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The Impact of Travel Photography Store Image on Consumers' Destination Apparel Rental Intention

Leiwen Lu, Hongjian Qu*, Qixing Jing

College of Textile and Fashion, Shanghai University of Engineering Science, Shanghai 201600, China

*quhongjian0535@126.com

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, destination photography has been rapidly growing, yet limited research has examined consumer decision-making from the perspective of apparel rental. This study addresses this gap by investigating how store image influences consumers' apparel rental intention in the context of travel photography. Based on the SOR framework, seven dimensions of store image—store atmosphere, store location, store promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, and service experience—were selected as independent variables, while perceived value and perceived risk were introduced as mediators to construct the theoretical model and conduct empirical analysis. A total of 314 valid survey responses were collected, and structural equation modeling together with bootstrap methods was applied to test the hypotheses. The findings show that: (a) all seven store image dimensions significantly and positively affect consumers' apparel rental intention, with apparel hygiene and apparel quality being the most influential factors; (b) perceived value partially mediates the effects of store location, store promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, and service experience, but not store atmosphere; and (c) perceived risk plays a partial mediating role across all seven paths. By integrating apparel and tourism, this study extends the application of the SOR model in cross-domain consumer research and highlights the strategic significance of apparel rental experiences in destination development and sustainable consumption, offering new perspectives and practical implications for optimizing store image and enhancing competitiveness in the travel photography market.

KEYWORDS

apparel rental, travel photography, store image, perceived value, perceived risk

INTRODUCTION

The rapid rise of social media has encouraged tourists to actively share their travel experiences, with the phenomenon of selfies becoming particularly prevalent [1]. As destinations improve and visitor demands evolve, an increasing number of tourists choose to wear local traditional apparel in culturally distinctive

scenic areas for photography [2], making destination apparel rental a preferred option. From the imperial attire at Beijing's Forbidden City to the ethnic costumes in places such as Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, destination-based costume photography has gradually emerged as a growing trend. Such activities, where tourists change into local apparel for on-site photography, are collectively referred to as travel photography. With the continued maturation of the tourism market, the apparel rental segment of this industry has expanded rapidly, intensifying market competition. Against this backdrop, how to stand out and attract tourists has become the key to the success of travel photography stores [3].

Travel photography was initially popularized through wedding photography, and as an artistic form it not only captures cherished moments but also reflects contemporary society's pursuit of fashionable lifestyles [4]. Through costume changes and makeup design, tourists participate in photography with a more aesthetically appealing image, which allows them to create personalized works, share travel experiences, and simultaneously satisfy aesthetic needs while engaging with the unique artistic and cultural charm of destinations [2]. At present, academic research on travel photography mainly focuses on wedding photography, shooting techniques, and creative methods [5], while studies addressing specific consumer behaviors such as apparel rental remain limited. According to Lee, apparel rental offers diverse and seasonally relevant fashion experiences in a cost-effective manner while reducing clothing waste and resource use, thus supporting sustainable development in the fashion industry at both the consumer and environmental levels [6]. In tourism contexts, clothing rental not only creates differentiated travel experiences for tourists, but also generates positive impacts at both the commercial and social levels [7] [8]. Lang found that through repeated use, apparel rental can yield economic returns for businesses that often exceed retail value [9]. On the societal level, this model strengthens tourists' environmental awareness and promotes sustainable consumption. Hyejune indicates that apparel rental meets consumers' needs in terms of price, time efficiency, variety of styles, and ease of use, thereby providing an economically affordable and flexible way of accessing clothing [10]. Research also shows that apparel is among the most popular commodities purchased by tourists during travel [11]. Apparel rental not only fulfills tourists' needs to express individuality and document experiences through photography but also relieves them from the burden of carrying luggage while providing diverse fashion choices that enhance novelty and enjoyment during trips [9]. Nevertheless, systematic research on destination apparel rental remains insufficient, particularly in advancing a deeper understanding of the drivers of consumer rental behavior. In contrast to conventional fashion rental, travel clothing rental places greater emphasis on cultural engagement and immersive experiential contexts

[7]. Consequently, stores, as the primary carriers of rental experiences, play a critical role in shaping consumers' psychological perceptions and behavioral choices.

Building on this foundation, the present study takes travel photography store image as the research object and divides it into dimensions across store, apparel, and service aspects, thereby constructing a theoretical framework grounded in the S-O-R model to systematically examine its influence on consumers' rental intention. The study not only seeks to reveal how different image elements shape consumers' perceptions of value and risk but also aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for travel photography stores in service optimization, image building, and competitiveness enhancement. By doing so, this research achieves a cross-domain integration of fashion, retail, and tourism, advancing interdisciplinary theoretical development while highlighting the strategic importance of apparel rental experiences in both tourism destination development and the promotion of sustainable consumption.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Stimulus–Organism–Response Model

Environmental psychologists Mehrabian and Russell first proposed the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model in 1974, which reveals the relationship between external stimuli and organism responses [12]. In this model, “S” represents the influence of external environmental stimuli on individuals, “O” refers to the psychological perception or cognitive process triggered by these stimuli, and “R” denotes the individual's behavioral response. Within the stimulus (S) stage, external factors such as store atmosphere, store location, store promotion, apparel quality, and apparel hygiene act as stimuli that shape consumers' initial perceptions. In the organism (O) stage, consumers process these stimuli to form subjective evaluations of perceived value and perceived risk, where perceived value enhances rental intention while perceived risk inhibits it. Finally, in the response (R) stage, these psychological evaluations directly influence consumers' apparel rental intention. Building on this framework, the present study applies the S-O-R model to analyze how travel photography store image shapes consumers' apparel rental intention. Specifically, it explores how external stimuli related to store, apparel, and service dimensions act through the psychological mechanisms of perceived value and perceived risk to affect consumer behavior, thereby providing theoretical support for optimizing apparel rental services and designing effective marketing strategies.

Travel Photography Store Image

Store image is generally defined as the overall impression formed by consumers based on both the functional and psychological attributes of a store, representing the combined effect of its physical characteristics and subjective evaluations, and reflecting consumers' comprehensive cognition of the store [13]. Prior studies indicate that store image not only reflects consumers' overall perception of brand products and services but also highlights the critical role of subjective perception in the decision-making process [14]. Lang further emphasized that store image essentially constitutes consumers' holistic perception of a series of tangible and intangible dimensions. In terms of dimensional categorization, multiple perspectives have been developed within the academic community [15]. Martineau's classic framework identified nine dimensions-price, quality, service, location, product display, signage, color design, advertising, and sales personnel-which laid the foundation for subsequent research [13]. Balaji and Maheswari operationalized store image as a multidimensional construct comprising ambient atmosphere, staff performance, merchandise attributes, ease of shopping, and price and promotion, in order to capture consumers' systematic evaluations of a store's overall characteristics [16]. Erdil noted that product variety, vendor-provided services, and physical facilities also play a significant role [14]. Chang and Luan identified store atmosphere, service staff, and merchandise as the core elements of store image [17]. Ghosh (1990) attributed store image to multiple store-related characteristics within the retail marketing mix, including location, merchandise, store atmosphere, customer service, price, advertising, personal selling, and sales promotion programs, which together shape consumers' overall perceptions of the store [18]. Kim and Jin further expanded the framework by incorporating product display, service convenience, facility accessibility, customer traffic, cleanliness and spaciousness, as well as price competitiveness [19]. Finally, Du Preez summarized that the features of store image can be categorized into multiple dimensions, including atmosphere, convenience, facilities, institutions, products, promotions, sales personnel, and services [20].

Prior research consistently indicates that store image is a multidimensional construct whose scope extends beyond environmental and service-related attributes to also encompass merchandise-related evaluative dimensions. Store atmosphere represents environmental and sensory cues such as display style, lighting, and spatial aesthetics, focusing on the experiential and ambient features of the store [21]. Store location reflects geographical accessibility and convenience, a spatial attribute that does not overlap with environmental experience or service features [22]. Store promotion is an informational and communication-related

dimension, evaluated through advertising content, promotional methods, and brand messaging, and is conceptually distinct from price or service attributes [23]. Prior retail research has explicitly identified merchandise as a core component of store image, capturing consumers' integrated evaluations of product quality, assortment, and perceived value. In the context of travel photography stores, the primary merchandise encountered by consumers is rental apparel; therefore, apparel-related attributes naturally constitute an important source of store image perception. In the product domain, apparel quality concerns intrinsic product characteristics such as material, craftsmanship, and durability, whereas apparel hygiene captures cleanliness, sanitation, and maintenance procedures. Empirical studies in rental and shared apparel contexts consistently confirm that apparel quality and apparel hygiene function as two conceptually distinct evaluative constructs [24] [25]. Price positioning encompasses assessments of price level, fairness, and price–value congruence and represents an economic evaluative category separate from product or promotional attributes [26]. Service experience focuses on interpersonal interactions, procedural efficiency, and staff professionalism, aligning with established service-quality constructs and conceptually independent from environmental or product-related dimensions [27].

In sum, the seven dimensions above point respectively to seven fundamentally different evaluative domains—environmental cues, spatial attributes, communicative/promotional information, intrinsic product attributes, product hygiene attributes, economic/price attributes, and service-related attributes—and therefore constitute conceptually non-substitutable and non-overlapping constructs. Based on established classification traditions and supporting empirical evidence, operationalizing store image as these seven independent dimensions is both theoretically justified and contextually appropriate for destination apparel rental. Accordingly, this study treats store image as an independent variable composed of the following seven dimensions: store atmosphere, store location, store promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, and service experience.

Travel Photography Store Image and Apparel Rental Intention

Store image is a critical factor influencing consumer intention, and its components and mechanisms of action have been extensively explored in prior research. Roggeveen argued that a positive store image can effectively attract customer visits [28]. Among its determinants, product quality, diversity, and uniqueness are decisive in whether consumers choose to shop at a given store, while service levels directly affect their willingness to visit [29]. Bohl indicates that cues in the store atmosphere, such as music and scent, influence

consumers' emotional states, which in turn lead to approach or avoidance shopping behaviors [30]. Further, Hussain's empirical study finds that environmental elements of the store atmosphere have a significant positive effect on consumers' purchase intention [31]. Meanwhile, location convenience has also been confirmed as a key dimension influencing consumer behavior; reasonable store siting and easy access to products significantly increase consumers' consumption intention [32]. On the service dimension, research shows it plays an indispensable role in shaping store image. Efficient customer service, smooth communication channels, and personalized recommendations not only improve the overall experience but also enhance consumers' functional satisfaction, thereby strengthening their rental intention [33]. Price is also considered a fundamental variable affecting store image, as shoppers' attitudes toward a store are strongly shaped by pricing levels, which in turn influence consumption intention [34]. In addition, given the distinctive nature of destination apparel rental, the consumption process differs from that of regular apparel purchases. Consumers not only focus on style and quality but also attach great importance to apparel cleanliness and hygiene. These factors directly affect the comfort and safety of wearing the apparel and substantially influence rental intention [35] [36]. Therefore, building on prior research, this study incorporates apparel hygiene as a core component of store image to provide a more comprehensive explanation of its impact on consumers' apparel rental intention. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1 (H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d, H1e, H1f, H1g): travel photography store image (store atmosphere, store location, store promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, and service experience) positively influences consumers' apparel rental intention.

Travel Photography Store Image, Perceived Value, and Apparel Rental Intention

Perceived value is generally defined as the overall evaluative judgment formed by consumers after weighing the utility gained against the costs incurred, a judgment that directly influences purchase decisions and may even occur prior to the act of purchase [37]. Zauner emphasized that perceived value essentially reflects consumers' expectation levels, arising from the trade-off between perceived utility and perceived price [38], whereas Mansouri described it as the outcome of balancing the overall benefits obtained from purchasing a product or service against the costs borne [39]. A substantial body of research has shown that store image is a critical external stimulus shaping consumers' perceived value. Elements such as product quality, service level, store atmosphere, and innovativeness influence value perception through multiple pathways [40]. A strong store image not only fosters a positive interaction between functional attributes and consumers'

personal preferences—thereby significantly enhancing perceived value [14]—but also shapes in-store preference judgments and perceived value levels by influencing consumers' overall attitudes toward the store and their value evaluation mechanisms [16]. Moreover, sensory factors within the store environment, such as variations in scent or music, can further alter customers' atmospheric perception, producing either positive or negative differences in their shopping experience [41].

From the results perspective, perceived value is not only an important and stable predictor of consumer behavior [37], but also reflects that satisfied customers often expect and seek additional value [42]. Related studies have further shown that consumer experiences influence brand attitudes through their impact on perceived value [28], and that higher perceived value during shopping significantly enhances consumption intention [43]. Therefore, perceived value plays a critical role in consumer cognition and often functions as a mediating variable between store image and consumption intention [44]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2 (H2a, H2b, H2c, H2d, H2e, H2f, H2g): Perceived value mediates the relationship between travel photography store image (store atmosphere, store location, store promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, and service experience) and apparel rental intention.

Travel Photography Store Image, Perceived Risk, and Apparel Rental Intention

Perceived risk is a critical concept in consumer behavior research. Bauer was the first to introduce it from psychology, using it to explain the anxiety and concern consumers experience due to uncertainty in the purchasing process [45]. Subsequent scholars further defined it as an individual's subjective belief about the potential negative consequences of a purchase decision, which are often characterized by uncertainty [34]. Accordingly, perceived risk has long been regarded as a key factor in understanding consumer purchasing behavior [46]. Perceived risk is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct rather than a single, unidimensional concept. Classic consumer behavior studies have identified several core dimensions of perceived risk, including financial risk, performance risk, and social risk, which reflect consumers' concerns regarding economic loss, functional failure, and negative social evaluation, respectively [46] [47]. In the context of apparel rental, these traditional dimensions are particularly salient, as consumers not only evaluate price fairness and usage outcomes but also anticipate potential social judgments associated with wearing rented apparel. Moreover, prior research on secondhand and rental apparel consumption highlights hygiene-related concerns as a distinct and critical source of perceived risk, as issues related to cleanliness and

sanitation may directly affect consumers' health perceptions and psychological comfort [48]. Accordingly, this study conceptualizes perceived risk as a four-dimensional construct comprising financial risk, performance risk, hygiene risk, and social risk, each measured by a single item reflecting consumers' perceived deviation in the corresponding dimension.

Regarding its antecedents, store image is considered an effective factor in alleviating perceived risk. Studies have shown that a favorable store image can reduce consumers' sense of uncertainty and anxiety during shopping decisions [49]. Consumers often rely on reputable stores to mitigate potential risks encountered during shopping, and a high level of service quality not only alleviates concerns but also strengthens trust in the reliability and performance of rental services [50]. Ensuring price transparency, clearly outlining rental terms and conditions, and offering secure payment methods all contribute to reducing transaction risk [35]. At the same time, consumers are generally concerned that secondhand apparel may involve issues such as uncleanliness, unpleasant odors, or potential health hazards [36], with hygiene risk defined as an anxiety perception that may threaten personal life or health [51]. To address this, researchers have suggested that providing complete and transparent information regarding apparel use, cleaning, and maintenance can significantly reduce consumers' perception of hygiene-related risks [52].

Perceived risk is not only influenced by store image but also directly linked to consumers' consumption intention. Existing studies have demonstrated that as the level of perceived risk increases, consumers' willingness to consume decreases significantly. This effect is evident not only in their willingness to try new products but also in their perceived value and ultimate purchase decisions [53]. When consumers strongly perceive potential negative consequences of a transaction, their purchase intention further diminishes; once perceived risk exceeds an individual's acceptable threshold, consumers often adopt avoidance or adjustment strategies to mitigate the risk [46]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3 (H3a, H3b, H3c, H3d, H3e, H3f, H3g): Perceived risk mediates the relationship between travel photography store image (store atmosphere, store location, store promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, and service experience) and apparel rental intention.

Research Model

Based on the hypotheses, a structural model was developed to examine the relationship between travel photography store image and apparel rental intention. Seven dimensions-store atmosphere, location, promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, and service experience-serve as exogenous var-

iables (X). Perceived value and perceived risk function as mediators (Z1 and Z2), and apparel rental intention is the endogenous variable (Y). The model specifies three paths: Path 1, $X \rightarrow Y$ (direct effect); Path 2, $X \rightarrow Z1 \rightarrow Y$ (mediation via perceived value); and Path 3, $X \rightarrow Z2 \rightarrow Y$ (mediation via perceived risk). The full specification is depicted in Figure 1.

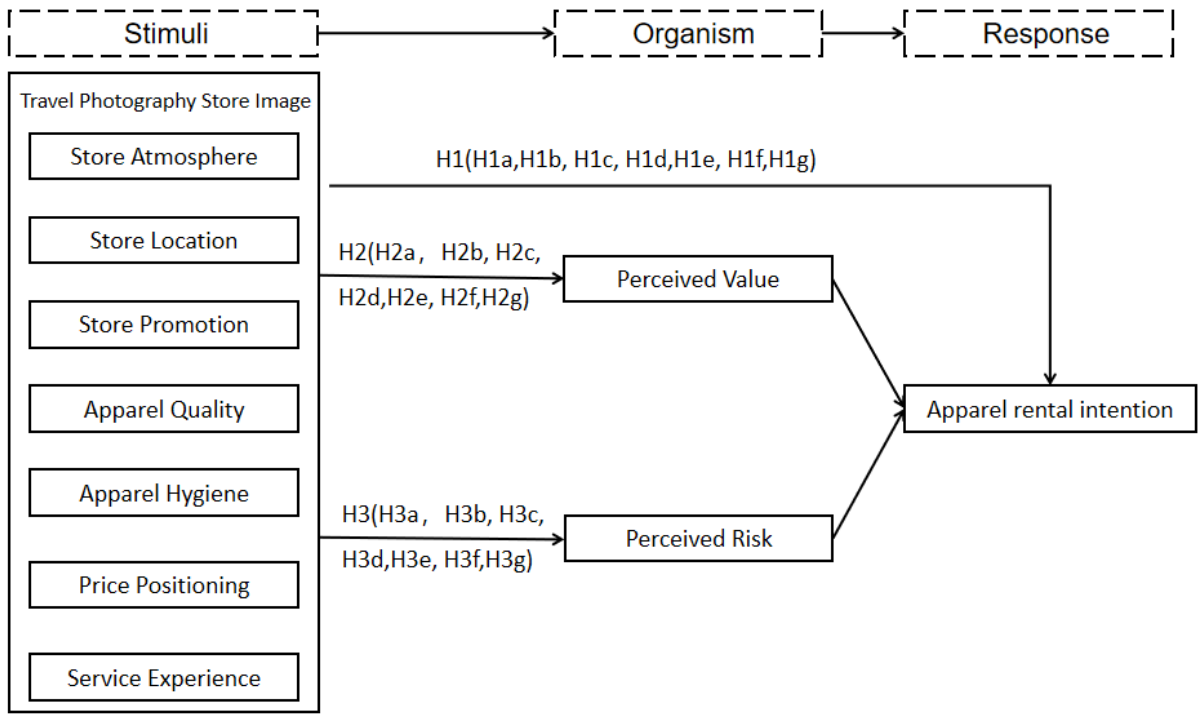


Figure 1. Research model

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Measurement of Constructs

This study, grounded in the SOR theoretical framework and considering the service characteristics of the travel photography industry as well as the dimensions of store image, adapted the measurement indicators based on a systematic review of relevant domestic and international literature. These adjustments ensured that the indicators more accurately captured the unique features of the travel photography context. Through refinement and adaptation, ten key variables were ultimately identified for this research, encompassing critical dimensions such as store atmosphere, apparel quality, and service experience. The specific measurement indicators and their reference sources are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Measurement metrics and reference sources

Dimension	Measurement Items	Source
Store Atmosphere (X1)	The store' s interior design matches the positioning of travel photography apparel (X11)	[54]
	The store' s lighting design creates a comfortable shopping atmosphere (X12)	
	The store' s interior environment is clean and hygienic (X13)	
	The store layout allows customers to move around conveniently (X14)	
	The apparel display in the store makes it convenient for customers to browse and select (X15)	
Store Location (X2)	The store' s location is convenient, allowing me to easily access and complete apparel rental (X21)	[55]
	The store is close to major travel photography sites, saving time (X22)	
	The location allows me to quickly find the required apparel rental service during travel photography (X23)	
	The store' s surrounding area offers convenient transportation (X24)	
Store Promotion (X3)	Online promotion enables me to learn about apparel rental services in a timely manner(X31)	[16]
	Offline promotion effectively captures my attention(X32)	
	The promotion methods are diverse (X33)	
	The promotional content of the apparel rental store is authentic and reliable (X34)	
Apparel Quality (X4)	The promotion channels make it convenient and quick to locate the store(X35)	[43]
	The fabric is comfortable(X41)	
	The colors are long-lasting(X42)	
	The styles are diverse (X43)	
Apparel Hygiene (X5)	The designs are novel and unique(X44)	[52]
	The apparel is cleaned to a reassuring standard (X51)	
	The store clearly explains the disinfection process of travel photography apparel (X52)	
	The hygiene and safety of the apparel are satisfactory (X53)	
	The packaging effectively maintains the hygiene of the apparel (X54)	

Dimension	Measurement Items	Source
	The rental price of apparel matches the quality of travel photography apparel (X61)	
	The rental price is consistent with the service experience provided (X62)	
Price Positioning	The rental price is reasonable and aligns with the consumption level of the travel photography market (X63)	[54]
(X6)	The store offers apparel rental options at different price levels to meet the needs of different consumers (X64)	
	The price positioning is clear, allowing me to quickly judge whether the rental is worthwhile (X65)	
	The fitting service helps me easily find apparel suitable for travel photography needs (X71)	
Service Experience	Professional suggestions on apparel selection are provided according to the travel photography theme (X72)	[56]
(X7)	The rental process is efficient and convenient (X73)	
	The return service for apparel is convenient and quick (X74)	
	The service meets my needs (Z11)	
Perceived Value	The service matches my expectations (Z12)	[57] [58]
(Z1)	I am satisfied with the overall outcome (Z13)	
	The price is reasonable (Z14)	
	There is a deviation in the price (Z21)	
Perceived Risk	There is a deviation in the wearing effect of the apparel (Z22)	[46] [48]
(Z2)	There is a deviation in hygiene conditions (Z23)	[51]
	There is a deviation in social evaluation (Z24)	
Apparel Rental	I am willing to rent apparel (Y11)	
Intention	I choose to rent apparel (Y12)	[59]
(Y1)	I would recommend renting apparel (Y13)	

Data Collection

This study employed a five-point Likert scale as the measurement instrument, with scores ranging from 1 (“very unimportant”) to 5 (“very important”). The survey targeted consumers who either had prior experience with destination apparel rental or expressed a clear intention to engage in such services. To ensure that the sample closely aligned with the specific research context, two screening questions were included before the formal survey items: (1) “Have you ever rented local specialty apparel for photography during a trip?” and (2) “If you travel to a destination known for its distinctive apparel in the future, would you be willing to rent such apparel for photography?” Only respondents who answered “yes” to at least one of these questions were allowed to proceed to the main questionnaire. The survey was administered online via the Sojump platform (<https://www.sojump.com>), yielding a total of 330 collected questionnaires. After excluding 16 invalid responses due to excessively short completion times or contradictory answers, 314 valid questionnaires were retained, resulting in an effective response rate of 95.15%.

As shown in Table 2, a total of 330 questionnaires were collected in this survey. After excluding 16 invalid responses due to excessively short completion times [51] or logical inconsistencies, 314 valid questionnaires were retained. Among them, males accounted for 49% and females for 51%, reflecting a balanced gender distribution. In terms of age, respondents aged 21-50 comprised the majority at 70.75%, while those under 20 and over 51 represented relatively smaller proportions of 14% and 15.25%, respectively. Regarding education, respondents with a bachelor's degree formed the largest group at 52.25%, followed by those with a high school degree or below (24.25%), a master's degree (19.5%), and a doctoral degree or above (4%). Monthly income was mainly concentrated below 6,000 RMB (61.75%), while 38.25% reported incomes above this level. For occupation, office workers were the primary group (50.75%), followed by freelancers (24.75%); students and other occupations accounted for 14% and 10.5%, respectively. Overall, the sample structure is reasonable, with balanced distribution across demographic groups, ensuring that the data effectively meet the requirements of the empirical analysis.

Table 2. Sample descriptive statistics

Demographic Category	Characteristic	Sample Size	Percentage/%
Gender	Male	154	49

	Female	160	51
Age	Below 20 years old	44	14
	21–30 years old	87	27.75
	31–40 years old	75	24
	41–50 years old	60	19
	Above 51 years old	48	15.25
	Education Level	High school or below	76
	Bachelor' s degree	164	52.25
	Master' s degree	61	19.5
	Doctorate or above	13	4
Monthly Income	≤ 3000 RMB	101	32.25
	3001–6000 RMB	93	29.5
	6001–9000 RMB	57	18
	≥ 9000 RMB	64	20.25
Occupation	Student	44	14
	Employee	159	50.75
	Freelancer	78	24.75
	Others	33	10.5

Reliability and Validity

This study employed SPSS 27.0 statistical software to conduct reliability and validity tests on the collected valid questionnaires. As shown in Table 3, the overall and dimensional internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach' s α) of the measurement instrument all exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.800, indicating strong inter-item correlations and high internal consistency of the constructs. Moreover, the exploratory factor loadings (λ) of all items were greater than 0.5, demonstrating that the questionnaire possesses strong construct validity [60].

Table 3. Reliability and validity test

Latent Variable	Item	Standardized Factor	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α	KMO
		Loading				
Store Atmosphere (X1)	X11	0.695	0.541	0.851	0.846	0.861
	X12	0.763				
	X13	0.754				
	X14	0.724				
	X15	0.687				
Store Location (X2)	X21	0.788	0.614	0.864	0.850	0.812
	X22	0.833				
	X23	0.752				
	X24	0.696				
Store Promotion (X3)	X31	0.766	0.601	0.882	0.881	0.880
	X32	0.819				
	X33	0.744				
	X34	0.749				
	X35	0.789				
Apparel Quality (X4)	X41	0.715	0.542	0.824	0.820	0.806
	X42	0.696				
	X43	0.755				
	X44	0.758				
Apparel Hygiene (X5)	X51	0.735	0.531	0.815	0.812	0.799
	X52	0.691				
	X53	0.728				
Price Positioning (X6)	X54	0.724	0.524	0.845	0.843	0.856
	X61	0.730				
	X62	0.669				
	X63	0.702				
	X64	0.743				

	X65	0.758				
	X71	0.819				
Service Experience (X7)	X72	0.738				
			0.607	0.843	0.847	0.814
	X73	0.759				
	X74	0.737				
	Z11	0.777				
Perceived Value (Z1)	Z12	0.725				
			0.594	0.854	0.848	0.821
	Z13	0.802				
	Z14	0.775				
	Z21	0.739				
Perceived Risk (Z2)	Z22	0.788				
			0.628	0.826	0.823	0.726
	Z23	0.718				
	Z24	0.713				
	Y1	0.726				
Apparel Rental Intention (Y)	Y2	0.774	0.543	0.810	0.832	0.719
	Y3	0.709				
Standard level	-	>0.500	>0.500	>0.800	>0.800	>0.700

This study first conducted the KMO and Bartlett' s test of sphericity to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire. The results showed that the overall KMO value of the scale was 0.905, significantly exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.900; the significance level of Bartlett' s test reached 0.000, meeting the statistical requirement of $p < 0.01$. In addition, the KMO values for all dimensions were above the minimum standard of 0.700, and the Bartlett' s test results were all significant ($p = 0.000$), indicating strong validity of the questionnaire. In the confirmatory factor analysis, all factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) values of the observed variables were greater than the critical value of 0.500, while composite reliability (CR) values exceeded 0.800, further confirming the construct validity of the scale.

Correlation and Discriminant Validity Tests

Table 4 presents the correlation results among the variables. The analysis shows that the square root of the AVE for each factor is greater than its correlations with other factors, and all correlation coefficients are be-

low 0.850. These findings indicate that while reasonable correlations exist among the variables, they also demonstrate strong discriminant validity, thereby meeting the data requirements for subsequent regression analysis [61].

Table 4. Correlation analysis

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	Z1	Z2	Y
X1	0.736									
X2	0.445* **	0.774								
X3	0.338* **	0.593***	0.775							
X4	0.352* **	0.548***	0.566***	0.736						
X5	0.335* *	0.502***	0.461***	0.522***	0.729					
X6	0.419* **	0.458***	0.458***	0.461***	0.552***	0.724				
X7	0.380* **	0.540***	0.431***	0.512***	0.511***	0.468***	0.779			
Z1	0.296* **	0.529***	0.472***	0.476***	0.478***	0.471***	0.466***	0.771		
Z2	-0.436* **	-0.612** *	-0.472** *	-0.552** *	-0.613** *	-0.462** *	-0.465** *	-0.521** *	0.780	
Y	0.426* **	0.580***	0.546***	0.588***	0.610***	0.528***	0.548***	0.576***	-0.547***	0.737

Note: The diagonal values represent the square root of AVE. *** and ** indicate significance levels at 0.1% and 1%, respectively.

Model Fit Test

This study employed AMOS 24.0 statistical software to conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement model in order to assess its goodness of fit. As shown in Table 5, all fit indices reached the ideal standards: the chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) was 1.292, falling within the excellent range of 1–3; the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.031, indicating a good model fit; meanwhile, the incremental fit index (IFI), the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and the comparative fit index (CFI) all met the criteria for acceptable values. Taken together, these indices suggest that the measurement model demonstrates strong goodness of fit and fully meets the requirements for hypothesis testing [62].

Table 5. Model fit test

Index	Reference Standard	Value	Result
CMIN/DF	1–3 = Excellent; ≤ 3.5 = Acceptable	1.292	Excellent
RMSEA	<0.05 = Excellent; <0.08 = Acceptable	0.031	Excellent
IFI	>0.90 = Excellent; >0.80 = Acceptable	0.965	Excellent
TLI	>0.90 = Excellent; >0.80 = Acceptable	0.961	Excellent
CFI	>0.90 = Excellent; >0.80 = Acceptable	0.965	Excellent

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study empirically tested the proposed research hypotheses using the constructed structural equation model, with the corresponding analysis results presented in Figure 2.

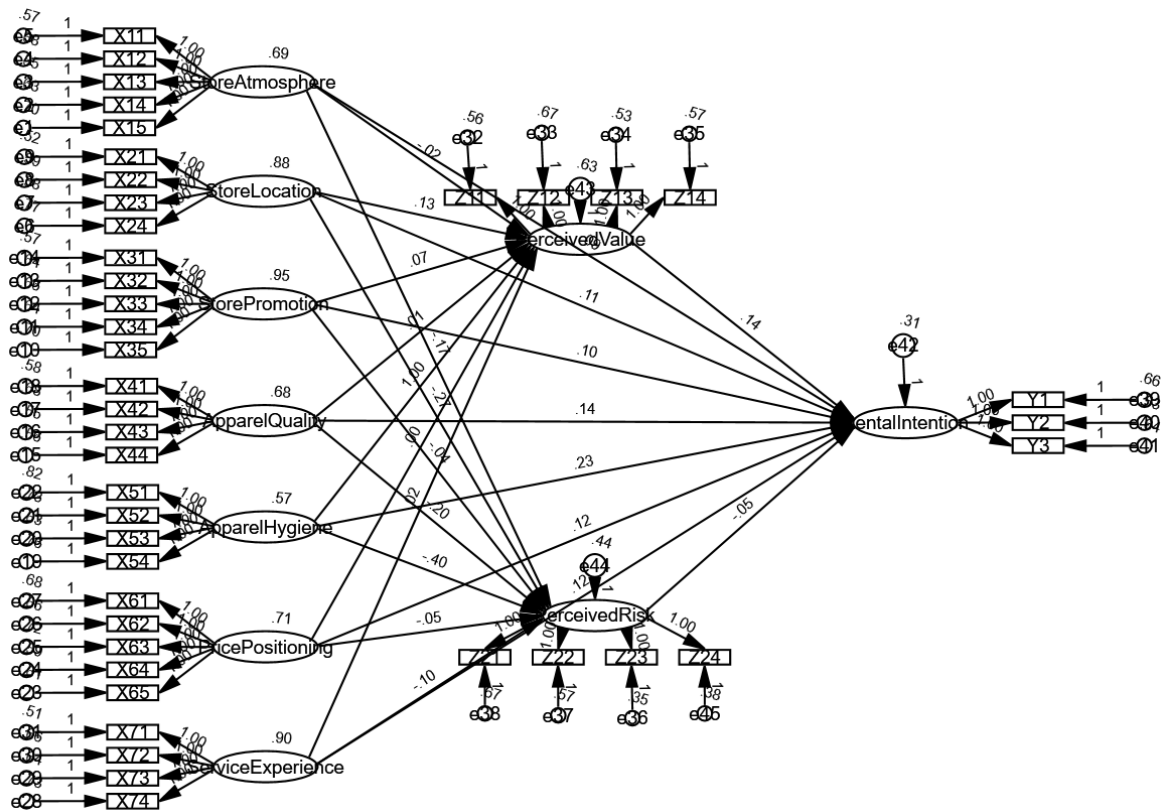


Figure 2. Structural equation model test results

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regression Analysis of Main Effects

The path analysis results in Table 6 show that all dimensions of the travel photography apparel rental store image have significant positive effects on consumers’ rental intention, thereby supporting hypotheses H1a-H1g. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Mitchell [32], Brand [33], McCoy [35], Hur [36], who demonstrated that a positive store image enhances consumer purchase intention. Specifically, a one-unit increase in store atmosphere results in a 0.117 standard deviation increase in rental intention (P = 0.038), reflecting a moderate impact. A one-unit increase in store location leads to a 0.123 standard deviation increase in rental intention (P = 0.023), indicating a meaningful effect driven by accessibility. Store promotion has a smaller, but still significant, impact, with a one-unit increase corresponding to a 0.112 standard deviation rise in rental intention (P = 0.014). Among product-related dimensions, a one-unit increase in apparel quality results in a 0.173 standard deviation increase in rental intention (P = 0.003), showing a moderately strong effect. Apparel hygiene has the most pronounced influence, with a one-unit increase leading to a 0.277 standard deviation increase (P = 0.014), demonstrating a significant impact. Price

positioning has a smaller but notable effect, with a one-unit increase associated with a 0.105 standard deviation increase in rental intention ($P = 0.049$). Service experience also has a moderate impact, with a one-unit increase leading to a 0.119 standard deviation rise in rental intention ($P = 0.012$).

Based on standardized path coefficients, the effects are ranked as follows: apparel hygiene, apparel quality, store location, service experience, store atmosphere, store promotion, and price positioning. This ranking suggests that consumers prioritize quality-related and risk-reducing factors over promotional or price-based incentives.

Table 6. Results of structural equation modeling

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient(β)	S.E.	T	P	Supported or Not
H1a	X1→Y	0.117	0.056	2.073	0.038	Supported
H1b	X2→Y	0.123	0.054	2.269	0.023	Supported
H1c	X3→Y	0.112	0.045	2.469	0.014	Supported
H1d	X4→Y	0.173	0.058	2.979	0.003	Supported
H1e	X5→Y	0.277	0.113	2.448	0.014	Supported
H1f	X6→Y	0.105	0.053	1.964	0.049	Supported
H1g	X7→Y	0.119	0.047	2.515	0.012	Supported

Note: *** denotes significance at the 0.001 level, and ** denotes significance at the 0.01 level.

Bootstrap Mediation Path Analysis

This study employed the PROCESS macro to examine the mediating effects of perceived value and perceived risk, with the detailed results presented in Table 7. In the Bootstrap resampling test, the number of repetitions was set to 5,000, and statistical inference was conducted using a 95% confidence interval. When both the lower limit (LLCL) and the upper limit (ULCL) of the confidence interval exclude zero, the mediation effect is considered statistically significant [63].

Table 7 shows that the indirect effects of travel photography apparel rental store image on rental intention are mainly transmitted through two mediation paths: perceived value and perceived risk. Bootstrap analysis indicates that the 95% confidence intervals for perceived value in the mediation paths linking store location, promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, and service experience to rental intention do not include zero, thereby supporting hypotheses H2b–H2g. This result is consistent with the findings of Babin [40], further confirming the critical role of perceived value in consumer decision-making. In contrast, the mediation effect of perceived value between store atmosphere and rental intention is not significant, as its 95% confidence interval includes zero ([-0.022, 0.070]); therefore, hypothesis H2a is not supported. This finding differs from that of Jones [41], whose study emphasized perceptual differences across consumer groups without distinguishing specific store types. By focusing on the context of destination apparel rental, the present study further demonstrates that consumers tend to rely more heavily on practical and functional attributes—such as apparel hygiene, quality, price, and service experience—when forming cognitive value judgments that subsequently influence rental intention. These attributes are closely associated with cost-benefit evaluations and utilitarian considerations, making them more likely to be processed through perceived value within the organism stage of the S–O–R framework. In contrast, prior research in environmental psychology and retailing suggests that atmospheric cues (e.g., visual design, lighting, color, and scent) are predominantly sensory and experiential in nature, and thus are more likely to evoke immediate affective reactions or holistic impressions rather than reflective value assessments [12] [21]. Accordingly, the non-significant mediating effect of perceived value in the relationship between store atmosphere and rental intention may indicate that atmospheric stimuli operate through an affective or experiential pathway that bypasses cognitive value evaluation, highlighting the existence of differentiated organism-level processing mechanisms for atmospheric versus functional stimuli within the S–O–R model.

Across the mediation paths linking the seven store image dimensions to rental intention, the 95% confidence intervals for perceived risk do not include zero, indicating that all mediation effects are significant and thereby supporting hypotheses H3a–H3g. This result is consistent with the findings of McCoy [35], Yuan [50], and Tymoshchuk [52], and further demonstrates that perceived risk plays an important role in consumer decision-making within the context of destination apparel rental.

Building on these significant mediation effects, a comparison of the bootstrap indirect effects further reveals the relative strength of perceived value and perceived risk across different store image dimensions. For store atmosphere, the indirect effect through perceived value is not significant, whereas the effect through perceived risk is significant ($\beta = 0.073$), indicating that atmospheric cues influence rental intention primarily through risk-related perceptions rather than value evaluations. For store location, promotion, price positioning, and service experience, the mediating effects of perceived value are stronger than those of perceived risk, suggesting that these dimensions enhance rental intention mainly by improving overall value assessments. For apparel quality, the magnitudes of the two indirect effects are relatively similar ($\beta_{\text{value}} = 0.058$; $\beta_{\text{risk}} = 0.068$), indicating that consumers engage in both value appraisal and risk evaluation when assessing garment quality. In contrast, for apparel hygiene, the mediating effect of perceived risk ($\beta = 0.092$) is substantially stronger than that of perceived value ($\beta = 0.049$), highlighting the dominant role of risk avoidance in hygiene-related decision-making. Overall, different store image dimensions exhibit differentiated dominance patterns between value-driven and risk-driven mechanisms. These results suggest that travel photography apparel rental stores should prioritize factors that significantly enhance perceived value and reduce perceived risk—particularly apparel hygiene, apparel quality, and store location—in order to effectively strengthen consumers' rental intention. At the same time, for nonsignificant paths, such as the effect of store atmosphere on perceived value, alternative strategies may be adopted to directly enhance rental intention.

In addition, within the S–O–R framework, environmental stimuli are generally expected to influence behavioral responses through organismic evaluation processes, while also allowing for certain stimuli to exert more immediate effects on behavior. In the present study, the significance of most indirect paths through perceived value and perceived risk indicates that store image primarily affects rental intention through consumers' cognitive evaluations. Meanwhile, the remaining direct effects suggest that some store image cues may operate through additional internal psychological processes that are not fully captured by perceived value and perceived risk. Accordingly, the coexistence of mediated and direct effects reflects the

multidimensional nature of consumer responses to store image in the context of travel photography apparel rental.

Table 7. Bootstrap mediation effect

Hypothesis	Model Path	Estimate	SE	LLCL	ULCL	Result
H2a	X1→Z1→Y	0.022	0.023	-0.022	0.070	---
H3a	X1→Z2→Y	0.073	0.025	0.033	0.131	Partial Mediation
H2b	X2→Z1→Y	0.159	0.052	0.056	0.262	Partial Mediation
H3b	X2→Z2→Y	0.082	0.025	0.041	0.138	Partial Mediation
H2c	X3→Z1→Y	0.076	0.025	0.033	0.129	Partial Mediation
H3c	X3→Z2→Y	0.052	0.022	0.015	0.098	Partial Mediation
H2d	X4→Z1→Y	0.058	0.023	0.018	0.107	Partial Mediation
H3d	X4→Z2→Y	0.068	0.023	0.031	0.118	Partial Mediation
H2e	X5→Z1→Y	0.049	0.023	0.008	0.099	Partial Mediation
H3e	X5→Z2→Y	0.092	0.027	0.045	0.152	Partial Mediation
H2f	X6→Z1→Y	0.079	0.026	0.035	0.134	Partial Mediation
H3f	X6→Z2→Y	0.045	0.021	0.008	0.092	Partial Mediation
H2g	X7→Z1→Y	0.065	0.025	0.021	0.118	Partial Mediation
H3g	X7→Z2→Y	0.049	0.021	0.013	0.095	Partial Mediation

CONCLUSION

This study is grounded in the stimulus–organism–response (S–O–R) framework and systematically examines the mechanism through which travel photography apparel rental store image influences consumers' rental intention. A theoretical model was developed and empirically tested using questionnaire survey data, structural equation modeling, and the Bootstrap method. The results not only confirm the direct effects of seven store image dimensions on rental intention but also reveal the mediating roles of perceived value and perceived risk, thereby deepening the understanding of consumer decision-making mechanisms in the context of travel photography consumption.

The main effect analysis indicates that all seven dimensions of travel photography apparel rental store image exert significant positive effects on rental intention, with the strength of influence ranked as follows: apparel hygiene, apparel quality, service experience, store location, store atmosphere, in-store promotion, and price positioning. Among these, apparel hygiene and apparel quality are the most critical factors, reflecting consumers' strong concern for cleanliness, safety, and comfort, which directly shape their trust and rental intention. Service experience also plays an important role, suggesting that efficient and attentive service can effectively strengthen rental intention. By contrast, store location and atmosphere serve a supportive role, while in-store promotion and price positioning, although statistically significant, exert relatively limited effects, indicating that consumers in the travel photography context place greater emphasis on quality and experiential attributes than on price factors.

The mediation analysis results show that perceived value partially mediates the relationships between store location, in-store promotion, apparel quality, apparel hygiene, price positioning, service experience, and rental intention, suggesting that a favorable store image enhances rental intention by increasing consumers' value perceptions. In contrast, the mediating effect of perceived value between store atmosphere and rental intention is not significant, indicating that atmospheric cues do not influence consumer behavior through a rational value-evaluation pathway. Meanwhile, perceived risk exhibits significant partial mediation effects between all seven store image dimensions and rental intention, demonstrating that consumers simultaneously weigh value acquisition and risk avoidance during the decision-making process. Among these dimensions, apparel hygiene and service experience play particularly important roles in reducing perceived risk. Taken together, these findings reveal a dual psychological mechanism in destination apparel rental decisions, characterized by the coexistence of value-driven motivation and risk-avoidance considerations, while the effect of store atmosphere is more likely to operate through affective or experiential pathways that are not fully captured by perceived value as a cognitive mediator.

The chain mediation analysis further confirms the synergistic roles of perceived value and perceived risk, showing that along certain paths, store image enhances consumers' rental intention by simultaneously increasing perceived value and reducing perceived risk. This result indicates that store image not only strengthens consumers' positive cognitive evaluations but also helps alleviate their uncertainty and concerns.

Regarding research limitations, the sample in this study is primarily drawn from Chinese consumers and does not sufficiently cover cross-cultural contexts, which may to some extent limit the external generaliza-

bility of the findings. In addition, the use of cross-sectional data makes it difficult to capture the dynamic evolution of rental intention across different stages of decision-making. Moreover, the study mainly focuses on store image variables and does not fully consider the potential influence of digital platform factors or sociocultural differences. Based on these limitations, future research could proceed in several directions: first, expanding the sample to include consumers from different regions and cultural backgrounds to enhance external validity; second, adopting longitudinal research designs to examine the dynamic mechanisms underlying changes in rental intention over time; and third, incorporating a sustainable consumption perspective to explore the roles of green values and environmental concern in destination apparel rental. Overall, this study not only verifies the critical role of travel photography apparel rental store image in shaping consumers' rental intention but also systematically elucidates the mediating mechanisms of perceived value and perceived risk, providing important theoretical foundations and practical implications for store image optimization and competitiveness enhancement.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization - Lu L; methodology - Lu L and Qu H; formal analysis - Lu L and Jing Q; investigation - Lu L; resources - Lu L and Jing Q; writing-original draft preparation Lu L; writing-review and editing Qu H and Jing Q. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Human Research Subjects

This study involved human research participants and was conducted in accordance with all relevant guidelines and regulations for human subject research. All procedures were reviewed and approved by the appropriate institutional committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation in the study.

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