

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM THROUGH FASHION RENTALS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON INDIAN MILLENNIALS PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Post-pandemic, the trend towards travel has returned strongly. Many are taking “revenge travel” to cover up the loss of vacation after being restricted to the four walls of their homes during the lockdown for two years. However, there is a shift in the mindset of travellers. They want to travel light, wear a variety of destination-specific clothes different from day-to-day wear, and pack sustainably. Considering the upsurge in global mobility, the trend to travel without the burden of carrying heavy baggage, and the growing consciousness to reduce carbon footprints on the planet, some of the popular rental firms have expanded their collections to include travel fashion. Largely global travellers are millennials, aged 18 to 35, who take an average of 5.6 journeys per year, indicating that they represent a promising market segment for travel apparel. A significant proportion of millennial travellers identified “travel planning” as one of their primary sources of stress, according to a study. However, they are most open to the idea of renting, with apparel being the third most popular category. Most studies on rental fashion focus on Millennials, primarily in categories such as luxury, executive wear, or everyday clothing. To date, there has been a lack of substantial research on travel fashion rentals. Hence, it is imperative to get a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives held by millennials regarding rental travel fashion and to discern the diverse aspects that impact its acceptance within this demographic. To achieve this purpose, the present study uncovers the motivations and risks perceived by millennials when adopting fashion rentals for sustainable travel practises. The study adopts a qualitative research technique and utilises in-depth interviews as the primary method for data collection until thematic saturation is achieved. Thematic analysis, supported by NVivo 12 software, is used to analyse the collected data from a sample of 26 individuals from the millennial generation in India. The findings reveal seven distinct themes that indicate perceived motivations to rent travel fashion, including eco-friendly travel, trying new trends, reasonable cost, personalised styles, supporting local economies, convenience, and social visibility. Likewise, seven themes indicating the perceived risks comprised product failure, time risk, monetary risk, contamination, loss of uniqueness, data privacy risk, and merchandise inaccessibility. The research findings will provide a substantial contribution to the existing scholarly literature on fashion rentals and their relevance to sustainable tourism, offering vital insights for policymakers, fashion marketers, and researchers alike. From a managerial standpoint, fashion marketers can develop targeted strategies for travel enthusiasts interested in fostering sustainable travel behaviours among Indian Millennials. From a scholarly perspective, the current study holds the potential to provide significant insights for future research endeavours focused on exploring cross-cultural variances.