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Unraveling Tourists’ Responsible Behaviour Intention Towards the Environment

Siti Intan Nurdiana Wong Abdullah *
Faculty of Economic and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia
Malaysia

Zaiton Samdin
Faculty of Economic and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia
Malaysia

Phuah Kit Teng
Faculty of Business, Communication and Law, INTI International University
Malaysia

Bernard Lim Jit Heng
Faculty of Business, Communication and Law, INTI International University
Malaysia

*Corresponding author’s Email: nurdiana.w@gmail.com
Research Highlights

Despite the awareness on global climate change and reminder on environmental protection, it remains a challenge to promote sustainable tourism. The existing literatures on tourists’ sustainable behaviours pinpointed the emergence of environmentally-conscious tourists, yet the antecedents of their behaviours have not been fully established. Responsible environmental behavioral intentions are expected to be relevant predecessors for sustainable tourism. Thus, this study applies Responsible Environmental Behaviour model (REB) by Hines et.al (1986), which is tested alongside with Consumption Values Theory (Sheth et al., 1991) and destination image. This research proposed four hypotheses along with environmental consumption values and environmental attitude. In comparison, tourists that have higher levels of environmental knowledge and positive image of the destination will have higher intention to behave in an environmentally responsible manner.

Graphical Abstract
Research Objectives

The irresponsible consumption patterns of tourists were identified as a barrier towards the efforts that drive sustainable efforts (Neto, 2003). Promoting responsible consumption behaviour is a vital for sustainable development, whereby environmental and social needs are required to achieve long-term economic growth. Thus, the knowledge contribution of each dimension towards improving pro-environmental behaviour among potential visitors can attract the right segment of tourists and improve conservational efforts. Despite the study of tourists’ responsible environmental behavior existed, gap of knowledge in predicting their behavior still remains. This study aims to narrow the ‘knowledge-behaviour gaps’. As such, the main objective of this study is to examine the predictors of tourists’ environmental knowledge, consumption values, attitude and destination image towards their responsible environmental behaviour intention.

Methodology

Quantitative data is collected through face-to-face method to provide immediate responses while attaining high response rate. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed using convenience sampling to tourists at the Langkawi jetty. Only 103 usable questionnaires were returned for further analyses. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies and was pretested among four experts before conducting the final survey. The data were analysed by applying the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method through SmartPLS statistical software. The PLS method follows a two-stage approach as the research model employed is a second-order reflective-formative hierarchical model. Furthermore, PLS-SEM can handle complicated models and small sample sizes to produce reliable statistical results.

Results

The measurement model; which consists of convergent and discriminant validity analysis, was validated satisfactorily for the first and second order constructs. The structural model’s
path analysis was then examined to test the respective hypotheses. Despite that the five dimensions of consumption values (functional, emotional, social, epistemic and conditional) had a significant relationship towards consumption values, the variables were found to have no influence on environmental behaviour intention. This indicates that tourists are not motivated by personal gains to behave responsibly. In comparison, this study revealed that destination image has the most significant relationship towards tourists’ intention to behave in an environmentally responsible way. Environmental knowledge and destination image had a medium effect size towards behaviour intention. Surprisingly, environmental attitude were found to have no impact towards the tourists’ intention to behave in a responsible manner. Thus, this study confirms that the increase in environmental concern have no impact on their intention to take care of the environment during vacation (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014).

Findings

It is inferred that pictureque images of the local destination can be used to communicate with potential tourists (Jamaludin & Aziz, 2018). As they develop positive images of the destination, their environmental concern increases and will help to conserve it. Besides, tourists who are knowledgeable about climate change and pollution would have a higher intention to behave responsibly. Environmental educational programmes has been found to significantly increase pro-environmental behaviours (Zsóka et al., 2013; Varela-Candamio, 2018). As majority of the respondents are well-educated, information on environmental impact can assist in creating a generation that would protect the environment.

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References


