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Expedia group general manager for South-East Asia and India, Simon Fiquet thinks the needs of millennial travellers are very important for the future of the travel industry. Photo: Expedia

Millennials will rule travel in the future. Do you agree?

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MALAYSIA ([HTTP://WWW.STAR2.COM/./TRAVEL/MALAYSIA/](http://www.star2.com/./TRAVEL/MALAYSIA/)), TRAVEL ([HTTP://WWW.STAR2.COM/./TRAVEL/](http://www.star2.com/./TRAVEL/)), WORLD ([HTTP://WWW.STAR2.COM/./TRAVEL/MALAYSIA/WORLD/](http://www.star2.com/./TRAVEL/MALAYSIA/WORLD/))

BY S.S. YOGA

A millennial would rather spend on travel than buy a car. Surprised?

This finding that 72% of respondents would choose travel, versus 64% who would buy a new car, emerged from the 2017 Expedia Millennial Travel Report, conducted globally.

And why is the travel industry so interested in millennials? According to Expedia group general manager for South-East Asia and India, Simon Fiquet, they have become one of the largest generations in history who are “keen on travelling and experiencing things”.

As there are different definitions of what a millennial is for Expedia they have defined them as those between 1982 and 1999. And they are also holding back on previously perceived life landmarks like marriage and mortgage and seeking instead experiential moments.

Another finding that emerged which might surprise some people who think millennials being young might be more adventurous and less averse to risk. Concern for personal safety stood out more so for Asia-Pacific travellers in contrast to Westerners.

Malaysians were slightly more concerned about safety compared to Singaporeans, 60% versus 59%.

Millennial risk- aversion extends beyond just bodily safety to even the “risk” of having a bad time. The Report observed that to this generation, the verified authenticity – peers vouching for both safety and success, was imperative. A travel experience without such ‘warranty’ was not of interest to this group.

In most non-Western markets, the influence of fellow consumers (review sites, blogs, travel forums) is the most important source of influence when it comes to their holiday decision-making – more so than close contacts (friends, family, social network contacts) and industry experts (travel agents, travel providers, expert opinion websites).

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Millennials are always looking at peer reviews to plan their next holidays. Photo: Expedia

And because they seek out their peers, millennials also tend to seek their approval. Thirty-eight percent of Malaysians and Singaporeans want people to comment on their holiday photos. But this need peaks with the Indians and the Thais – 62% of them. The Westerners on the other hand didn't seem so bothered. But then again perhaps it resonates with others too, as 44% of millennials agree that holiday photos seen on social media influence where they go on holiday.



Graphic: Expedia

A majority of Asia-Pacific travellers, and 72% of Malaysian respondents think that experiencing the authentic culture of a place is the most important aspect of their holiday abroad, while the figures for Western-based travellers are noticeably lower. Based on the Report, three in four millennials are interested in a service that could provide personalised travel recommendations based on their budget. However, when asked the same about a service that was based on personality alone, two in three were still interested – suggesting that the demand for personalised services extends beyond price sensitivity.

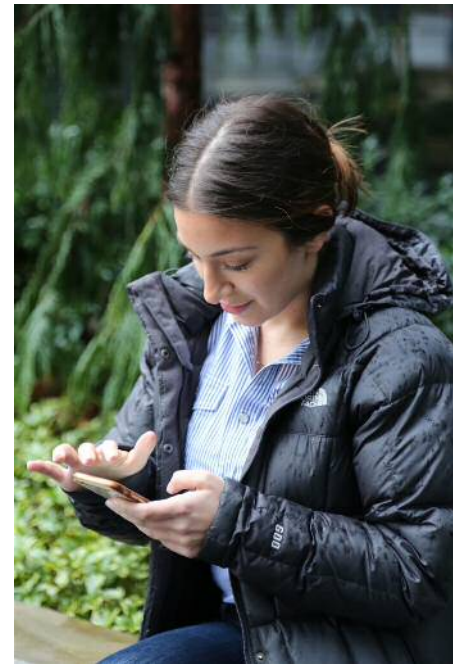
Millennials expect convenience at all touch-points: fewer confirmation emails to clutter the inbox; being able to book or cancel a holiday last-minute, or even switch names on tickets if need be; having more payment options to divide, amalgamate or otherwise play with costs. Sixty-six percent said they were interested in a service that would allow travellers to split the holiday cost online with another person.

Malaysians go even further with 75% saying they were very interested in having a wearable technology that could automatically adjust the hotel room temperature according to one's own body

temperature” and are only surpassed by Thailand, China and India. Such innovative features seemed to be a lot less important to the West.

“Perhaps the most valuable insight we have gained from this Report is that by tailoring the experiences for the millennial traveller, we stand to gain their trust for years to come, as indicated by the importance they place on the opinion of their peers whom they trust and find relatable”, Fiquet points out.

The survey was done via an online questionnaire in March and November 2016, with a sample of 1,000 consumers per country, 18-64 years old (to include non-millennials’ perception) from 21 countries including – Britain, Germany, France, United States, China, Australia, Brazil, South Korea, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Spain, Thailand, Mexico and Canada.



Millennials place a high emphasis on technology when it comes to travel.
Photo: Expedia

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