



E-ISSN: 2706-9591

P-ISSN: 2706-9583

[www.tourismjournal.net](http://www.tourismjournal.net)

IJTHM 2025; 7(2): 10-13

Received: 14-04-2025

Accepted: 16-05-2025

**Amor B Jangao**

College of Hospitality  
Education, University of  
Mindanao, Davao City,  
Mindanao, Philippines

**Abigail B Betonio**

College of Hospitality  
Education, University of  
Mindanao, Davao City,  
Mindanao, Philippines

**Ishii Q Harumi**

College of Hospitality  
Education, University of  
Mindanao, Davao City,  
Mindanao, Philippines

**Patrice Micah Ellah B Llanda**

College of Hospitality  
Education, University of  
Mindanao, Davao City,  
Mindanao, Philippines

**Corresponding Author:**

**Amor B Jangao**

College of Hospitality  
Education, University of  
Mindanao, Davao City,  
Mindanao, Philippines

## Sustainable tourism: Exploring the behavior and travel preferences of millenials

**Amor B Jangao, Abigail B Betonio, Ishii Q Harumi and Patrice Micah Ellah B Llanda**

**DOI:** <https://www.doi.org/10.22271/27069583.2025.v7.i2a.157>

### Abstract

Tourism undeniably is considered a major contributor to global economic activity; however, it faces pressure to adopt sustainable practices. Millennials, a key tourism demographic, are seen as eco-conscious, yet their actual behaviors toward sustainable tourism remain underexplored. This study examined the relationship between sustainability attitudes and travel preferences of millennials in Davao City using a survey of 400 respondents. Findings revealed high awareness of economic sustainability, moderate awareness of environmental sustainability, and low awareness of sociocultural aspects. Promotions were the top factor influencing travel decisions, followed by accommodation and service. A significant positive correlation was found between sustainable behavior and travel preferences, indicating that millennials prefer travel options aligned with sustainable values. The study recommends leveraging digital marketing, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content, and integrating sociocultural elements into tourism campaigns. These strategies is hoped to enhance awareness and better align tourism offerings with millennial values, ultimately promoting sustainable tourism in Davao City.

**Keywords:** Sustainable tourism, tourist behavior, millennial travelers, eco-conscious travel

### Introduction

Sustainability in tourism has become an increasingly important topic. Millennials are at the forefront of shaping modern travel trends being the generation who grew up during the dawn of the internet and personal computers estimated born from 1981 through 1996. There are an estimated 1.1 millennials, considered the largest demographic group in Asia as stated by WEF World Economic Forum (2021) <sup>[15]</sup>, and they are known for their values centered around experiences in travel. Based on their volume, it can be seen to create influence in market trends like local tourism policies, highlighting the need for a focused study on this cohort. Notably, millennials tend to see themselves as active participants in sustainability efforts, especially in how and where they travel.

While existing studies have explored millennial travel behaviors and sustainability awareness in various regions, there is a notable lack of focused research on the interplay between millennials' sustainable tourism behaviors and their travel preferences within the specific context of Davao City. For instance, a study by Jimenez *et al.* (2023) <sup>[8]</sup> examined the role of perceived destination attractiveness in tourists' intentions to visit Davao's ecotourism sites, but it did not specifically address millennial behaviors or sustainability aspects. Furthermore, while Olivar *et al.* (2023) <sup>[11]</sup> investigated the mediating effect of social media on the relationship between travel behavior and tourist preference in Davao City, the study did not focus on the sustainability behaviors of millennials as well. Some studies however showed, like Burke (2021) <sup>[4]</sup> that while millennials aim for immersive and culturally rich experiences, their choices can sometimes unintentionally strain environmental and social systems. Ramgade (2023) <sup>[12]</sup> emphasizes the importance of aligning millennial-driven tourism with long-term sustainability goals. Understanding the nuances in millennials' preferences and behaviors is essential to advance sustainable tourism in this urban and ecologically diverse locale.

This gap underscores the need for a comprehensive study that examines how millennials in Davao City integrate sustainability considerations into their travel preferences and behaviors. Such research would provide valuable insights for policymakers and tourism stakeholders aiming to promote sustainable tourism practices tailored to this influential demographic. In order to fill in those gaps thus, this study was conducted with the aims to determine

millennials' tourism sustainability behavior and travel preferences in Davao City. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions: determine the millennial behavior toward tourism sustainability in Davao City with indicators covering environmental sustainability awareness, socio-cultural, and economic sustainability. Moreover, this study determines the level of travel preference of millennials in Davao City in terms of service, accommodation, and promotion. Lastly, this seeks to see the significant relationship between behavior toward tourism sustainability and the travel preferences of millennials.

### Materials and Methods

The study adopted a quantitative research design using a structured survey questionnaire. The respondents were the millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) visiting in Davao City. The researchers used Raosoft, software to ensure that the study was well represented based on target population. A sample size of approximately 400 respondents was generated at 5 percent margin of error only from an estimated four hundred thousand visitors in the year 2024 based on the city's data. A stratified random sampling was used to ensure diversity within the sample, considering

factors such as age, sex, profession, and educational attainment. The questionnaire was developed and inspired from the studies of Sharmin, *et al* (2020) <sup>[13]</sup>, Kairiss, *et al.* (2023) <sup>[1]</sup> and Acheron, Mundo *et al* (2018) <sup>[2]</sup>. The instrument for data collection was survey questionnaire using the 5 point Likert scale to measure the responses. The data gathering was conducted in Davao City specifically the visitors located in the Eden Nature Park and Resort and Francisco Bangoy International Airport of the city. Using the qualifying questions, it was ensured that the respondents were ages 28–43 years old, only millennials were sampled. The respondents will be informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent will be obtained before participation. The personal information of respondents will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents can withdraw at any time without any consequences. The date was collected and the results were examined using pertinent statistical tools like mean, standard deviation and Pearson r.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Level of millennial behavior towards tourism sustainability in Davao City.

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	SD	Descriptive level
Environmental sustainability awareness	4.57	0.521	Moderately aware
Awareness on socio-cultural practices	4.35	0.668	Somewhat aware
Economic sustainability awareness	4.61	0.423	Extremely aware
Overall	4.43	0.508	

The data in Table 1, shows the millennial behavior toward tourism sustainability the results suggest that the respondents generally exhibit a high level of awareness and behavior toward tourism sustainability specifically in the economic and environmental aspects. However, their understanding of socio-cultural practices related to tourism is moderate hence this is identified as an area for improvement that can be addressed through targeted education and programs to improve in this aspect. The result is aligned to the study of Huang and Petrick (2010) <sup>[10]</sup> found

that millennials are more likely to support and engage in sustainable tourism activities. However, it negates from the result of the study of Burke (2021) <sup>[4]</sup> that while millennials aim for immersive and culturally rich experiences, their choices can sometimes unintentionally strain environmental and social systems. The result of the study implies that program enhancement focusing on understanding socio-cultural practices of the destination could be conducted. The policy makers to develop strategies to promote socio cultural assets of the destination.

**Table 2:** Level of travel preference of millennials of Davao City.

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	SD	Descriptive level
Service	3.67	1.132	Sometimes preferred
Accommodation	4.44	0.468	Often preferred
Promotion	4.45	0.493	Highly preferred
Overall	4.32	0.433	Highly preferred

Table 2 shows the level of travel preference of millennials covering three indicators such as service, accommodation, and promotion. The millennials highly preferred promotion in the choice of their travel while service comes only sometimes preferred and surprisingly the least preferred among the three variables. However the overall mean says the travel preference of the three indicators are highly preferred anyway. The result implies that millennials place promotion as travel preference over services and accommodation. Respondents' evaluation implies that promotion and marketing strategies significantly influence millennial travel decisions. A study by Fromm and Garton (2013) <sup>[6]</sup> highlights that millennials are highly responsive to

social media and digital marketing. Effective promotions that leverage social media platforms resonate well with this demographic, as they rely heavily on online reviews and recommendations when making travel decisions. The influence of social media promotions is evident, with many local businesses leveraging influencers and targeted advertising to attract millennial travelers (Abel, 2020) <sup>[3]</sup>. Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that tourism stakeholders prioritize promotional strategies to effectively attract millennial travelers specifically targeted promotions in order to increase the visibility of the millennial travelers in the city.

**Table 3:** Correlation Matrix of Millennials Behavior towards tourism sustainability and travel preference in Davao City

Travel Preference	Behavior Towards tourism Sustainability			
	Environmental sustainability awareness	Awareness on socio- cultural practices	Economic sustainability awareness	Overall
Service	0.120*	0.188*	0.253*	0.228* Sig
Accommodation	0.468*	0.415*	0.446*	0.525* Sig
Promotion	0.460*	0.461*	0.445*	0.547* Sig
Overall	0.498*	0.487*	0.537*	0.605* Sig

In Table 3, statistical significance,  $p < 0.05$ , indicates that the observed correlations between millennials' travel preferences and their behaviors towards tourism sustainability is significantly correlated. The result implies that there is a need develop sustainable tourism strategies that cater to millennials preferences, enhancing the city's appeal and competitiveness in order to capture such market. This aligns with previous studies of Higgins-Despoilers (2001) <sup>[9]</sup> and Font (2002) <sup>[7]</sup> that also found significant correlations between travel preferences and sustainable behaviors. However, since service preference shows lower correlations (0.228\*) than other aspects of the study. It doesn't mean to leave service behind because the impact of service can only be experienced while it is consumed hence, it might result in dissatisfaction that may ruin the visitor's expectation of the place. Insights from this study can inform tourism policymakers and marketers in Davao City and beyond about the importance of promotion to align with millennials' preferences for sustainability. While this study focuses on millennials in Davao City, the findings are relevant globally as they contribute to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism behavior among different demographic groups. Similar patterns have been observed in various global contexts, highlighting the universality of the relationship between travel preferences and sustainable behaviors (Fennell, 2008; Throsby, 2001) <sup>[5, 14]</sup>.

### Conclusion

In line with millennials' behavior towards tourism sustainability, this study provides valuable insights into recognizing their high level of awareness and behavior in economic and environmental aspects. However, their understanding of socio-cultural practices related to tourism is moderate, indicating a need for improvement. Targeted education and programs can enhance millennials' knowledge and appreciation of socio-cultural practices, promoting more responsible tourism behaviors. The findings align with previous studies, such as Huang and Petrick (2010) <sup>[10]</sup>, which suggest that millennials are more likely to support sustainable tourism activities. To promote sustainable tourism practices, policymakers and stakeholders can develop strategies that highlight the socio-cultural assets of the destination like program enhancements focusing on socio-cultural practices can also be implemented to educate millennials about the importance of preserving local cultures and traditions.

Looking at the travel behavior and preferences, the study reveals that millennials highly prefer promotion when making travel decisions, with service and accommodation being less preferred. However, overall, millennials highly prefer all three indicators, with promotion being the most influential. The findings suggest that promotion and marketing strategies significantly impact millennial travel decisions. Specifically, millennials are highly responsive to social media and digital marketing, relying on online

reviews and recommendations. Effective promotions leveraging social media platforms can attract millennial travelers. Tourism stakeholders should prioritize promotional strategies, particularly targeted promotions, to increase visibility and attract millennial travelers. By leveraging social media influencers and targeted advertising, local businesses can effectively reach this demographic. Correlating the variables, the study showed, this study demonstrates a significant correlation between millennials' travel preferences and their behaviors towards tourism sustainability. The relationship of the two variables suggests that developing sustainable tourism strategies targeting to the preferences of the millennials' can enhance Davao City's competitiveness. Moreover, the result is telling us not to forget to maintain the quality service because it remains to be a crucial aspect of the tourism experience, as dissatisfaction can negatively impact visitors' expectations when they stroll around. Last but not the least, this study provides valuable insights for tourism stakeholders seeking to develop effective strategies for attracting and retaining millennial travelers. Ultimately, by embracing sustainability and catering to millennials' preferences, destinations can achieve long-term success and competitiveness in the global tourism market.

### References

1. Kairiss A, Geipele I, Olevska-Kairisa I. Sustainability of cultural heritage-related projects: Use of socio-economic indicators in Latvia. *Sustainability*. 2023;15(13):10109. <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/13/10109>
2. Aceron RM, Del Mundo LC, Restar ASN, Villanueva DM. Travel and tour preferences of millennials. *Journal of Economics and Management Sciences*. 2018;1(2):p141. Available from: <https://shorturl.at/jwQZ4>
3. Abel J. Influencer marketing and the millennial traveler. *Journal of Travel Research*. 2020;59(3):456–470. Available from: <https://shorturl.at/biBV7>
4. Burke M. How sustainable tourism is impacting the travel industry. LinkedIn 2021. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-sustainable-tourism-impacting-travel-industry-martyn-burke>
5. Fennell DA. Ecotourism and the myth of indigenous stewardship. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 2008;16(2):129–149. DOI:10.2167/jost736.0
6. Fromm J, Garton C. Marketing to millennials: Reach the largest and most influential generation of consumers ever. New York: AMACOM; 2013. Available from: <https://shorturl.at/biBV7>
7. Font X. Environmental certification in tourism and hospitality: Progress, process and prospects. *Tourism Management*. 2002;23(3):197–205. Available from: <https://www.scribd.com/document/518445807/FONT-2002>

8. Jimenez FKM, Rodriguez DKL, Modesto ASL, Sumague JS. Predicting the role of perceived destination attractiveness to visit intention of tourists to Davao ecotourism sites. ResearchGate. 2023. <https://shorturl.at/fjGI6>
9. Higgins-Desbiolles F. More than an “industry”: The forgotten power of tourism as a social force. *Tourism Management*. 2006;27(6):1192–1208. Available from: <https://shorturl.at/bexGJ>
10. Huang J, Petrick JF. Generation Y's travel behaviors: A comparison with Baby Boomers and Generation X. In: Benckendorff P, Moscardo G, Pendergast D, editors. *Tourism and Generation Y*. Wallingford: CABI; 2010. p. 27–37. Available from: <https://shorturl.at/jrIW6>
11. Olivar KG, Acquiattan KS, Palado PMS. The mediating effect of social media on the relationship between travel preference and tourist behavior of local tourists in Davao City. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*. 2023;11(2):51–59. Available from: <https://shorturl.at/lFXIa>
12. Ramgade A. A study on the rise of millennial travelers and how their travel trends are shaping the present and future. ResearchGate 2023.
13. Sharmin F, Sultan MT, Badulescu A, Bac DP, Li B. Millennial tourists' environmentally sustainable behavior towards a natural protected area: An integrative framework. *Sustainability*. 2020;12(20):8545. DOI:10.3390/su12208545
14. Throsby CD. *Economics and culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2001. Available from: <https://shorturl.at/moBxn>
15. World Economic Forum. Travel and tourism development in the wake of COVID-19 2021 Available from: <https://shorturl.at/HKbPq>