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## **Advancing Sustainable Consumer Behavior: Insights and Strategies for Tourism and Hospitality in the Eco-Conscious Era**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Various types of environmental issues pose a significant threat to nature. Environmental sustainability is a key focus in today's tourism and hospitality sectors. Sustainable consumer behavior plays a crucial role in protecting the environment, which in turn benefits society. To better understand sustainable consumption and encourage eco-friendly consumer actions, this research offers a clear understanding of sustainable consumer behavior and reviews key theories from tourism and environmental psychology, including the Theory of Reasoned Action, Norm Activation Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, Model of Goal-Directed Behavior, and Value-Belief-Norm Theory. Additionally, this study highlights the main factors driving sustainable consumer behavior, such as green image, everyday pro-environmental actions, environmental knowledge, attachment to green products, social norms, feelings of pride and guilt, corporate social responsibility, perceived effectiveness, connection to nature, and green values. Finally, the paper presents insights from recent research on environmental sustainability and consumer behavior in tourism and hospitality. This study, along with other articles in this special issue, helps create a platform for collaboration across these industries, aiming to promote eco-friendly consumption and sustainability.

### **KEYWORDS:**

Environmentally-sustainable consumer behavior; tourism and hospitality; key drivers of eco-friendly behaviors; theories related to environmentally-sustainable behaviors; environmental sustainability

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Various environmental issues, such as the greenhouse effect, pollution (air, water, and soil), species extinction, and depletion of natural resources, pose significant threats to the environment's sustainability (Wang et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2020). These problems largely stem from human behaviors that harm the environment (Hopkins, 2020; Steg & Vlek, 2009; Xu et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020). Researchers agree that addressing these challenges requires changing human behaviors to be more environmentally sustainable (Han, 2020; Steg & Vlek, 2009). In particular, shifting individual consumption habits—such as how people purchase and use products in a more eco-friendly way—is seen as essential for environmental sustainability (Halder et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

Over the past few decades, promoting sustainable consumer behavior has become a crucial topic of interest in both the consumer market and academic research (Dong et al., 2020; Garvey & Bolton, 2017). Though hard to define precisely, environmentally sustainable consumer behavior, also known as

environmentally responsible consumer behavior, generally refers to actions that conserve resources (like water and energy), minimize environmental damage (such as reducing waste), meet societal green needs, and enhance personal quality of life (Bridges & Wilhelm, 2008; Dong et al., 2020; Han, 2020). Similarly, Krajhanzl (2010) describes pro-environmental behavior as actions that are considered, based on environmental science, to protect or contribute to a healthier environment.

Terms like environmentally responsible behavior (Kaiser et al., 1999), environmentally sustainable behavior (Clayton & Myers, 2009), environment-protecting or preserving behavior (Krajhanzl, 2010), ecological behavior (Kaiser et al., 1999), and green behavior (Han, 2020) are often used interchangeably with pro-environmental behavior. Environmentally sustainable consumer behavior is a vital aspect of pro-social consumption, benefiting both the environment and society as a whole (Black & Cherrier, 2010; Halder et al., 2020; Park et al., 2018; Steg & Vlek, 2009).

Sustainable consumption is becoming an increasingly important issue in the tourism and hospitality industry (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017; Wang et al., 2020). With more people recognizing that many environmental problems stem from tourism activities and development (Trang et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020), the focus on eco-friendly consumption and sustainable product development is growing. Today, customers are increasingly demanding green products, such as eco-friendly hotels, restaurants, cruises, and airlines, and are showing a greater willingness to adopt sustainable consumption practices (Chen et al., 2012; Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Trang et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2018). As a result, many companies in the tourism and hospitality sectors are becoming more proactive in making their operations and products environmentally friendly (Afifah & Asnan, 2015; Hopkins, 2020; Lee et al., 2013). At the same time, consumers are becoming more aware of the need for sustainable behaviors, both in their consumption choices and in their everyday lives (Choi et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2020).

This research aims to contribute to the tourism and hospitality literature on sustainable consumption and purchasing behavior by addressing gaps in the existing studies. While researchers have explored environmentally sustainable consumer behavior (Bridges & Wilhelm, 2008; Chan, 2001; Joshi & Rahman, 2015), it has not been clearly defined in the context of tourism and hospitality. Although efforts have been made to apply and expand social and environmental psychology theories (Choi et al., 2015; Han, 2015; Young et al., 2020), extended discussions on sustainable consumer behavior and its related theories in these fields are still lacking. Understanding the factors that drive sustainable behavior is essential for developing effective strategies to reduce the environmental impact of tourism (Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2020), yet comprehensive reviews on these drivers are limited.

This study explores the concept of environmentally sustainable consumer behavior and its benefits for the environment. It also provides a review of key social and environmental psychology theories that help explain pro-environmental behavior among consumers. Furthermore, the paper discusses the main factors driving sustainable consumer behavior and offers a conceptual framework for understanding them. In the final section, this paper introduces nine articles included in the special issue on "Sustainability and Consumer Behavior" and highlights their contributions.

## **ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

Currently, there is no clear consensus on the definition of environmentally sustainable consumer behavior. In environmental psychology, terms like pro-environment behavior and green behavior are often used to describe actions that support environmental sustainability (Bridges & Wilhelm, 2008; Han, 2020). In simple terms, environmentally sustainable behavior refers to actions that either do not harm the environment or positively contribute to its well-being (Halder et al., 2020; Steg & Vlek, 2009). According to Steg and Vlek (2009), it is any behavior that either avoids damage or is beneficial to the environment.

In this study, environmentally sustainable consumer behavior is defined as actions taken by individuals during the consumption of products or services that either have minimal impact or bring benefits to the environment.

In consumer behavior literature, these actions are often described as green consumption activities (Black & Cherrier, 2010; Chan, 2001; Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Examples of green behaviors include eco-friendly purchasing, conserving energy, saving natural resources, reducing waste, using organic or green products, and opting for public transportation (Dong et al., 2012; Leary et al., 2014; Minton et al., 2018; Singh & Verma, 2017). Environmentally sustainable consumption encompasses all consumer behaviors that help reduce environmental impact (Han, 2020).

The most common environmentally sustainable behaviors among consumers include green purchasing, recycling, and conserving natural resources (Dong et al., 2020; Garvey & Bolton, 2017; Zhao et al., 2014). In the tourism and hospitality industry, such behaviors include saving water, reusing towels, conserving energy, buying eco-friendly products, and reducing food waste at tourist destinations (Choi et al., 2015; Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017; Untaru et al., 2016). Many studies have focused on the purchase of eco-friendly or green products, particularly in areas like green hotels (Choi et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018), green restaurants (Moon, 2021), sustainable destinations (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017; Werner et al., 2020), and other green venues like cafes, museums, and conventions. Offering these green products helps businesses and destinations meet the growing demand for environmentally friendly options, boosting their competitiveness in the marketplace.

Pro-environmental purchasing, a key form of sustainable consumer behavior in tourism, involves travelers making eco-friendly choices to support environmental preservation (Han, 2020). These responsible choices stem from complex decision-making processes (Chan, 2001; Joshi & Rahman, 2015) and result in reduced environmental impact or even positive benefits for the environment (Chan, 2001; Dong et al., 2020; Minton et al., 2018; Singh & Verma, 2017). In the context of tourism, travelers' sustainable consumption behaviors play a crucial role in preserving tourist destinations, while irresponsible behaviors contribute to environmental degradation (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017).

## **THEORIES UNDERPINNING ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

This section reviews key theories from social and environmental psychology, including the Theory of Reasoned Action, the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior, the Norm Activation Theory, and the Value-Belief-Norm Theory. These well-established theories have been widely applied to explain pro-environmental behaviors among consumers (Han, 2020; Manosuthi et al., 2020; Megeirhi et al., 2020; Onwezen et al., 2013). They suggest that environmentally sustainable consumer behaviors are driven by either pro-social motives or self-interest (Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019; Han, 2015; Meng et al., 2020).

### **THEORY OF REASONED ACTION AND THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR**

In their efforts to explain pro-environmental behavior, researchers and industry professionals typically focus on specific behaviors such as water conservation, recycling, energy saving, using public transportation, avoiding disposable products, or engaging in environmental protection activities (Moon, 2021; Paiano et al., 2020; Untaru et al., 2016). These behaviors are of particular interest because understanding the factors that drive them is key to developing interventions that encourage eco-friendly practices and reduce environmental problems.

For decades, scholars in environmental psychology, social behavior, and travel behavior have heavily relied on the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) to explain customer pro-environmental behaviors (Garay et al., 2019; Han, 2020). These theories have been widely tested and proven effective across various behavioral domains.

According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, an individual's intention to engage in a particular behavior is the strongest predictor of actual behavior. This intention is shaped by two main factors: the individual's attitude toward the behavior and the subjective norm, or perceived social pressure (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). The theory highlights the importance of these attitudinal and social factors, applying them to specific behaviors of interest (Meng et al., 2020). Attitude refers to how positively or negatively an individual views performing a certain behavior, based on their beliefs about the potential outcomes and the value they place on those outcomes (Ajzen, 1991; Manosuthi et al., 2020).

Subjective norm refers to the social pressure an individual feels to either engage in or avoid a particular behavior, influenced by the expectations of important people in their life, such as family members, teachers, or peers (Ajzen, 1991; Jacobson et al., 2011). Normative beliefs reflect these referents' expectations, while motivation to comply refers to how much the individual values those expectations (Meng et al., 2020; Moon, 2021).

The Theory of Planned Behavior extends the original model by including perceived behavioral control, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This factor recognizes that some behaviors may be influenced by both volitional (intended) and non-volitional (uncontrollable) factors. Perceived behavioral control is shaped by control beliefs—perceptions of the presence or absence of factors that facilitate or hinder the behavior—and perceived power, which reflects the significance of those factors (Ajzen, 1991; Manosuthi et al., 2020; Moon, 2021). Together, these elements help predict whether an individual will follow through on their intentions to act in an environmentally responsible way.

## **MODEL OF GOAL DIRECTED BEHAVIOUR**

In the effort to understand individuals' environmentally sustainable behavior, researchers often focus on goals such as using green products, consuming healthy eco-friendly food, responsible travel, or adopting an energy-efficient lifestyle—behaviors that help reduce environmental harm (Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019; Han & Hwang, 2014; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). These goals are critical because understanding what drives them can help design strategies that encourage pro-environmental behaviors and reduce environmental degradation.

The Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB) has gained popularity due to its stronger predictive power compared to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), especially when explaining goal-centered behaviors across various fields (Kim et al., 2020). While TPB primarily focuses on behavior, MGB sees behavior as a means to achieve specific goals (Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001), emphasizing a goal-oriented approach.

According to MGB, behavioral intention, the direct and strongest predictor of actual behavior, is influenced by several processes: motivation (desire for the behavior), volitional factors (attitude and subjective norm), non-volitional factors (perceived behavioral control), emotional responses (anticipated positive and negative emotions), and habitual patterns (frequency of past behaviors). To provide a more comprehensive understanding of intention and behavior, MGB adds critical elements to the TPB, including desire, anticipated emotions, and past behavior frequency (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2004).

MGB improves upon TPB in three key ways:

1. **Desire as a direct driver**: Desire is seen as a key determinant of behavioral intention, representing the motivation to perform the behavior to achieve a specific goal (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006). This desire stems from a mix of attitude, subjective norm, perceived control, and anticipated emotions (Carrus et al., 2008; Han & Hwang, 2014; Kim et al., 2020).
2. **Inclusion of anticipated emotions**: MGB considers the emotional outcomes individuals expect after performing a behavior, which can be positive or negative. These anticipated emotions are seen as important motivators alongside volitional and non-volitional factors (Kim et al., 2020; Thomson et al., 2008).
3. **Impact of past behavior**: By incorporating the frequency and recency of past behavior, MGB acknowledges the role of habits in shaping future intentions and actions, especially in goal-centered behaviors. Past behavior is particularly influential in situations where actions are less stable or not well-learned, acting as a direct driver of future behavior (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Ouellette & Wood, 1998).

## **NORM ACTIVATION THEORY**

People's everyday actions, including their consumption habits, can harm the environment, but they can also adopt pro-environmental behaviors to reduce this harm (Rosenthal & Ho, 2020). For the past forty years, researchers have often used the norm activation theory to explain these pro-environmental actions (Han, 2020; Klöckner, 2013; Schwartz, 1977). This theory, also known as the norm activation model, includes concepts like awareness of consequences, feeling responsible, and personal norms (Bamberg & Moser, 2007; Denley et al., 2020; Schwartz, 1977; Stern et al., 1999).

Personal norms play a crucial role in influencing how awareness of consequences and feelings of responsibility affect pro-environmental behavior (Bamberg & Moser, 2007; Shi et al., 2017). A personal norm is a person's sense of moral duty to act based on their understanding of the negative effects of not acting and their sense of responsibility (Han, 2014; Rosenthal & Ho, 2020). This sense of moral duty can also be called a moral norm or moral obligation (Denley et al., 2020; Han, 2014). Personal norms guide pro-environmental behavior (Shi et al., 2017). The norm activation occurs when someone realizes the negative impact of their actions and feels responsible (De Groot & Steg, 2009).

There are two main ways to understand norm activation theory (Han, 2014; Steg & De Groot, 2010). The first is a sequential model where personal norms are influenced by awareness of consequences through feelings of responsibility (Onwezen et al., 2013; Steg & De Groot, 2010). The second model suggests that awareness of consequences and responsibility directly lead to personal norms, which then drive pro-environmental behavior (Bamberg & Moser, 2007; Rosenthal & Ho, 2020). The first model (awareness of consequences → responsibility → personal norm → pro-environmental behavior) is more widely accepted in environmental psychology and consumer behavior (Onwezen et al., 2013; Steg & De Groot, 2010). This model has been supported by research from Han (2014) and Onwezen et al. (2013) and aligns with Schwartz and Howard's (1981) ideas.

## **VALUE BELIEF NORM THEORY**

Schwartz's (1977) norm activation model was developed to explain general pro-social or altruistic behavior, while Stern et al.'s (1999) value-belief-norm (VBN) theory specifically focuses on pro-environmental behavior. The VBN theory builds on the norm activation model (Choi et al., 2015; Han,

2015; Megeirhi et al., 2020; Young et al., 2020), integrating value orientations and an ecological worldview into the framework. It suggests that environmentally responsible actions are shaped by connections between a person's sense of obligation to act (normative factor), value orientations (biospheric, altruistic, and egoistic), and beliefs (ecological worldview, perceived negative consequences, and responsibility) (Choi et al., 2015; De Groot et al., 2007; Stern, 2000).

The VBN theory works as a step-by-step process, where pro-environmental behavior is influenced by a chain of factors: value orientations, ecological worldview, awareness of negative consequences, responsibility, and a sense of moral obligation to act (Klößner, 2013; Young et al., 2020).

In this theory, a value is defined as "a desirable goal that guides a person's life" (Schwartz, 1992). Among the value orientations, biospheric values relate to environmental concerns (Stern, 2000; Stern et al., 1999) and are commonly used to explain pro-environmental behaviors (De Groot et al., 2007; Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017). Biospheric values reflect a personal commitment to protecting the environment (Han, 2015; Stern, 2000), while altruistic values focus on the well-being of others, and egoistic values are about self-benefit (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017; Stern, 2000).

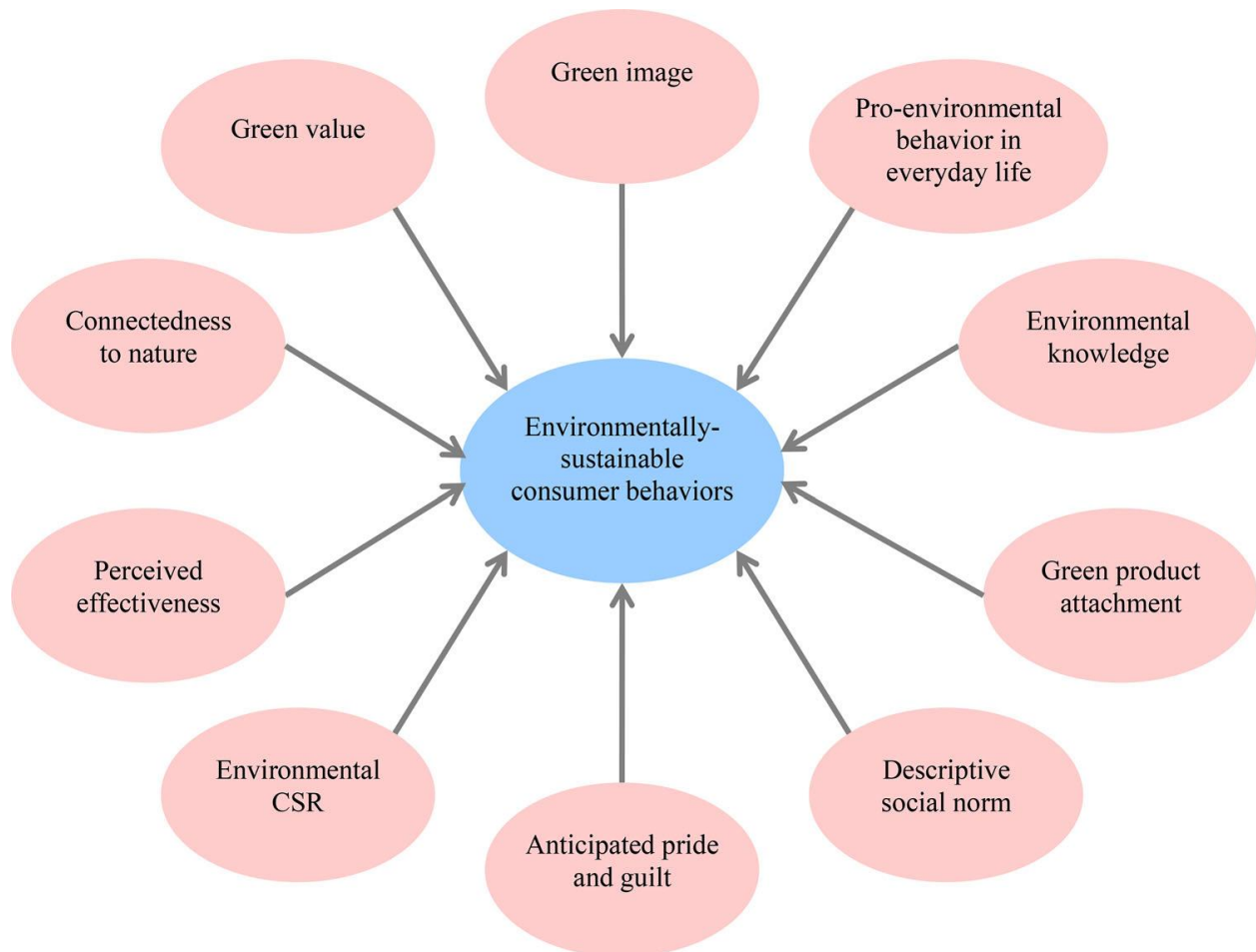
An ecological worldview is a person's tendency to engage in eco-friendly actions (Stern et al., 1999). "Adverse consequences for valued objects" is another term for "awareness of consequences" (De Groot & Steg, 2009) and refers to a person's understanding of negative outcomes for things they care about when they don't act in an environmentally responsible way (Schwartz, 1977). Ascribed responsibility refers to a person feeling personally accountable for these negative outcomes (Schwartz & Howard, 1981). In line with the norm activation theory, the "sense of obligation" refers to a personal moral duty to perform a specific pro-environmental action (Han, 2015; Young et al., 2020). The VBN theory, combining these concepts, has been widely supported in research on environmental behavior and tourism (Choi et al., 2015; Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017).

## **KEY FACTORS AFFECTING ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER BEHAVIORS**

Extensive research has highlighted the importance of key factors in social and environmental psychology theories, such as attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, emotions, desire, past behavior, awareness of consequences, responsibility, personal norms, value orientations, and ecological worldview (Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019; Denley et al., 2020; Han, 2015; Ramkissoon, 2020; Rosenthal & Ho, 2020; Shi et al., 2017; Young et al., 2020). These factors have been widely studied and tested in various research on environmentally responsible consumer behavior (Bamberg & Moser, 2007; Klößner, 2013; Onwezen et al., 2013; Steg & De Groot, 2010).

In addition to these core concepts, other factors such as green image (Lee et al., 2010), everyday pro-environmental behaviors (Han & Hyun, 2018; Untaru et al., 2016), environmental knowledge (Chan et al., 2014), attachment (Rosenthal & Ho, 2020), social norms (Matthies et al., 2012), anticipated pride and guilt (Klößner & Matthies, 2004), corporate social responsibility (Afifah & Asnan, 2015), perceived effectiveness (Han et al., 2017), connectedness to nature (Dutcher et al., 2007), and green values (Halder et al., 2020) have also been identified as key components in understanding environmentally sustainable decision-making.

These variables cover cognitive/perceptual aspects (green image, environmental knowledge, corporate social responsibility, perceived effectiveness, green values), emotional aspects (anticipated pride and guilt), conative aspects (attachment, connectedness to nature), normative aspects (social norms), and habitual aspects (everyday pro-environmental behaviors). Together, they are essential for understanding and promoting sustainable behavior and are widely discussed in environmental consumption research.



**Figure 1. Key drivers of environmentally-sustainable consumer behaviors.**

### **GREEN IMAGE**

Image is often defined as the set of beliefs or impressions that a person has about a product, service, or place and its characteristics (Kotler et al., 1993). Similarly, Han et al. (2018) described green image as customers' overall perception of a green product or service and its features. This image is shaped by the information and knowledge gathered and processed over time about the green object (Assael, 1984; Lee et al., 2010). Some researchers suggest that image consists of multiple stages—cognitive (thoughts), affective (feelings), conative (actions), and overall image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). However, the common view is that image is cross-sectional, meaning it develops as a single snapshot (Assael, 1984; Han et al., 2018; Kotler et al., 1993; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). A positive green image is essential for the

long-term success of any business (Han et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2018). Due to its importance, green image has been a key topic in consumer behavior (Kotler & Gertner, 2002), environmental psychology (Wu et al., 2016), and tourism research (Lee et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2018).

## **PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIORS IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

Eco-friendly consumers who choose green products or services tend to engage in sustainable behaviors in their everyday lives and believe that these actions help protect the environment (Laroche et al., 2001; Paco & Rapose, 2009; Untaru et al., 2016). When these conservation efforts are repeated regularly, they become habits (Han & Hyun, 2018; Untaru et al., 2016). These everyday pro-environmental habits are considered key to understanding sustainable consumer behavior because daily eco-friendly actions directly influence sustainable decisions (Han & Hyun, 2018; Laroche et al., 2001). People's awareness of environmental issues is often reflected in their daily habits, such as reducing disposable product use, conserving water, saving energy, reusing towels, and recycling, as well as in their purchasing choices, like buying green products (Laroche et al., 2001; Paco & Rapose, 2009). Promoting these everyday pro-environmental behaviors has been shown to significantly increase eco-friendly consumption, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industries (Han & Hyun, 2018; Untaru et al., 2016).

## **ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE**

Environmental knowledge plays a key role in explaining environmentally sustainable consumption behavior and is seen as a crucial cognitive factor (Boo & Park, 2013; Han & Hyun, 2017; Kaiser et al., 1999). According to Chan et al. (2014), it is an essential prerequisite for consumers to develop sustainable intentions and behaviors, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors. Environmental knowledge refers to a consumer's understanding of environmental concepts, issues, and problems, and how to align their actions accordingly (Han & Hyun, 2017; Laroche et al., 1996).

Consumers are less likely to engage in certain behaviors if they feel their knowledge is insufficient, as they want to avoid uncertainty (Chan et al., 2014; Kaiser et al., 1999). People tend to believe their knowledge about a product or behavior is higher when they feel more informed than others (Boo & Park, 2013; Kaiser et al., 1999). This knowledge often triggers a sense of moral responsibility, leading to more pro-environmental actions, especially in the context of green product consumption (Han & Hyun, 2017).

## **GREEN PRODUCT ATTACHMENT**

Customers who feel a strong connection to a product tend to remain loyal and continue purchasing it (Fedorikhin et al., 2008). Similarly, individuals attached to a particular brand or place are more likely to maintain their relationship with it (Thomson et al., 2005). When someone develops an attachment to a green or eco-friendly product, they are also more inclined to keep buying and using it (Jang et al., 2015). Green product attachment refers to a consumer's strong sense of connection or belonging to a specific eco-friendly product (Ailawadi et al., 2001). It is often described as an emotional bond between a consumer and a company's green product (Jang et al., 2015; Ramkissoon et al., 2018; Yuksel et al., 2010).

This attachment leads to positive purchasing decisions and encourages environmentally sustainable consumption behaviors (Jang et al., 2015). It often results in repeated purchases of sustainable products over non-green alternatives and fosters high product loyalty (Fedorikhin et al., 2008; Yuksel et al., 2010). For environmentally responsible companies, creating strong attachments between their green products and customers is crucial for maintaining customer relationships and ensuring long-term business success (Pedeliento et al., 2016; Thomson et al., 2005).



## **DESCRIPTIVE SOCIAL NORM**

In environmental behavior research, social norms are typically divided into two categories: injunctive social norms and descriptive social norms (Matthies et al., 2012; Steg & Vlek, 2009). Injunctive social norms, often called "subjective norms" (Han & Hwang, 2017), refer to the social pressure individuals feel to perform or avoid a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019). This concept is about what important people in someone's life approve or disapprove of (Smith et al., 2012). On the other hand, descriptive social norms describe what most people are actually doing in a given situation (Han & Hwang, 2017; Matthies et al., 2012).

Unlike personal norms, which are driven by intrinsic motivation (internal factors), descriptive social norms are based on extrinsic motivation (external influences) (Steg & Vlek, 2009). When social norms are strong, people tend to act in environmentally friendly ways due to external pressures (Smith et al., 2012; Steg & Vlek, 2009). Descriptive social norms are believed to influence various sustainable behaviors, such as choosing green hotels, consuming eco-friendly food, using sustainable transportation, and conserving natural resources (Han & Hwang, 2017; Steg & Vlek, 2009).

## **ANTICIPATED PRIDE AND GUILT**

When consumers engage in certain behaviors, they may experience positive or negative emotions, and they also predict how they might feel in the future when performing that same behavior (Bamberg & Möser, 2007; Klöckner & Matthies, 2004; Steg & Vlek, 2009). These feelings are referred to as "anticipated emotions" (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). However, the broad nature of positive and negative anticipated emotions makes them less effective in explaining pro-environmental behavior (Han et al., 2017). As a result, the more specific emotions of anticipated pride and guilt are commonly used to understand environmentally sustainable consumer behavior (Han et al., 2017).

Anticipated pride and guilt are key to understanding how consumers make sustainable decisions (Bamberg & Möser, 2007; Han, 2014). Unlike other self-conscious emotions, these arise when a person feels responsible for their actions and evaluates them based on personal ethical and social standards (Harth et al., 2013; Onwezen et al., 2014). Anticipated pride is associated with feelings of accomplishment, confidence, and self-worth, while anticipated guilt involves feelings of regret, remorse, and shame (Han et al., 2017).

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

An ethical company that actively engages in corporate social responsibility (CSR) focused on environmental protection is more likely to retain customers and build a strong reputation in today's eco-conscious market (Afifah & Asnan, 2015; Han et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2013). In the tourism and hospitality sectors, many businesses consistently work on implementing and promoting environmental CSR activities to enhance their competitive edge (Han et al., 2019). These efforts contribute positively to both society and the business world by fostering eco-friendly growth while safeguarding the environment (Chen et al., 2012). Environmental CSR ensures that a company operates in a way that aligns with environmental protection and adheres to local laws and government regulations (Montgomery & Stone, 2009).

There is strong evidence that a company's environmental CSR practices influence consumer decisions and behavior (Afifah & Asnan, 2015; Lee et al., 2013). Han et al. (2019) found that when consumers perceive a company as actively engaging in environmental CSR, they develop a more favorable image of the firm and are more likely to choose its eco-friendly products.

**PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS**

Numerous studies based on social and environmental psychology theories, particularly those focused on pro-social motivations, have shown that for moral norms to be effectively triggered, certain cognitive factors are needed (Han & Yoon, 2015; Roberts, 1996; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). One of the key factors is perceived effectiveness, which refers to an individual's belief in the impact their environmental efforts have on reducing harm to nature (Han & Yoon, 2015; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). In the environmental consumer behavior field, this concept is also known as self-efficacy (Han et al., 2017; Judge et al., 2007). An eco-conscious person is more aware of environmental issues, feels a shared responsibility for them, recognizes the importance of protecting the environment, and believes in the power of sustainable actions to address these challenges (Judge et al., 2007; Roberts, 1996). Consequently, a consumer's decision to engage in pro-environmental behavior, such as choosing a sustainable tourism product, is strongly influenced by their belief in the effectiveness of their conservation efforts (Han & Yoon, 2015).

No.	Article Title
1	Green-induced tourist equity: The cross-level effect of regional environmental performance
2	Hotels’ sustainability practices and guests’ familiarity, attitudes and behaviors
3	The anchoring effect of aviation green tax for sustainable tourism, based on the nudge theory
4	Application of internal environmental locus of control to the context of eco-friendly drone food delivery services
5	The impact of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus on inbound tourism in South Korea toward sustainable tourism
6	Exploring preferences and sustainable attitudes of Airbnb green users in the review comments and ratings: A text mining approach
7	An application of Delphi method and analytic hierarchy process in understanding hotel corporate social responsibility performance scale
8	Comparing resident and tourist perceptions of an urban park: A latent profile analysis of perceived place value
9	Understanding backpacker sustainable behavior using the tri-component attitude model

**Table 1. Articles in this special issue**

**CONNECTEDNESS TO NATURE**

Customers who feel a strong connection to nature are generally more likely to engage in environmentally sustainable behaviors (Dutcher et al., 2007; Mayer & Frantz, 2004). Research shows that people tend to act more responsibly toward the environment when they feel linked to the natural world (Gosling & Williams, 2010; Han & Hyun, 2017; Poon et al., 2015). Connectedness to nature is defined as the degree

to which individuals perceive themselves as part of the natural environment (Schultz, 2001). When people feel this connection, their motivation to protect the environment typically increases (Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Poon et al., 2015; Schultz, 2001). This sense of closeness to nature also enhances their attachment to eco-friendly products and drives more environmentally responsible behavior in their consumption choices (Han & Hyun, 2017; Mayer & Frantz, 2004).

## **GREEN VALUE**

Researchers have developed various frameworks to understand how customers make environmentally responsible decisions and behave (Halder et al., 2020; Monroe, 1991). One key element often included in these frameworks is "green value" (Halder et al., 2020; Han et al., 2018). Green value is essentially a customer's assessment of how effective an eco-friendly product or service is, based on their perception of what they gain versus what they give up (Zeithaml, 1988; Han et al., 2018). For example, if consumers perceive that the benefits of a green product (like high performance and health benefits) outweigh the costs (such as price and effort), they view the green value positively (Monroe, 1991; Oh, 2000; Zeithaml, 1988). Conversely, if the perceived costs are greater than the benefits, the green value is seen as lower (Monroe, 1991; Oh, 2000).

## **VALUE OF THE PAPERS IN SPECIAL ISSUE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

This special issue covers a range of important topics in tourism and hospitality, offering valuable insights into environmental sustainability. The articles included address various issues such as the impact of green practices on tourism, hotel sustainability efforts, and the influence of environmental policies on consumer behavior. For example, they explore how regional environmental performance affects tourist perceptions, the role of green taxes in sustainable tourism, and how eco-friendly practices are received by Airbnb users. The research presented here enhances our understanding of sustainable consumer behavior and provides new methods and practical knowledge for those in the industry.

- 1) While much research has explored how specific green practices can affect tourists' attitudes and behaviors, it has mostly focused on individual traits and overlooked the broader environmental context that shapes these attitudes and actions. As a result, studies on sustainable tourism have primarily looked at tourists' experiences and behaviors at their travel destinations, neglecting how environmental factors from their home region might influence them. Wong, Ruan, Cai, and Huang (2020) introduce the concept of "green equity" to describe how tourists' views of a destination's environmental efforts can enhance the destination's value, brand, and relationship with visitors. They propose a multilevel model showing how a destination's green practices can affect tourists' likelihood to return by influencing their perceptions of value and brand. This model suggests that environmental efforts at a destination can subconsciously influence tourists' decisions, based on their home region's environmental cues. Their research offers a new perspective on how these underlying beliefs about environmental practices can shape tourists' choices and evaluations of destinations.
- 2) Sustainability is a complex issue that includes social, economic, and environmental aspects. While hotels have been slow to adopt sustainability practices compared to other industries, research has focused on individual aspects like environmental or social sustainability (e.g., Namkung & Jang, 2017; Martinez & del Bosque, 2013). Olya, Altinay, Farmaki, Kenebayeva, and Gursoy (2020) have expanded our understanding by examining all three dimensions of sustainability (social, economic, and environmental) in a model to see how guest awareness of these dimensions affects their satisfaction and loyalty. Their study, which used data from hotel

guests in Kazakhstan and a multi-method approach, found that while being familiar with these dimensions increased guest satisfaction, it did not affect loyalty. However, combining social and economic dimensions, or environmental and social dimensions, could lead to increased loyalty. All three sustainability dimensions are essential for achieving both guest satisfaction and loyalty. Although familiarity alone is not essential, pairing it with social dimensions can enhance both satisfaction and loyalty.

- 3) The aviation industry's substantial contribution to climate change has raised growing concerns about environmental sustainability. It accounts for 40% of total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, more than car transport, which contributes 32% (Scott et al., 2010). Kim and Hyun (2020) explore the legitimacy of implementing aviation green taxes in countries that prioritize environmental and climate issues. Their study investigates how the nudge theory, which influences consumer decisions, affects those who are willing to pay environmental taxes. They found that the nudge had a significant impact on consumer behavior. This research adds to the sustainable tourism literature by examining factors that encourage voluntary changes in consumer behavior. The findings suggest that improving transparency and reducing tax resistance can positively affect travelers' views on aviation green taxes. Additionally, in countries where such taxes are not yet implemented, these insights could help encourage travelers to willingly support aviation green taxes, promoting long-term sustainable tourism.
- 4) Drones for food delivery can make consumption much more eco-friendly compared to traditional methods. More consumers are looking to make sustainable choices in their food consumption. People with a strong internal environmental locus of control (INELOC) are particularly committed to creating an eco-friendly environment through their actions. Hwang et al. (2020) use the concept of multifaceted INELOC, which includes green consumers, activists, advocates, and recyclers, to explore how it relates to the use of eco-friendly drone food delivery services. Their study examines the connections between INELOC, anticipated emotions, and the intention to use these services, revealing new insights. The findings suggest several ways to enhance consumers' intentions to engage in pro-environmental behaviors.
- 5) Sustainable tourism can be significantly affected by epidemics, which can have more severe impacts than anticipated, especially in today's highly interconnected world (Jamal & Budke, 2020). Epidemics not only restrict individual sustainable tourism behaviors but also lead to economic losses for countries (Jung & Sung, 2017). Even though the MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in South Korea ended in December 2015, the domestic economy and tourism sector did not quickly recover. There has been limited estimation of how epidemics affect inbound tourism demand. Choe et al. (2020) analyzed the impact of MERS on tourism demand in South Korea, using various forecasting methods like the Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average Model, Winters Exponential Smoothing Model, and Stepwise Autoregressive Model. Their findings showed that MERS had a statistically significant negative effect on South Korea's inbound tourism industry in 2015. Their models estimated that MERS resulted in a loss of 1,968,765 tourists and a reduction of 3.1 billion USD in tourism receipts from June to September 2015.
- 6) The rise of the sharing economy, driven by technology, social networks, and the internet, has transformed the Short-Term Rental (STR) accommodation industry. This shift, exemplified by platforms like Airbnb, has changed how tourists consume lodging, the conditions of sale, and the value created. Originally, the growth of STR platforms was fueled by consumers' desire for more sustainable options. While many studies have looked at changes in consumer behavior towards greener choices, few have explored this using big data or unstructured data like online reviews.

Serrano et al. (2020) address this gap by analyzing Airbnb users' preferences and attitudes towards sustainability using sentiment analysis and text mining of global online reviews. Their study finds a positivity bias in these reviews and shows that the concept of 'sustainability' is a dominant theme in the feedback from Airbnb's green users.

- 7) The measurement of hotel Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) performance using a standardized index has not been thoroughly examined. Wong, Kim, Lee, and Elliot (2020) used both Delphi and Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) methods to survey three groups: academics, hotel managers, and hotel customers. Their research found that the main contributors to CSR performance are the traditional domains of legal, ethical, and social/philanthropic responsibilities. These are followed by two new environmental domains related to rooms, restaurants, and other general areas, and financial/economic domains as secondary contributors. The study reveals that responses were consistent across stakeholder groups, highlighting the effectiveness of the scale for measuring hotel CSR performance. However, the impact of CSR varies slightly depending on the characteristics of the respondents, indicating that CSR impacts are sensitive to respondent diversity. These findings are valuable for defining CSR indicators and domains for assessing performance in the hotel industry.
- 8) In today's visitor economy, urban parks have become key recreational areas for both tourists and city residents. As a result, city governments are focusing on enhancing these parks to appeal to both groups. Research has shown that residents and tourists often value the same park differently, suggesting that effective management requires understanding these differing perceptions. Song and Shim (2021) address this gap by studying visitors at Gwanggyo Lake Park (GLP) in South Korea. Their research uses Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to identify three distinct visitor groups: Relationship Seekers, Activity Seekers, and Environment Seekers. The findings show that residents place the highest value on the environmental aspects of the park, while tourists prioritize recreational opportunities. The study also uncovers notable differences in the demographic and behavioral traits of residents and tourists. This research highlights the evolving roles of urban parks as they cater to both local residents and tourists, who are increasingly important in urban life.
- 9) Research on the sustainable practices of backpackers has grown over the past thirty years, but a thorough model for understanding their sustainable behavior is still missing in tourism studies. Backpacker tourism has the potential to contribute positively to sustainability through various economic, cultural, social, and environmental activities, but it can also involve unsustainable practices. The reasons behind these patterns of sustainable and unsustainable behavior among backpackers are not well explored, especially in relation to promoting responsible consumption aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12. Agyeiwaah et al. (2021) tackle this gap by exploring how backpacker motivation, perceived impacts of backpacking, and sustainable or unsustainable behaviors relate to their satisfaction, using the tri-component attitude model. Their findings show that backpacker motivations and perceived positive impacts of backpacking can predict sustainable behavior, while motivations alone can predict unsustainable behavior. Both perceived impacts and sustainable behavior are linked to backpacker satisfaction, with motivation being a crucial factor in understanding these behaviors.

## CONCLUSION

Customers play a significant role in achieving long-term environmental sustainability by adopting eco-friendly consumption patterns that go beyond short-term benefits (Dong et al., 2020; Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017; Laroche et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2018). Scholars in tourism and hospitality can help reduce the

environmental impact of consumer behavior by encouraging customers to make environmentally responsible choices in different situations. Promoting pro-environmental behaviors is more effective when planned systematically, implemented properly, and continuously evaluated (Manosuthi et al., 2020; Steg & Vlek, 2009; Untaru et al., 2016). To achieve this, it's essential to understand what environmentally sustainable behavior is, identify the theories explaining it, recognize the factors driving it, and review current research in tourism and hospitality, which has not been fully addressed in the literature. This study makes a valuable contribution by filling these gaps. Specifically, it provides (1) a clear definition of environmentally-sustainable consumer behavior, (2) a detailed review of social and environmental psychology theories, (3) a discussion on the key factors driving such behavior, and (4) introduces new studies in tourism and hospitality related to sustainability and consumer behavior.

This research, as an introduction to a special issue on environmental sustainability and consumer behavior, aims to enhance the understanding of environmentally responsible consumer behavior, support it, and contribute to environmental sustainability in the tourism and hospitality fields. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a guide to building a more sustainable future, with environmental sustainability being a key component. The variety of topics covered in this special section, along with the methodologies used, will inspire collaboration across hospitality, tourism, consumer behavior, and environmental psychology fields, working toward the shared goal of promoting pro-environmental consumption and sustainability. This special issue, along with this introductory paper and other articles, creates a platform for continued collaboration and future research on sustainable consumer behavior, addressing the needs of an eco-conscious market and society, while also aligning with the broader goals of sustainable development.

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