one another. (Hamid et.al, 2022) Through websites like Facebook groups or travel forums, millennials may engage with others who share their interests. Opportunities for collaboration and experience sharing may result from this. This community element might influence their travel choices because recommendations from like-minded individuals are often more reliable than conventional advertising. Millennials' travel preferences are generally greatly influenced by social media. Through community interaction, real-time recommendations, authentic information, and visual inspiration, it informs their trip planning and enhances their overall experience. As this generation continues to embrace digital connectivity, social media's impact on travel decisions is likely to grow, further connecting technology and travel in general.

One of the major drawbacks of using social media for travel planning is the tendency for it to create inflated expectations (Yuan et al., 2022). Much of the content shared on these platforms particularly by influencers is often curated to portray idealized versions of destinations. These carefully crafted visuals and narratives can distort travelers' perceptions, making it difficult to distinguish between authentic experiences and marketing strategies. As a result, millennials may arrive at a destination expecting it to match the glamorous imagery they have seen online, only to be disappointed when reality falls short. This gap between expectation and reality can diminish the overall quality of the travel experience.

Another pressing issue is over-tourism, which has been significantly intensified by the viral nature of social media content (Gretzel 2021). Popular destinations frequently featured in trending hashtags attract large crowds of tourists aiming to replicate the images and experiences showcased online. This surge in visitors can overwhelm local infrastructure, disrupt communities, and harm the environment. Ironically, in their pursuit of unique and memorable adventures, millennials may inadvertently contribute to the degradation of the very places they wish to enjoy. Social media also encourages a focus on fleeting, surface-level experiences rather than meaningful cultural engagement. In their desire to keep up with online trends, millennials may prioritize capturing "Instagram-worthy" moments over developing a genuine connection with local cultures and communities. The pressure to document and share visually appealing content can lead travelers to favor tourist traps over more authentic, immersive encounters, ultimately diluting the depth of their travel experiences. Moreover, the vast amount of travel-related content on social media can lead to information overload (Butler, 2022). The overwhelming number of reviews, recommendations, and itineraries can create confusion and anxiety, making it difficult for travelers to make informed decisions. This oversaturation of information may dampen the excitement of planning a trip and reduce the spontaneity that often characterizes enjoyable travel. This practice supports the theory of cue utilization, as described in grounded theory by Konuk (2021), and involves social creativity where individuals transform fleeting experiences and interactions into tangible, meaningful expressions of social connection.

In Pangasinan, visual inspiration plays a key role in influencing millennials' travel choices. Instagram's image-centric platform allows users to share stunning photographs of destinations such as Patapat Beach and the Hundred Islands in Alaminos. Research suggests that visually appealing content can evoke strong emotional responses, encouraging users to consider visiting featured locations. The idyllic scenes of crystal-clear waters and picturesque landscapes not only inspire wanderlust but also strongly influence millennials' vacation planning.

Another critical influence on millennials' travel decisions is user-generated content, including endorsements by social media influencers (Arreza, 2021). Influencers and local travel bloggers often promote both well-known and hidden gems in Pangasinan highlighting activities like kayaking in the Hundred Islands or exploring the caves of Bolinao. Their curated experiences, aligned with the interests of their audiences, can significantly shape travel preferences. Through the use of hashtags such as #Pangasinan or #VisitPangasinan, millennials can easily access a wealth of firsthand experiences, which inform and influence their travel choices. In many cases, these influencers also provide insights into local cultures and lifestyles, enhancing the sense of connection to the destination.

The researcher chose this topic due to a strong interest in how social media shapes the travel preferences of millennials. Today, a significant portion of the millennial generation is actively engaged in travel, often embracing adventure and sharing their journeys on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter—thus inspiring others to visit the same places. Another objective of this study is to examine how millennials contribute to the growth of the

tourism industry. The researcher seeks to identify the elements of travel that millennials find most fulfilling and to explore how they use social media both to document their experiences and to promote destinations. As a member of the millennial generation, the researcher is personally motivated to understand how travel aspirations influence the tourism industry and the effectiveness of social media in promoting destinations. Additionally, the study aims to uncover what factors drive the industry's use of particular platforms to reach this influential demographic.

2. METHODOLOGY

Using conjoint analysis, this study conducts an exploratory investigation into the characteristics of millennials' preferred travel destinations. There are two stages to the investigation. Phase 2 employs quantitative techniques, whereas Phase 1 takes a qualitative approach. The primary purpose of the qualitative method is to ascertain the characteristics of millennials' travel destinations, and it provided the foundation for the development of the data collection instrument in the quantitative stage. The relevance weights for the features of the tourist location were established using the quantitative approach of analysis.

According to Bansak (2021) one component of designing the conjoint experiment is specifying the basic model form. For conjoint analysis, the analyst must make two key decisions regarding the conjoint model: first, selecting the composition rule; and second, selecting the part-worth relationship to explain the respondent's preference from the overall evaluations of a set of stimuli. The composition rule describes how the respondent combines the part-worth of the factors to obtain the overall worth. There are two composition rules that may be considered, the additive model and the interactive model. The additive model is the most common, basic composition rule; it simply "adds up" the values for each attribute (the part-worth) to get the total value for a combination of attributes. The interactive model differs from the additive model for it allows certain combinations of levels to be more or less than the sum.

Selecting a part-worth relationship focused on how the levels of a factor are related. There are three types of part-worth relationships to select from: First is the linear model which is the simplest yet the most restricted form wherein only a single part-worth is estimated (similar to regression coefficient) that is multiplied by the level's value. Second, the quadratic model - the ideal model, in which assumption of strict linearity is relaxed and curvilinear relationship, is established. Third is the part-worth model, the most general model that allows each level to have its own part-worth. This study used the linear model where a single part-worth is estimated from the responses of each millennials to measure their preferred tourist destination.

3. RESULTS

In qualitative phase, travellers base their choices on a number of criteria, each of which has varying degrees of influence. According to the study, the most important aspect is online reviews (24%), which are followed by safety (22%), price (20%), perceived value (18%), and location (16%). These results imply that although conventional elements like cost and location are still significant, current travellers' decision-making is significantly more influenced by digital factors and security concerns.

3.1 Online Reviews

With 12 or 24% of travellers stating it as their top concern, it is the most important aspect in deciding where to go. When assessing places in the digital age, tourists are depending more and more on user-generated content from websites like TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, and social media. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has a big impact on customer expectations and decision-making, claims Maia et.al (2022). Reviews influence prospective travellers' opinions before they even reach a destination by offering insights about the calibre of services, activities, lodging, and the entire visitor experience.

3.2 Safety

It is the second most influential factor, with 11 or 22% of tourists prioritizing it when choosing a destination. This finding aligns with global tourism trends, where perceived security risks significantly impact travel

behavior. According to Chen et.al (2022) travelers are risk-averse and avoid destinations perceived as unsafe due to concerns about crime, political instability, health hazards, and natural disasters.

In recent years, safety concerns have expanded to include health security due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourists now prioritize destinations that offer strict hygiene measures, reliable healthcare infrastructure, and transparent communication about safety protocols (Sohail et.al, 2023). Moreover, destinations that implement visible security measures, such as police presence, emergency response systems, and clear safety guidelines, are more likely to attract tourists.

3.3 Price

Ten travellers cited cost as one of their primary criteria, suggesting that affordability is still a key consideration when making trip plans. Budget-conscious tourists give priority to low-cost travel options, such as reasonably priced lodging, cheap flights, and inexpensive tourist sites, claims Cheremynkh (2022)

3.4 Perceived Value

With a frequency of 9 or 18%, perceived value came in fourth place, closely tied to price, indicating that travellers evaluate their return on investment while planning their trips. Perceived value, according to Watanabe et.al (2020), is the equilibrium between experience quality and cost. If visitors feel they are getting outstanding service, cultural enrichment, or unforgettable experiences, they are willing to spend more.

3.5 Location

With a frequency of 8 or 16%, it is the least important consideration for visitors, indicating that accessibility or geographic closeness by itself is insufficient to affect travel choices. Convenience is crucial, but other considerations like pricing, safety, and internet reviews are more significant. This is consistent with research by Da Mota (2020) which shows that if a place offers captivating sights, first-rate service, or distinctive cultural experiences, tourists are willing to pay more and travel farther.

Table 1: Frequency count of the qualitative result

Choices of Tourist Destination	Frequency	Percent
Price	10	20
Location	8	16
Safety	11	22
Perceived Value	9	18
Online Reviews	12	24
Total	50	100

Table 2: Attributes that the Millennial Consider in their Choices of Tourists Destinations by Profile

	Profile	Price	Location	Safety	PValue	Online
Age	25-30	20.14	19.2	20.3	20.11	20.25
	31-35	19.71	19.57	20.71	19.57	20.45
	36-40	19.17	19.47	19.63	19.98	21.7
	41-45	19.86	19.36	18.65	20.07	22.06
Gender	Male	20.11	19.38	20.12	19.46	20.58
	Female	19.68	19.94	20.27	19.29	20.82

Monthly Income	Below 10,000	20.14	19.76	19.78	19.96	20.32
	10,001-30,000	19.88	20.01	19.33	20.05	20.73
	30,001-40,000	19.29	19.18	20.94	20.77	19.82
	40,001 & above	19.84	19.87	19.34	20.21	20.75
Frequency of Travel	Rarely	19.65	19.38	19.59	19.68	21.72
	Occasionally	19.95	18.11	19.63	19.95	22.36
	Frequently	20.03	19.63	20.63	19.96	19.74

According to Table 2, younger travelers especially those between the ages of 25 and 30 and 31 and 35, place a high value on online presence (20.25 and 20.45, respectively) and safety (20.3 and 20.71, respectively). This implies that younger tourists are more likely to be wary and favour locations with a solid security record, as well as rely significantly on internet channels for information. This behavior is consistent with research showing that younger consumers are more likely to use online platforms to assess travel options and have greater levels of digital literacy (Nguyen & Hall, 2020).

The 36–40 and 41–45 age groups, on the other hand, indicate a minor decrease in the emphasis on safety while displaying a more marked preference for online presence (21.7 and 22.06, respectively). This implies that rather than safety concerns, older millennials—who may have greater travel experience—rely more on internet evaluations and digital marketing. This pattern is in line with earlier studies showing that seasoned tourists are more assured of their capacity to evaluate dangers, which causes them to prioritise accessibility and comfort (Kim, 2021).

As seen by the different priorities of male and female travellers, gender significantly influences travel preferences. While men place somewhat more weight on pricing (20.11), women place a higher priority on safety (20.27) and online presence (20.82). This implies that women are more risk cautious when selecting travel destinations, supporting research showing that female travellers are more inclined to look for security information and use social proof like internet reviews to support their selections (Tessin et.al, 2022). The criteria that millennials take into account when selecting travel destinations are also influenced by their monthly income level. The choices of millennials with incomes under \$10,000 are evenly distributed, with safety (19.78) and online presence (20.32) scoring somewhat higher. This suggests that while lower-income travellers still place a higher priority on security and digital accessibility, their financial constraints cause them to balance all variables more equally.

Online presence (20.73) continues to be the top priority among millennials making between \$10,001 and \$30,000, while safety (19.33) is given less weight. This may indicate that middle-class tourists prioritise well-marketed and easily accessible online locations because they are more assured of their capacity to evaluate dangers. The highest emphasis on safety (20.94) is shown by individuals making between \$30,001 and \$40,000, suggesting that having money enables travellers to put safe destinations ahead of price. This pattern is in line with research showing that consumers value comfort and safety more when their disposable income rises (Shen et al, 2020).

It's interesting to note that those in the highest income bracket—those making \$40,001 and more—continue to place a high value on their internet presence (20.75), despite placing a more balanced focus on other qualities. In line with earlier studies that emphasise the value of digital marketing in drawing in high-income clients, this shows that wealthy tourists depend on digital platforms to guarantee convenience and simplicity of planning. In a similar vein, infrequent travellers prioritise their online presence the most (22.36) and place the least significance on location (18.11). This implies that occasional travellers are more interested in a destination's online reputation than in its actual accessibility. Their behavior aligns with research indicating that social media and online travel agencies significantly influence the travel choices of infrequent travelers (Amin et.al, 2021).

Lastly, price (20.03) and safety (20.63) are given precedence over other considerations by travellers, suggesting a more practical and economical method of making travel decisions. This implies that seasoned tourists

make well-informed decisions based on prior encounters rather than mainly depending on internet resources. Studies demonstrating that frequent travellers gradually form their own tastes and depend less on digital recommendations lend credence to this behaviour (Chaudhari, 2020)

4. CONCLUSIONS

Millennials consider a range of attributes when selecting tourist destinations, with particular emphasis on factors that align with their values, lifestyle, and digital engagement habits. The key attributes identified in the study include online reviews, safety and security, price, perceived value, and location. Among these, online reviews stand out as the most influential factor, underscoring the powerful impact of digital content and user-generated feedback in shaping travel preferences. This finding reflects the growing trust millennials place in peer opinions and online platforms when evaluating travel options.

Safety and security rank as the second most important consideration, revealing millennials' heightened awareness of personal well-being, especially in unfamiliar environments. This is particularly evident among female travelers and those who travel frequently, for whom safety is a non-negotiable aspect of destination choice.

While price remains a practical concern, it is closely linked with perceived value. The study reveals that millennials are not solely driven by cost; rather, they are willing to invest more in destinations that promise meaningful, authentic, and enriching experiences. This shift from cost-consciousness to value-consciousness indicates that millennials prioritize the overall experience and emotional return on investment over budget constraints.

Interestingly, location emerged as the least influential factor among the five. This suggests that geographical proximity, convenience, or even destination familiarity are becoming less critical in comparison to factors like online visibility, experiential appeal, and digital storytelling.

When analyzing the utility weights assigned to each attribute, online presence received the highest average weight at 25%, followed by perceived value (21%), safety (19%), price (18%), and location (17%). These percentages reflect the relative importance millennials attach to each factor during the decision-making process. The dominant weight assigned to online presence confirms the central role of digital marketing, reviews, and social media engagement in capturing millennial attention. The strong emphasis on perceived value also highlights a generation that evaluates destinations not merely on affordability but on the richness and uniqueness of the experience offered. Though price and location still hold relevance, their comparatively lower weight suggests that millennials are increasingly seeking personalized, high-impact travel experiences, often influenced more by what they see and hear online than by physical distance or cost alone.

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