

To Visit and Preserve an Ecotourism Destination? The Moderating Effect of the Sense of Responsibility



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ABSTRACT: Tourists' intention to visit a local destination and the awareness of preservation is one of the key factors that lead to sustainability. The engagement of tourists in ecotourism enables them to demonstrate a sense of responsibility in contributing to the development and preservation of a destination while having their vacation. The current study employed the Model of Goal-Oriented Behaviour (MGB) to predict tourist attitudes and sense of responsibility as a moderator to examine the relationship between personal behaviour intention. Questionnaire was utilised to collect responses from 200 respondents. Structural equation modeling was used to examine the proposed research model. The findings indicated that escape, hedonic and social interaction significantly influenced tourists' attitudes toward ecotourism sites, and the sense of responsibility has moderated the relationships between the visitors' intention to visit and preserve ecotourism destinations. The findings also stated that tourists' intention to visit ecotourism sites was least significantly influenced by their attitudes, despite their attitudes to preserve ecotourism sites. The study is one of the few to investigate factors affecting the attitude of tourists in the context of ecotourism and utilised social responsibilities as moderators to study the intention to visit and to preserve. It provides new insight to the government sectors, communities, and other stakeholders regarding the motivations influencing the tourist intention to visit and preserve.

KEYWORDS: ecotourism; tourist; visit; preserve; sense of responsibility

Introduction

Ecotourism has been seen as a viable instrument for sustainable development through the initiatives of preservation of a natural destination and the responsible act of tourists. Indeed, ecotourism has steered growing attention from practitioners and academicians (Lee & Jan, 2018; Pham & Khanh, 2020). Ecotourism refers to responsible travel in natural reserves, taking care of the well-being, and engaging in translation and education (The International Ecotourism Society, 2018). Through ecotourism, people visit natural regions, enjoy their vacation, and simultaneously learn about a place's natural and cultural components without

endangering it. Such practices assist the local economies while giving tourists an environmentally favourable experience, ultimately promoting sustainable development and tourism.

In the coming decade, ecotourism is expected to impact the tourism industry and economy significantly. Global spending will increase at a greater rate than the overall tourism industry (Gaitonde, 2019). It is postulated that ecotourism is to grow to 25 % of the global tourism market in the near future and produce tourism revenue of US\$ 470 billion, according to the International Ecotourism Association (Gaitonde, 2019). To address the importance of ecotourism, the local government has made many efforts to improve travel accessibility to all ecotourism destinations (Yeo, 2021). In addition, a survey conducted in Malaysia, a developing country, has demonstrated that 30.4 % of visitors are involved in nature-related activities that can be considered indicative of ecotourism (Gaitonde, 2019).

Since tourism is a major source of revenue for the host countries, it is gaining considerable attention from academics and industry professionals concerned about the environment and promoting ecotourism. (Baniya & Paudel, 2016; Leong et al., 2022). It has been addressed by prior research because it enables tourists to experience and learn about the environment and the natural areas during their visit (Winter et al., 2019; Wondirad, Tolkach & King, 2020). Numerous studies have been conducted pre-and post-pandemic to address the impact of COVID-19 on the ecology and conservation area (Roy & Sharma, 2021; Paul & Roy, 2023). Such initiatives indicated the importance of predicting tourist attitudes toward the sustainability of ecotourism and the future trend of the 'new normal' among tourists, especially after the pandemic.

Past studies stated that the tourist experience is a personal experience characterised by psychological factors and a social experience involving interaction between individuals (Chan & Baum, 2007; Devesa et al., 2010; Kastenholz et al., 2012). Hence, a few psychographic predictors influencing the tourist ecotourism experience has been highlighted in the literature (creativity, escape, hedonism, enthusiasm, learning, and service quality) (Buonincontri et al., 2017; Chan & Baum, 2007). Additionally, nature, social interaction, and physical/mental health have been addressed as motivations influencing the tourist's environmental behaviour (Kil et al., 2014). Understanding and appreciating these drivers can influence individuals to develop more positive environmental attitudes, affecting their desire to interact with nature and inspiring them to behave more responsibly. Moreover, it was mentioned that personality factors such as a sense of responsibility significantly affected individual behaviour (He et al., 2019). As such, individuals, such as tourists, displayed a certain level of responsibility by taking on and fulfilling the associated obligations and responsibilities for the well-being of society (Li et al., 2022).

Despite a plethora of studies on tourist behaviour (Cham et al., 2022a; 2022b) and ecotourism, little is known about the tourist's intention to visit and to preserve a destination in the context of ecotourism (Hermawan et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2021; Naiman et al., 2021). The impact of a sense of responsibility in influencing tourist's attitudes in the tourism literature remained unclear as earlier studies mainly focus on corporate social responsibilities and in different tourism contexts (Donnelly & Wickham, 2020; Yoon et al., 2021). Also, a handful of studies on ecotourism have been conducted in the setting of developing nations, which may make it more challenging to comprehend tourists' intentions to visit and preserve natural areas (Ana, 2017; Khanra et al., 2021; Kil et al., 2014).

As such, by using the factors of learning, escape, hedonic and social interaction, the current study attempts to fill the gaps by assessing the tourists' behaviour on ecotourism and examining the intention to visit and to preserve the natural destination based on their attitude. Also, the impact of a sense of responsibility in moderating between attitude, intention to visit, and intention to preserve has been conducted as well. Hence, the goal of this study is to broaden the understanding of the Model of Goal-Oriented Behaviour (MGB) theory by extending the model and, at the same time, offering new insights into the topic from the ecotourism perspectives through the tourist's intention to visit and to preserve a natural area.

Literature Review

Model of Goal-oriented Behaviour (MGB)

Model of goal-oriented behaviour (MGB) offered insight into tourists' behaviour and addressed the importance of emotion, motivation and desire during personal behaviour decision-making. It also advocates that attitudes and subjective norms will affect individual behaviour (Lee et al., 2021; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). The theory was developed from the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and has been further developed to enhance the explanatory power (Chang et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2020). As such, this study incorporated learning, escape, hedonic and social interaction as motivations, attitude as one of the variables, the dependent variables are visit intention and preservation intention as behavioural intentions, and the sense of responsibilities as moderator. It was posited that the attitude of tourists is affected by learning, escape, hedonic and social interaction, while attitudes will influence tourist's intention to visit and protect nature. Subsequently, the sense of responsibility will moderate the attitudes toward the tourists' intention to visit and protect nature.

Learning

The definition of ecotourism indicates that tourists visit a natural area to experience, interpret and learn about the environment (Sharpley, 2006). As such, the intrinsic motivation of tourists is to learn from nature, learn through travel experiences, actively participate in sports activities, and meet like-minded people (Adam et al., 2019; Subramaniam et al., 2019). Prior studies addressed the main motivation of ecotourists is to understand the natural environment in wild or undisturbed areas such as national parks (Arowosafe et al., 2022). Tourists travel to a place to acquire new knowledge, develop ideas and construct a new vision while enjoying their vacation. They learn before traveling and reinforce their learning after visiting a place (Walter, 2013). Hence, it was postulated that:

H1: *There is a positive relationship between learning and attitude.*

Escape

In tourism, escape is referred to as an activity that enables guests to become fully immersed in the surroundings while letting go of daily stress (Buonincontri et al., 2017). It is one of the motivators for people to relax and temporarily get rid of the stress of daily activities (Aducci et al., 2021). It was mentioned that escaping or getting away to the natural environment is considered the most important motivation for ecotourists (Adam et al., 2019). Escape to relax

is one driving factor that encourages tourists to travel to destinations (Kruger & Saayman, 2010; Subramaniam et al., 2019). The fundamental idea of this concept is that tourists may escape from social environments and structures when their primary objective is to leave, and they may get away to something new or different when their goal is to immerse themselves in a different experiencing context. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: *There is a positive relationship between escape and attitude.*

Hedonic

Hedonic value is a cornerstone of tourism destinations. It refers to the perceptual pleasure that tourists desire in a tourist destination, such as fun, enjoyment, pleasure, and fantasy (Woodside et al., 2008). Hedonism enables visitors to partake in a variety of tourism-related activities, enjoy destination services, and take in the sights and sounds of their travel destination (Khairudin & Rahman, 2020). In addition, the main manifestations of hedonism include excitement closely related to wildlife and the natural environment (Ponsignon et al., 2021). Enjoyment is also the tendency of tourists to take hedonism as one of their motivations. As such, it was postulated that:

H3: *There is a positive relationship between hedonic and attitude.*

Social interaction

Social interaction is viewed as a situation where behaviour is observed and impacted by others, allowing for a firm grasp of particular situations or things. (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Social interaction provides a wide range of information exchange opportunities for both parties, thereby changing people's attitudes (Olli et al., 2001). Good social interaction with locals helps tourists increase their knowledge and understanding of the local area (Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Li & Wu, 2020), such as cultural (Fam et al., 2023). Past literature also emphasised that in addition to knowledge, social interaction helps transfer the skills needed to improve tourist satisfaction and experience (Subramaniam et al., 2019). In addition, social interaction with tourists may affect the relationship between their attitudes toward ecotourism and their visit and preservation intentions (Fatima et al., 2017). For example, when tourists actively engage and share information with family and friends, their attitudes and behaviours towards certain activities will be developed. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: *There is a positive relationship between social interaction and attitude.*

Attitude

Attitudes are described as psychological tendencies expressed by positive or negative evaluations of humans when performing certain behaviours (Chen & Tung, 2014). When performing a specific behaviour, individuals consider and evaluate the effect based on their attitude towards it. Therefore, the researcher believes that people with positive attitudes will express positive behavioural intentions, which means that attitudes and behavioural intentions have a positive connection (Nordin et al., 2018). In recent years, ecotourism has taken a responsible attitude to raise tourist's environmental awareness (Diaz-Christiansen et al., 2016), and a study has been done to intensify the relationship between ecotourism attitudes and

personal ecotourism behaviour intention (Subramaniam et al., 2019). Therefore, it was postulated that:

H5: *There is a positive relationship between attitude and intention to visit.*

Intention to preserve

Ecotourism is both an extension and improvement of the link between tourism and the protection of the natural environment (Stronza et al., 2019). Indeed, ecotourism supports the preservation of natural destinations (Cobbinah, 2015). The intention to preserve a natural area encourages tourists to develop biodiversity conservation issues and will lead to positive aspects of understanding, which is essential (Gandiwa et al., 2014). In order to be sustainable in the tourism industry, it is important to manage the negative impact on natural resources and to improve the intention of the tourists in preservation and support for ecotourism, especially the national parks (Chiu et al., 2014; Nordin et al., 2018). When visitors visit a place, their comprehension and awareness of the value of nature may have an impact on how they behave environmentally to conserve the ecosystem. Therefore, it is assumed that:

H6: *There is a positive relationship between attitude and intention to preserve.*

Sense of responsibilities moderates attitude on intention to visit

Tourists typically evaluate information before deciding to formulate plans to visit a place (Masud et al., 2017). Their intention to visit refers to the understanding gained through personal experience to travel to a place or to a tourist's interest destination (Auesriwong et al., 2015). Motivations and attitudes can predict future tourists' behavioural intentions and attitudes towards ecotourism sites (Lee, 2009; Luo & Deng, 2008; Wurzinger & Johansson, 2006). Although many previous studies on ecotourism have found that motivation is an important predictor of attitude and visits, few studies have involved the relationship between motivation, attitude, and behaviour intention with the moderator of sense of responsibilities in the field of ecotourism (Lee et al., 2014). Therefore, it is postulated that:

H7: *Sense of responsibilities will moderate the relationship between the attitude and intention to visit.*

Sense of responsibilities moderates attitude on intention to preserve

In order for the responsible act to conserve the natural area, tourists must have a strong sense of responsibility for protecting natural resources. Past studies highlighted that tourist's sense of responsibility to nature is one of the factors to be considered in ecotourism (Choi et al., 2017). Some ecotourists tend to have a high sense of responsibility and indulge in nature by limiting their use of tourism infrastructure and facilities to participate in active environmental protection activities (Fennell, 2008). By being responsible for the environment, visitors can reduce their environmental damage behaviours. Such responsible acts are affected mainly by travellers' perceptions before travel and their experiences in ecotourism activities (Chiu et al., 2014; Handriana & Ambara, 2016). Therefore, behaviours observed in daily life can prevent environmental degradation. Hence,

H8: *Sense of responsibilities will moderate the relationship between the attitude and intention to preserve.*

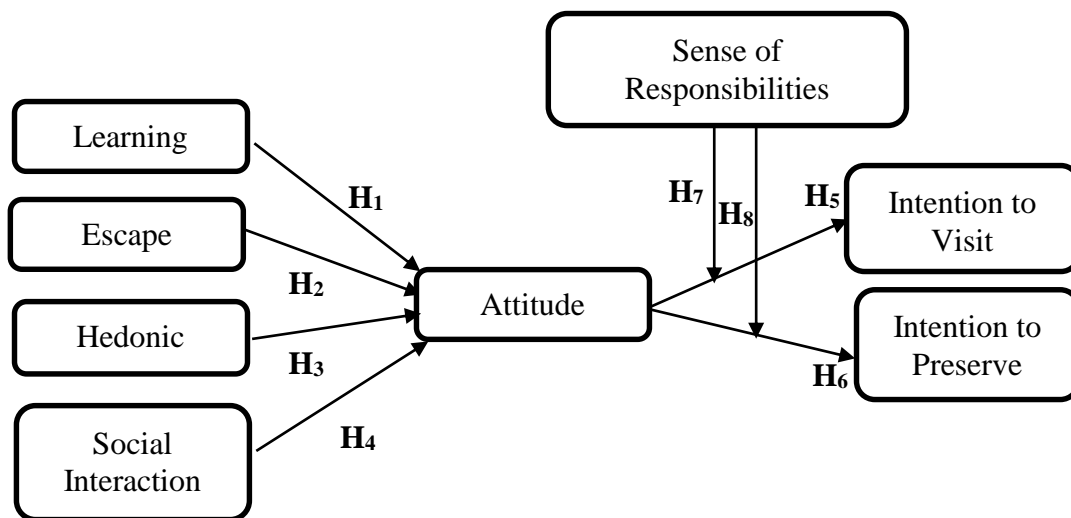


Figure 1: Research Framework

Methodology

The current research employed quantitative methods to assess the factors which impacted the tourist's intention to visit and to preserve because such design enables objective measurement and numerical analysis (Babbie, 2010; Muijs, 2010). The target respondents of the study are Malaysian who has been to a national park before and non-probability sampling techniques have been utilised. A statistical method called G*Power has been used to evaluate the minimum sample size for this study. Power analysis can be used to evaluate the sample size when a non-probabilistic sampling technique is used. For the 4 predictor variables or independent variables, the influence size will be set to 0.15, the α error probability is 0.05, and the power is 0.95 (Cunningham & McCrum-Gardner, 2007). The total number of samples generated is 129. The data was collected via social media applications such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc., to directly collect data from respondents. Google Form was used to design questionnaire. The partial least square-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used for the data analysis and was performed using SmartPLS software. Before collecting data using the questionnaire, a pilot test had been conducted on 10% (Connelly, 2008) of the targeted respondents of 200. A total of 20 sets of questionnaires were distributed to collect the data. In the actual data collection, there were 201 sets of data collected for the analysis.

Instrument

Researchers employed questionnaire to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was divided into five sections (see Table 1). In this study, the 7-point Likert scale was used to capture the degree of agreement, in which 1 = strongly disagree while 7 = completely agree in parts B, C, D and E. The reliability level often rises as the score rises and decreases after 7 points (Krosnick & Presser, 2010). This measurement method is used to obtain feedback from

respondents and determine the level of consensus reached on this issue. The measurement of the variables were adapted from reliable source: learning from Buonincontri et al. (2017); hedonic from Calver and Page (2013); Escape from Pearce and Lee (2005); social interaction from Aref et al. (2017); attitude from Jeong et al., (2018); sense of responsibilities from Choi et al., (2017); intention to visit from Hu et al. (2018); and intention to preserve from Kil et al., (2014). The items of the measurement were presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Structure of Questionnaire

Section	Element
A	Demographic
B	Learning Hedonic Escape Social Interaction
C	Attitude
D	Sense of Responsibilities
E	Intention to visit and Intention to preserve

Table 2: The List of Measurement Items for Variables Used

No	Variable	Measured items	Sources
1	Learning	I usually read publications about the preservation of nature. I usually watch documentaries about nature. I usually read online materials about issues related to nature. I am interested in learning how to protect our nature.	Buonincontri et al. (2017)
2	Hedonic	I enjoy exploring something surprising about nature. The well-being of nature has a real emotional impact on me. The nature around me stimulates my interest. I am thrilled about how nature works.	Calver and Page (2013)
3	Escape	I feel at rest when I see nature. Experiencing nature helps me to get away from everyday stress. Being with nature enables me to be free from daily routine. Seeing nature brings peace to my mind.	Pearce and Lee (2005)
4	Social Interaction	I like to explore nature with my friends/family. Spending a weekend or holiday with friends/family to see nature can enhance our relationship. Experiencing nature improves the interaction with friends/family members. Visiting a nature site with friends/family is enjoyable.	Aref et al. (2017)
5	Attitude	It is important for me to preserve nature. I believe my effort to protect nature is necessary. Initiatives to preserve nature are great things to do.	Jeong et al. (2018)
6	Sense of Responsibilities	I always learn about the destinations (e.g., culture and the nature) before I visit. I always feel obliged to make decisions at the best interest of the environment. It is part of my duty to take good care of nature and the	Choi et al. (2017)

		habitats. I always try to be part of the environment and one of the locals in the destination I visit.	
7	Intention to Visit	I plan to visit a national park during holidays. I will visit a national park soon. I will bring/recommend my family/friends to visit a national park in the near future.	Hu et al. (2018)
8	Intention to Preserve	I will participate in activities related to preserving nature. When given opportunities I will play my part to protect nature. I will make donations to conserve nature whenever I have the opportunity.	Kil et al. (2014)

Findings

Descriptive Analysis

Table 3 showed the demographic background of the respondents. Female respondents are the majority which recorded 121 out of 201 respondents or 60.2%. The remaining 80 respondents (39.8%) are male respondents. Majority of the respondents were aged from 21 to 25 years old (136 respondents or 67.7%). Then followed by the group aged from 26 to 30 years old, with 32 respondents (15.9%). 201 respondents (9.0%) are from the group of age 15 to 20 years old. Besides, both age group of 31 to 35 years old and above 40 years old recorded the same number of respondents, that is 6 respondents (3.0%). The aged group of 36 to 40 years old has the least respondents, where only 3 respondents out of 201 respondents (1.5%) are from this aged group. Majority of the respondents are students, which consisted of 139 respondents (69.2%). There are 30.3% out of 201 respondents (61 respondents) are working full-time. The least respondents work as other occupations, with the record of 1 respondent out of 201 respondents (0.5%).

Table 3: Demographic Analysis

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	80	39.8
Female	121	60.2
Age		
15-20	18	9.0
21-25	136	67.7
26-30	32	15.9
31-35	6	3.0
36-40	3	1.5
Above 40	6	3.0
Occupation		
Students	139	69.2
Full-time Working	61	30.3
Other	1	0.5
Total	201	100

Assessment of Measurement Model

The tests to check internal reliability of different constructs were performed. For composite reliability, the results obtained are ranged from 0.834 to 0.926, according to Table 4.2. According to Netemeyer, Bearden and Sharma (2003), The minimum threshold that is reasonable for a construct that is narrowly defined with five to eight items to meet is 0.80. Since the result of composite reliability for all the constructs in this study are more than the threshold value of 0.80, therefore it implies that all the constructs are reliable.

The convergence validity results calculated by factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE) as showed in Table 4.3. All of the factor loading values were greater than the threshold value of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2010) except LEA1 with the loading value of 0.616. A loading value greater than 0.4 was deemed appropriate because the average variance extracted (AVE) value was higher than 0.5. (Hulland, 1999). All of the AVE values were ranged from 0.560 to 0.757, which exceeded the threshold values of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4: Assessment of Measurement Model

Items	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
ATT1	0.826	0.899	0.749
ATT2	0.867		
ATT3	0.902		
ESC1	0.864	0.924	0.752
ESC2	0.901		
ESC3	0.876		
ESC4	0.826		
HED1	0.875	0.916	0.732
HED2	0.837		
HED3	0.857		
HED4	0.853		
ITP 1	0.839	0.873	0.697
ITP 2	0.874		
ITP 3	0.790		
ITV 1	0.863	0.854	0.661
ITV 2	0.730		
ITV 3	0.840		
LEA1	0.616	0.834	0.560
LEA2	0.719		
LEA3	0.752		
LEA4	0.883		
SOR1	0.743	0.856	0.598
SOR2	0.777		
SOR3	0.771		
SOR4	0.801		
SI 1	0.835	0.926	0.757
SI 2	0.898		

SI 3	0.865
SI 4	0.881

Note: AVE: Average Variance Extract; ATT: Attitude; ESC: Escape; HED: Hedonic; ITP: Intention to Preserve; ITV: Intention to Visit; LEA: Learning; SOR: Sense of Responsibilities; SI: Social Interaction.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio is used to assess discriminant validity. According to Table 5, the HTMT ratios for each pair of constructs are below the threshold of 0.90 (Kline & Rex, 2011). This implies that the items of construct are not measuring the same thing and there is least overlapping item from the perception of the respondents in the constructs.

Table 5: Assessment of Discriminant Validity using HTMT

	ATT	ESC	HED	ITP	ITV	LEA	SOR	SI
ATT								
ESC	0.813							
HED	0.783	0.857						
ITP	0.788	0.755	0.804					
ITV	0.500	0.628	0.589	0.816				
LEA	0.400	0.513	0.714	0.538	0.495			
SOR	0.824	0.769	0.867	0.866	0.649	0.627		
SI	0.770	0.856	0.754	0.696	0.657	0.469	0.694	

Note: ATT: Attitude; ESC: Escape; HED: Hedonic; ITP: Intention to Preserve; ITV: Intention to Visit; LEA: Learning; SOR: Sense of Responsibilities; SI: Social Interaction.

Assessment of Structural Model

Firstly, to tackle the collinearity problem, the inner variance inflation factor (VIF) is performed. All of the inner VIF values were below 5.0 (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, this model is safe from the problems of multicollinearity between the constructs.

The path coefficient analysis was shown in Table 6. The escape (H_2 , $\beta = 0.284$, $\rho < 0.01$), hedonic (H_3 , $\beta = 0.287$, $\rho < 0.01$) and social interaction (H_4 , $\beta = 0.265$, $\rho < 0.01$) have significant positive effect on the attitude. Therefore, H_2 , H_3 and H_4 were supported. The learning outcome (H_1 , $\beta = -0.008$, $\rho > 0.05$) has an insignificant negative influence on attitude. Thus, H_1 was not supported.

Besides, there is an impact on intention to visit and intention to preserve by attitude regarding the significance of path coefficient. Attitude has a negative impact toward intention to visit which is shown by the positive standardised beta value but the t-value that is lower than threshold value at 1.645 (H_5 , $\beta = 0.106$, $\rho > 0.05$). As a result, H_5 was not supported. As for the intention to preserve, attitude has positive impact on it (H_6 , $\beta = 0.281$, $\rho < 0.01$) according to the table. The sense of responsibilities moderates the attitude of the visitor to have the intention to visit. This assist by the standardised beta value and the t-value greater than 1.645 (H_7 , $\beta = 0.117$, $\rho < 0.05$). The same result for the sense of responsibilities moderates the attitude of visitor to have the intention to preserve (H_8 , $\beta = 0.142$, $\rho < 0.01$).

In terms of R^2 coefficient of determination, the four independent variables (learning, escape, hedonic and social interaction) have large explanatory power toward attitude which recorded 56.6%. The R^2 coefficient of the relationship between the attitude and intention to preserve which is considered to have large explanatory power of 56.8%.

The f^2 effect size is used to describe the degree of influence of one indicator on another. As shown in the Table 6, the learning has no effect on attitude as the f^2 is 0 (H_1 ; $f^2 = 0$). For the escape (H_2), hedonic (H_3) and social interaction (H_4), these variables have small effect size toward the attitude with f^2 value of 0.056, 0.057 and 0.064, respectively. Attitude, however, is hardly affect intention to visit (H_5), as indicated by the f^2 value of 0.008 which is smaller than the threshold of 0.02. Besides that, the attitude has small effect size on intention to preserve (H_6 ; $f^2 = 0.094$) whereas the sense of responsibilities has small effect size on both the intentions to visit (H_7) and intention to preserve (H_8) with the results of 0.021 and 0.049, respectively.

The predictive relevance Q^2 is assessed, in which the Q^2 values that are larger than 0 indicate that the exogenous constructs have predictive relevance for the endogenous construct under consideration. The model possesses predictive power as all the Q^2 values are above 0 as shown in Table 6. In detail, the four independent variables (learning, escape, hedonic and social interaction) have large predictive relevance toward attitude which recorded 41.4% (>35%). The predictive power of the attitude over intention to preserve is large as the Q^2 recorded 56.8%.

Lastly, PLSpredict is performed to determine the model's level of prediction error for attitude, intention to visit and intention to preserve. A benchmark model for naïve linear regression (LM) can be used to compare the PLS-SEM model's prediction statistics. Reference is made using the root mean squared error (RMSE). The vast majority of PLS-RMSE SEM's statistic values are lower than the corresponding naïve LM benchmark RMSE values. In light of this, PLS-SEM analysis exhibits a medium predictive power.

Table 6: Assessment of Structural Model

Hypothesis	Relation ship	Beta	SD	T Statistics	Lower CI	Upper CI	f^2	R^2	Inner VIF	Q^2
H ₁	LEA -> ATT	-0.008	0.071	0.108	-0.112	0.117	0.000	0.566	1.889	0.414
H ₂	HED-> ATT	0.287	0.105	2.74	0.104	0.457	0.056		3.401	
H ₃	ESC -> ATT	0.284	0.096	2.957	0.122	0.454	0.057		3.256	
H ₄	SI -> ATT	0.265	0.09	2.942	0.104	0.412	0.064		2.508	
H ₅	ATT -> ITV	0.106	0.091	1.168	-0.039	0.257	0.008	0.294	1.955	0.168
H ₆	ATT -> ITP	0.281	0.068	4.144	0.164	0.396	0.094	0.568	1.955	0.369
H ₇	ATT*S R(ITV) -> ITV	0.117	0.061	1.935	0.22	0.015	0.021		1.082	
H ₈	ATT*S R(ITP) - > ITP	0.142	0.054	2.642	0.218	0.038	0.049		1.082	

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; CI = Confidence Interval; Inner VIF: Inner Variance Inflation Fact

Table 7: Results of PLSpredict

Item	PLS-SEM		LM	PLS-SEM - LM
	RMSE	Q ² _predict	RMSE	
ATT1	0.841	0.403	0.859	-0.018
ATT2	0.784	0.447	0.772	0.012
ATT3	0.809	0.440	0.759	0.050
INTP1	0.916	0.444	0.975	-0.059
INTP2	0.771	0.504	0.823	-0.052
INTP3	0.969	0.283	1.012	-0.043
INTV1	1.330	0.230	1.393	-0.063
INTV2	1.422	0.121	1.501	-0.079
INTV3	1.100	0.271	1.097	0.003

Discussion

The findings indicated that escape, hedonic and social interaction have significant influences on the attitude of the respondents. This is aligned with previous literature in the context of structural relationships between environmental attitudes, recreation motivations, and environmentally responsible behaviours by Kil et al. (2014) where the result described that escape, hedonic and social interaction could be regarded as emotional factors which will influence visitors' attitudes. The tourists wish to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life; they will enjoy nature and, simultaneously relax mentally and physically. Hedonic exists when tourists like to participate in various tourism activities and enjoy exciting experiences, which significantly influence their attitude towards ecotourism sites (Khairudin & Rahman, 2020). Escape can be defined as doing an activity for relaxation and be one of the factors that encourage tourists to visit travel destinations (Subramaniam et al., 2019). Most tourists nowadays want to spend more time with their families and friends as well as to build better relationships with them. Social interactions influence the relationship between tourists' attitudes towards ecotourism and their intentions to visit and conserve (Fatima et al., 2017).

Learning does not have a significant influence on attitude. This is opposed to the previous study by Chan and Baum (2007) where learning contributes a significant part to the ecotourism experiences, and the tourists are expected to learn. This is an interesting finding that learning does not particularly affect the attitude of tourists to visit and protect ecotourism sites. Although today, everyone has access to education and an understanding of the importance of ecology, it is not necessary for tourists to visit ecotourism sites specifically just because they want to learn about ecology. Most of the respondents in this study are young people, who are more likely to learn online as the technology is more advanced.

Attitude has significant influences on the intention of the respondents to preserve while does not have a significant influence on the intention to visit. According to the study by Zhang and Lei (2012), the attitude of the visitors will affect their intention in preserving the ecosystem, such as encouraging environmental awareness, low-impact activities and environmental protection. The result of this study which shows that the attitude can influence the intention to preserve of the respondents is similar to the result obtained in that study. When visitors have the attitude that they want to protect ecotourism sites, especially national parks, it indicates that they are one step closer to their responsibility to protect ecotourism sites. Since this study

was conducted to study visitors' intention to visit and conserve ecotourism sites, it is surprising to find that even though visitors have the attitude to preserve ecotourism sites, they do not necessarily have the intention to visit those places. Today's young people are too dependent on high-tech products, and some are even addicted, which causes they refused to carry out outdoor activities such as visiting ecotourism sites.

The sense of responsibility is used as a moderator to investigate whether it affects visitors' intention to visit and intention to preserve ecotourism sites. The sense of responsibility is the moderator that plays a role between the attitude and intention to preserve as well as intention to visit. According to Fennell (2008), tourists tend to have a high sense of responsibility, and indulge in nature by restricting their use of tourism infrastructure to participate in active environmental protection activities.

The data calculated proves that the sense of responsibility influences visitors' intention to visit and preserve ecotourism sites. As many people have become more responsive to ecological conservation in recent years, the focus on ecological change has led to more and more national parks and other natural environments being opened as ecological reserves for visitors to visit and has also led to greater awareness and sense of responsibility in the visitors to protect the environment. In addition, the spontaneous attitude of visitors to protect the ecotourism sites has also helped the development of ecotourism sites. This sense of responsibility to visit and protect the ecotourism sites is the most important point for the development of ecotourism.

Theoretical Implication

By examining tourists' intentions to visit and preserve a destination in the context of ecotourism, this paper has widened the existing ecotourism literature in determining the factors of learning, escape, hedonics, and social interaction influencing the tourists' attitudes. Subsequently, the sense of responsibility has been included and investigated as having a moderating impact on tourists' intentions to visit and preserve ecotourism destinations. The study extended the model of goal-oriented behaviour (MGB) to get a comprehensive understanding of tourists' behaviour, forming the basis for future research. This study has provided evidence of the theoretical importance of escape, hedonic and social interactions in influencing tourists' attitudes in the ecotourism context. This significant finding has provided empirical evidence that the important motivation aspects of escape, hedonic, and social interactions in shaping tourists' attitudes toward ecotourism destinations. Nevertheless, learning aspects do not significantly impact tourists' attitudes. Given the limited studies on the ecotourism context that focus on the learning aspect as a theoretical construct, it merits more scholarly attention, particularly given the prominence of younger tourists in touristic learning as a means of gaining knowledge about the historical nature of an ecotourism destination.

In addition, this study provides empirical evidence for a better understanding of the relationship between tourists' attitudes and intentions to visit ecotourism destinations and their intent to preserve these locations. Instilling favourable attitudes in tourists will result in their intention to visit ecotourism sites as well as their intention to preserve and conserve the natural environment and resources. On the other hand, MGB was expanded by including a contingent variable, a sense of responsibility, as a moderating variable in the relationship

between tourists' attitudes and their intention to visit and preserve. The research has demonstrated tourists' sense of responsibility in organising their trips and conserving natural resources. It is highly believed that the degree of tourists' attitudes can be improved by emphasising the influencing variables, which would immediately lead to an increase in tourists' intention to visit ecotourism destinations and their preservation.

Managerial Implication

The current study provides important insights to local tourism stakeholders, such as local communities, industry players, and tourism-related government departments, on preserving ecotourism destinations and increasing tourists' visit intentions. The findings shed light on tourism stakeholders and destination management organisations (DMOs) in developing eco-friendly practices and managing critical factors (such as motivation aspects) to stimulate responsible travel behaviour. Further study of the findings suggests that visitors seek a variety of restorative experiences, such as social interactions, hedonics, escapism, and learning to hedonism, authenticity, deep immersion, and nostalgic reminiscence. Furthermore, the findings show that hedonic, escape, and social interactions are key in building tourists' favourable attitudes. As a result, tourism stakeholders should establish some attractive recreational amenities in or around ecotourism destinations to boost tourists' hedonism and authenticity during their trips to the national park.

Moreover, insights from this study equipped tourism stakeholders with better ideas for the development of ecotourism destinations and collaborated with tourism organisations to promote ecotourism by offering various tour packages to attract more visitors. This study can also be used as a resource for the forestry department in preserving national parks and sustaining ecotourism development, as it provides numerous facets in shaping tourists' attitudes toward ecotourism destinations, such as their sense of responsibility, intention to visit, and conservation intentions. Last but not least, the current study may assist NGOs and ecotourism operators in making better managerial decisions when planning to protect and expand ecotourism destinations.

Limitation and Future Research

The current study has a few limitations. First, the data collected is limited to certain age groups. The data collected might not be comprehensive, and there might be different perceptions shared across age groups. Hence, future research should include the different age groups to obtain better insights. Second, the current study has utilised learning, escape, hedonic and social interaction to assess the motivations that influence visitors' attitudes. As such, future researchers can use different constructs to predict the motivations that influence visitors' attitudes to obtain more comprehensive results. Last, the current study only employs questionnaire to examine the intention to visit and to preserve a destination. The findings might lack generalisability. Future research, especially of a qualitative inquiry, can be conducted to explore the experiences and insights shared by a group of tourists pertaining to the intention to visit and preserve a place.

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