

The Evolution of Green Certification on Sustainable Travel Behaviors: Insights into Tourists Consciousness and Industry Support

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism has emerged as a strategic national priority, particularly within Oman's transition under Oman Vision 2040. This study investigates the determinants of tourists' sustainable travel behaviors in the tourist sites of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Oman where a total of 391 responses were collected. The research model evaluates the effects of tourists' awareness of green certifications, clarity and accessibility of sustainability information, and environmental values on sustainable travel behavior. Further, the model assesses the trip purpose moderate the relationship between environmental values and sustainable travel behavior. Empirical results demonstrate that clarity of sustainability information and tourists' environmental values significantly predict sustainable behaviors. Conversely, tourists' awareness of eco-labels alone does not significantly influence behavior, suggesting that awareness without contextual comprehension or credibility evaluation is insufficient to drive behavioral change. This reflects the widely documented attitude-action gap in sustainable tourism literature, where conceptual familiarity does not necessarily translate into responsible action. However, tour operator support for green certifications mediates the relationship between awareness and behavior, indicating that industry support plays a crucial role in transforming intent to actual sustainable practice. In addition, results confirm that the effect of environmental values on sustainable behavior is stronger among leisure travelers as compared to business travelers. This study contributes theoretically and practically by demonstrating that sustainability behavior is not solely shaped by individual consciousness but also by contextual support mechanisms. Insights offer implications for policymakers, destination managers, and tourism stakeholders to design targeted sustainability communications and industry interventions to advance sustainable tourism development in Oman.

Keywords

Sustainable travel behaviors, Green certification, Sustainable tourism, Environmental values, Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory.