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## A systematic literature review on the responsible travel behavior of tourists in destination tourism

Ailin Fei

*Purdue University*, [afei@purdue.edu](mailto:afei@purdue.edu)

Jonathon G. Day Dr.

*Purdue University*, [gjday@purdue.edu](mailto:gjday@purdue.edu)

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# **A systematic literature review on the responsible travel behavior of tourists in destination tourism**

## **Abstract**

Responsible travel can be referenced in a variety of ways in academic literature due to similar terms and synonyms. Responsible travel does not have a formal definition although, it is being researched in a wide range of contexts. This study is a systematic literature review on the responsible travel behavior of tourists in destination tourism. This study aims to identify what literature exists currently that investigates or aims to promote responsible travel behavior of tourists at a destination. This study is also interested in identifying if there is any literature that measures the responsible travel behavior of tourists. This will specifically address whether scales, measurements, tests, assessments, or instruments have been developed to measure responsible travel behavior. This study will be one of the first studies to consolidate the vast information regarding responsible travel, while recognizing that responsible travel can be referenced in a variety of ways. This study may also identify current gaps in responsible travel research and identify whether there is a lack of instruments to measure responsible travel behavior while traveling to a destination.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of responsible travel can be referenced through a variety of terms in academic literature such as ecotourism and responsible travel, which are both components of social and environmental sustainability (Reichel et al., 2008). Responsible travel can be addressed as ecotourism, green travel, ecological behavior, environmental or sustainable travel. However, the definition of ecotourism differs from the scope of responsible travel. Ecotourism primarily refers to the protection of landscapes, natural areas, and cultural heritage (Cheia, 2013) however, responsible travel refers to the actions of tourists at a destination trip such as a vacation (Liljeblad, 2020). Responsible travel can be discussed in a variety of countries, destinations, and settings. There can also be a focus on certain consumer groups such as adventure travel (Bentley et al., 2010), leisure travel (Ron et al., 2008), or comparing consumer groups to each other (Bagri et al., 2009). This study aims to identify how responsible tourist behavior is currently being addressed with destination travel as a context. This study will not focus on responsible travel behavior in the context of food, sport, ethics, government, or any other unrelated category. Additionally, this study aims to identify what literature exists currently that investigates or aims to promote responsible travel behavior of tourists at a destination. Finally, depending on the results that address the first two questions, this study is interested in identifying if there is any literature that measures the responsible travel behavior of consumers. This will specifically address whether scales, measurements, tests, assessments, or instruments have been developed to measure responsible travel behavior. Currently, there are popular and widely used scales that address environmental attitudes, such as various environmental attitude scales (Berberoglu & Tosunoglu, 1995; Ugulu et al., 2013; Uzun et al., 2019) or the new environmental paradigm (Lundmark, 2007), however, these scales use an ecological scope stemming from environmental psychology and general concern for the environment without the travel context.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A systematic literature review on responsible travel is being performed to identify how researchers are addressing sustainable travel in the scope of destination tourism. Previous systematic reviews on sustainable travel behavior have focused on a variety of topics such as

technology (Andersson et al., 2018; Sunio & Schmöcker, 2017), transportation (Jing et al., 2018; Moghdani et al., 2021), and communication (Tölkes, 2018); however, more specifically, this systematic literature review is interested in how sustainable travel is discussed through the consumer behavior side of destination tourism. Many articles are published on sustainable travel; however, there are few to no systematic literature reviews on responsible travel that incorporate and encompass all aspects and angles of responsible travel, including a wide array of related terms. Sustainable travel can be referred to in a variety of contexts such as environmental science, tourism, ecology, etc.; therefore, all related synonyms and terms will be included in this systematic literature review. Sustainable travel can be referred to as ecological, green, ecotourism, sustainable or environmental travel.

Previous studies have also addressed responsible tourism in ecotourism destinations (Chan Kim Lian & Saikim, 2021). Examples of studies that are not within the scope of this systematic literature review include a meta-analysis of tourism publications related to ecotourism (Wondirad, 2019) and a wide range of literature reviews (Cabral & Dhar, 2020; Voumard, 2019; Yang & Cheung, 2010). This is because these studies focus on ecotourism, rather than consumer travel behavior.

This study will use a systematic literature review approach to gather and summarize all relevant literature on a topic that synthesizes the information studied into a single document (Aromataris & Pearson, 2014). The steps for this method vary depending on field and topic, however, it can be simplified to searching for existing and relevant studies, selecting, assessing, and evaluating quality of literature based on certain criteria, analyses of the data obtained through the selection and evaluation of literature, and finally reporting on and interpreting the findings (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009; Khan et al., 2003).

## **METHODS**

Using a similar approach from a systematic review conducted on human-wildlife interactions (Dou & Day, 2020), a simplified three-step approach will be taken to reduce the vast amount of literature to the final sample of the study. This research will follow a modified PRISMA based checklist that will only include the use of one database, Hospitality & Tourism Complete (H&TC). The EBSCOhost electronic database, H&TC will be used to identify all relevant studies relating to responsible travel behavior scales. H&TC is a database with a growing collection of 53 global open access journals with 97 journals with searchable references in addition to the 270 indexed and abstracted journals, 144 of which are peer-reviewed (EBSCO, 2021). This review is concerned with the current literature on responsible travel behavior that are strongly associated with destination tourism and travel; therefore, it was deemed appropriate to use this database.

There will be an inclusion of many related terms due to the use of relevant terminology that describes a single concern such as green travel, sustainable travel, ecological concern, etc. There will be no cut-off point for publication dates or years to include the entire range of results that could be associated with responsible travel behavior and to capture any potential scales that have been developed in association with responsible travel. This study will include all articles related to the topic up to April 2022, when the initial database search will be conducted. This review of the literature will only include peer-reviewed articles in academic journals published in English. This search will invite and include all empirical, qualitative, and quantitative methods. This study is interested in the main idea of the literature that exists on responsible travel and destinations; therefore, the country, the objectives, methods and results of the study will be of particular interest to this literature review.

## **ANTICIPATED FINDINGS**

As the findings will depend on the content analysis of the existing literature, it is anticipated that the literature on responsible travel and destinations will be limited, leaving much room for potential future studies that will contribute to the academic literature on responsible travel in the destination context. The results will present interesting findings that will summarize the countries, the objectives, methods, and results used to examine responsible travel behavior in tourism destination travel.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

This systematic literature review will provide insight to academic literature by synthesizing answers to questions that have already been investigated by independent studies (Edwards, 2014). With a systematic literature review of the existing information on responsible travel behavior and all related terms will be identified through previously published articles that are peer reviewed and retrieved from academic journals, providing a source for other researchers and practitioners to familiarize themselves with the current state of the literature on this topic.

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