

THE IMPACT OF TRAVEL EXPERIENCE, TRAVEL MOTIVATION, AND DESTINATION IMAGE ON TOURISTS' REVISIT INTENTION TO ECOTOURISM

Nguyen Thi Khanh Chi
Foreign Trade University

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 15/02/2022	Although there are great body of studies examining relationships among factors and revisit intention in mass tourism, investigation of the association among tourist attitude, destination image, and revisit intention on ecotourism have received less attention. Therefore, this research examined the impact of travel experience, travel motivation, destination image on revisit intention to ecotourism. The research was operationalized using empirical data collected from 423 domestic tourists visiting eco-sites in Vietnam. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the causal relationships. The findings show that tourist travel motivation and experience positively influence revisit intention transferred through their attitude toward ecotourism, and that eco-destination image play a critical role in strengthening the effect of travel motivation and past experience on revisit intention. This paper contributes by investigating a tourist's emotion-behavior model to ecotourism literature and both sides (supply and demand) in managerial implications. Ecotourism managers may increase tourist revisit intention through building positive eco-destination image and evaluating tourist attitude for market segments.
Revised: 09/3/2022	
Published: 09/3/2022	

KEYWORDS

Revisit intention
Eco-destination image
Travel motivation
Travel experience
Ecotourism

TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA KINH NGHIỆM, ĐỘNG CƠ VÀ HÌNH ẢNH ĐIỂM ĐẾN ĐỐI VỚI Ý ĐỊNH QUAY TRỞ LẠI DU LỊCH SINH THÁI

Nguyễn Thị Khánh Chi
Trường Đại học Ngoại thương

THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO	TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài: 15/02/2022	Mặc dù có nhiều nghiên cứu về hành vi của khách du lịch, nhưng nghiên cứu mối quan hệ giữa thái độ của khách du lịch, hình ảnh điểm đến và ý định đi du lịch sinh thái thì chưa được nghiên cứu bài bản. Do đó, nghiên cứu này đã xem xét tác động của trải nghiệm du lịch, động cơ du lịch, hình ảnh đến ý định đi du lịch sinh thái. Nghiên cứu được thực hiện bằng cách sử dụng dữ liệu thực nghiệm được thu thập từ 423 khách du lịch trong nước đến thăm các khu sinh thái ở Việt Nam. Mô hình hóa phương trình cấu trúc (SEM) được sử dụng để kiểm tra các mối quan hệ nhân quả. Các phát hiện cho thấy rằng động cơ và kinh nghiệm du lịch ảnh hưởng tích cực đến ý định đi du lịch thông qua thái độ của du khách, hơn nữa, hình ảnh điểm đến đóng một vai trò quan trọng trong việc thu hút du khách đến với du lịch sinh thái. Nghiên cứu này đóng góp vào lý thuyết hành vi trong bối cảnh du lịch sinh thái dưới cả hai góc độ cung và cầu. Các nhà quản lý du lịch sinh thái thu hút khách du lịch thông qua việc xây dựng hình ảnh điểm đến và đánh giá thái độ của khách du lịch đối với từng phân khúc thị trường.
Ngày hoàn thiện: 09/3/2022	
Ngày đăng: 09/3/2022	

TỪ KHÓA

Ý định quay trở lại điểm đến
Hình ảnh điểm du lịch sinh thái
Động cơ du lịch
Kinh nghiệm du lịch
Du lịch sinh thái

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34238/tnu-jst.5548>

Email: chintk@ftu.edu.vn

<http://jst.tnu.edu.vn>

69

Email: jst@tnu.edu.vn

1. Introduction

Ecotourism has been viewed as one of the developing market segments with a potential outlook since more than twenty years ago [1]. From that respect, the issue of sustainable ecotourism development has become important to understand relationships among factors and tourist behaviors for both theoretical and practical implications [2]. Consequently, investing revisit intention becomes important as revisit intention describes tourists' satisfaction and their reaction for their next visiting travel.

In general tourism themes, there has many research which examine the impacts of antecedents on revisit intention, such as travel motivations and past travel experience [3], time perspective and visit intention [4], and previous experience and revisit intention [5]. Revisit intention is considered as an extension of satisfaction rather than an initiator of revisit decision making process [6]. So far, many studies have attempted to examine factors contributing to revisit intention [7] because the advantages related with retaining re-visitors are higher than focusing on new travelers. Drawing from the above research, intention to revisit a nature-based destination is seen as a tourist's readiness to retravel to the same nature-based destination. Pham and Nguyen (2020) [2] study the relationship between eco-destination image and ecotourism intention while Huang and Liu (2017) [8] studied environmental concern and ecotourism experience for revisit intention. However, these above research are insufficient in describing the overall picture of antecedents forming tourist behavior and in examining how these factors interact with each other influencing revisit intention to ecotourism.

According to Chi and Phuong (2021) [4] travel motivation referred to a meaningful state of mind which adequately disposes tourist to travel and which is interpretable by others as a valid explanation for travel decision. From the definition of travel motivation, this paper proposes travel motivation to ecotourism as a set of needs that cause tourist to participate in eco-destination sites. Many tourism literature indicated travel motivation basing on the push and pull factors [1]. Luo and Deng (2008) [9] concluded push motivation factors such as seeking to experience new things and social contact of human over nature. Drawing from these research, the present paper also examines the impact of travel motivation as a multi-dimensional variable which includes push and pull travel motivation. Even the image of destination is well studied in general tourism research [10], its interaction relationship among other factors (i.e. motivations and experience) on revisit intention to ecotourism sites is unclear. As destination image is a variable controlled by ecotourism marketers and providers, studying its moderating impact is important in empirical and practical implications by examining the supply side of ecotourism market. When individuals are pushed by travel motives and also have previous travel experience, they are likely to revisit ecotourism sites when eco-destination image has positively been consolidated.

On the other hand, attitude toward revisit viewed as endogenous factor has commonly studied in tourism concept [3]. Although tourist attitude toward ecotourism is not a variable controlled by ecotourism managers, understanding how travelers in different travel motives and experience categories from revisit intentions based on their attitude will enable ecotourism marketers and providers to manage different segments. However, the interrelationship among travel motivation, travel experience, attitude, eco-destination image and revisit intention towards ecotourism is still unclear. Therefore, to bridge these gaps, the current paper investigates ecotourism revisit intention based on the moderating effect of destination image (controlled factor by ecotourism managers) and mediating effect of attitude (non-controlled factor by ecotourism managers). The proposed model is tested in the context of Vietnam. This study aims to examine the impact of tourist's travel motivation and travel experience on tourist attitude and revisit intention.

The target of this study is to enable tourism providers develop ecotourism sites based on enhancing eco-destination image and communicating different market segments. This is especially interesting in developing countries where economic conditions are less developed and strategies for

ecotourism development are insufficient. Vietnam, a developing country in South East Region, was selected as the setting of this research as there are a lot of eco-destination sites which have already proposed by UNESCO world heritage since 1993. Therefore, the study about tourism in general and ecotourism in specific has become important for Vietnamese tourism industry.

2. Methodology

2.1. The proposed framework

This study examines the impact of travel experience, travel motivation, and destination image on tourists' revisit intention to ecotourism. The proposed framework is follows:

H1a: Tourist's travel motivations positively link with their revisit intention to ecotourism

H2: Past travel experience has positive link with their intention to revisit ecotourism

H2a + H3: Tourist attitude toward ecotourism mediates the relationship between travel motivation and revisit intention to ecotourism

H2b + H3: Tourist attitude toward ecotourism mediates the relationship between past travel experience and revisit intention to ecotourism

H4a: Destination image enhances the relationship between travel motivation and intention to visit ecotourism

H4b: Destination image enhances the relationship between past travel experience and intention to visit ecotourism

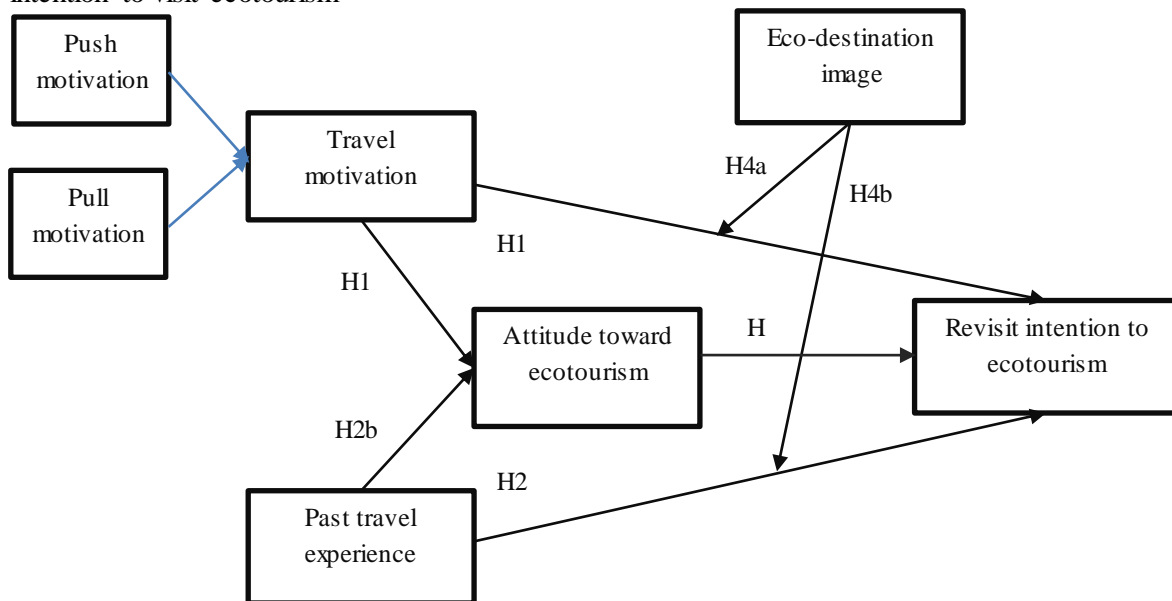


Fig.1. The proposed framework

The figure 1 proposes the roles of attitude toward ecotourism and eco-destination image on the association between travel motivation and travel experience on revisit intention to ecotourism.

2.2. Measurement scale

Travel motivation was computed by multidimensional scale and contained two attributes which are push and pull motives. This scale was measured by eight items from the research of Huang and Hsu (2017) [3]. Past travel experience is captured using four items adopted from Huang and Liu (2017) [8]. Meanwhile, eco-destination image was employed by four items which is in conformity with the studies of Sharma and Nayak (2018) [10]. Attitude toward ecotourism was measured by four items and applied by Hsieh et al. (2016) [5]. Finally, revisit intention to ecotourism was employed by four items and adopted from Tosun et al. (2015) [11] (Table 1).

Table 1. Scale of measurement

	Item description	References
Eco-destination image	Impressive natural environment	Sharma and Nayak, 2018
	Appealing eco-destination	
	Local attractions	
	Unique landscape	
Past travel experience	The ecotourism experience was engaging	Huang and Liu (2007)
	Ecotourism offers plenty of activity to see	
	Ecotourism gives a sense of wonder or awe	
	Enjoyable experience in ecotourism	
Motivation	Push motivation	Huang and Hsu (2017)
	Travel for relaxation	
	Travel for escape	
	Travel for excitement	
	Travel for self-knowledge	
	Pull motivation	
	Travel for new culture	
	Travel for new place	
	Inexpensive to reach area	
	Not too touristy	
Attitude toward ecotourism	I feel valuable travelling ecotourism sites	Hsieh et al. (2016)
	I feel happy when travelling ecotourism sites	
	I feel interesting to travel ecotourism sites	
	I feel beneficial to travel ecotourism sites	
Intention to revisit ecotourism	I will choose ecotourism in my travelling again in the following year	Tosun et al. (2015)
	I plan to revisit an ecotourism destination in the following year	
	If I had to decide again, I would choose ecotourism again	
	I would more frequently visit ecotourism	

Early studies used a 5-point scale in measuring constructs (travel motivation, past travel experience, eco-destination image, attitude, and revisit intention), this present study consequently employed a five-point Likert scale for measuring study questions which range from (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

2.3. Sampling

Thanks to successfully controlling impact of Coronavirus Pandemic in the first and second waves, Vietnam has welcomed tourists again from March 2020 to March 2021. Tourists were approached in the main travel zone near National Parks (Cuc Phuong, Cat Tien, Ba Be, Phong Nha- Ke Bang) and beauty eco-landscape and Caves (Ha Long Bay, Trang An, Son Doong) where the vast majority of hotels, shops and restaurants are located. The survey were launched from February to May 2020 using structured questionnaires. The valid surveys were returned and completed at 423 which represent a retrieval rate of 45%.

2.4. Analysis technique

The multivariate data analysis method was employed to analyze and test research hypotheses proposal. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to evaluate reliability and validity of each construct in the model. SEM is employed to test the proposed hypotheses. Measurement model scale were used to assess the overall fit with actual data, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The model fit with the actual data when Chi-square/df smaller than 3, CFI, TLI, IFI all are larger than 0.9 and RMSEA is smaller than 0.08 [12].

3. Results

This current paper was employed using 423 samples of domestic tourists visiting ecotourism. Within the sample of tourists, male accounted for 48% and female accounted for 52% representing an almost equal distribution of gender. Majority of tourists in the sample were from 31-40 years old (28.4%), and fulltime employed (47.3%). The vast majority of foreign tourists completed an academic qualification of university (56.7%) and had an annual income of 1000-2000 USD (23.7%). A substantial proportion of frequency of traveling per year from two to four times were at 45.7% (Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of customers

Characteristic	Percent
Gender	
Female	52
Male	48
Age	
Below 20	9.8
21-30	28
31-40	28.4
41-50	21.5
Above 50	12.3
Job	
Student	8.0
Office Staff	47.6
Business	23.2
Retirement	21.2

Cronbach alpha of each construct was more than the cut off requirement of 0.7 which indicated that the scale was internal consistence [12] (Table 3). The measurement model exhibited a good fit as the test indices indicated a satisfactory fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.074$ and $RMSEA = 0.050$) [13]. The model fit indices (CFI = 0.958, GFI=0.917, NFI=0.922, RFI=0.908, TLI = 0.950 and IFI =0.958) were above the cut off requirement of 0.90 [14]. All the indices were significant at $p < 0.001$.

Table 3. The reliability and convergent validity

Constructs/variables	Standard loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Eco-destination image	0.641-0.887	0.816	0.823	0.54
Past travel experience	0.745-0.796	0.848	0.850	0.58
Travel motivation				
<i>Push motivation</i>	0.695-0.748	0.792	0.800	0.51
<i>Pull motivation</i>	0.705-0.747	0.780	0.776	0.54
Attitude toward ecotourism	0.866-0.902	0.929	0.930	0.77
Revisit intention	0.799-0.840	0.928	0.886	0.66

Note: AVE= average variance extracted (>0.50), Composite reliability >0.50

Table 4 reports the direct and indirect effects of travel motivation, past experience, attitude and revisit intention variables. Both travel motivation and past experience have significant direct effect on attitude toward ecotourism and their indirect impacts on revisit intention transferred through tourist attitude are also significant. It is also suggested that tourist attitude toward ecotourism plays important role of mediating on the theoretical relationships (travel motivation - > revisit intention, past experience -> revisit intention).

Table 4. Direct, indirect and total effect coefficients

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Push motivation → Attitude toward ecotourism	0.650	0.000	0.650
Pull motivation → Attitude toward ecotourism	0.275	0.000	0.275
Past experience → Attitude toward ecotourism	0.317	0.000	0.317
Push motivation → Revisit intention	0.007	0.371	0.378
Pull motivation → Revisit intention	0.119	0.157	0.276
Past experience → Revisit intention	0.142	0.181	0.323
Attitude toward ecotourism → Revisit intention	0.571	0.000	0.571

With regard to the moderating effect of eco-destination image on the influence of travel motivation on revisit intention, the results address that there is a positive interaction effect (β eco-destination image \times each motive = 0.034 and 0.052) on revisit intention (Model 1). Furthermore, with regard to the moderating effect of eco-destination image on the influence of past experience on revisit intention, the findings in Model 2 also confirm a positive interaction effect (β eco-destination image \times past experience = 0.075).

Table 3. The results of the moderating effects of destination image

	Revisit intention			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Push motivation	0.364	***		
Pull motivation	0.317	***		
Eco-destination image	0.323	***		
Eco-destination image \times push motivation	0.034	0.002		
Eco-destination image \times pull motivation	0.052	***		
Past experience			0.408	***
Eco-destination image			0.244	***
Eco-destination image \times past experience			0.075	***

Note: *** $p < .001$

Therefore, H1b, H2a, H2b, H3, H4a and H4b in the theoretical model are supported.

4. Conclusion

The present study contributes to the tourism and hospitality literature including research on mediating role of tourist attitude and moderating role of eco-destination image because they have not been investigated in previous ecotourism research. This research describes both demand (tourist attitude) and supply sides (eco-destination image) in ecotourism by promoting image and understanding tourist attitude in order to develop ecotourism. One key insight from this study is that push motivation has just indirect effect on revisit intention to ecotourism through tourist attitude and that attitude toward ecotourism plays a critical role in mediating the link between ecotourism experience and revisit intention. It can be said that tourist internal psychology is important in leading their positive attitude toward revisiting eco-destination sites which in turn lead to visit again these sites. Besides, tourist external psychology (travel for new place, new culture, inexpensive trip, and not too touristy) not only directly cause their positive attitude but also directly make them intent to revisit ecotourism. Otherwise, the findings show how different perspectives of tourist past experience can lead to form their positive attitude and revisit ecotourism. Another important finding is that this study focused on ecotourism aspect of destination image so to explore more deeply as the important role in enhancing input factors (travel motivation and past experience) and its consequence (revisit intention). This current research used a moderation-mediation model of ecotourism to explain tourist behaviors. The model proposes that building image of eco-destination and evaluating tourist attitude through their travel motivation and experience may make sense of the importance of ecotourism and may influence tourist behavior.

The results of this research also suggest some practical implications. Firstly, ecotourism managers may increase tourist revisit intention through building positive eco-destination image and evaluating tourist attitude for market segments. As destination image is controlled factor by managers and as individuals who desire to revisit ecotourism may consider and identify image of eco-destination sites and look at their past travel experience, managers need to design appropriate image and ecotourism activities to attract and maintain tourist revisit actions. For example, designing environmental poster advertisement is also strategy on building ecotourism image and promoting natural preservation. Further, ecotourism managers should communicate and manage the different segments as well as target appropriate market basing on travel experience of tourists

and their different travel motivations. Secondly, the findings of this study also provide a key insights for the local government who might consider in making plan and appropriate management strategies for eco-environmental development.

With the purpose of extending current knowledge and contributing a comprehensive view of ecotourism travel behavior, this current paper revealed the mediating impact of attitude and the moderating impact of eco-destination image on enhancing tourist intention to revisit ecotourism sites. These findings filled those gaps and answer the unsolved questions in relating to the mediating and moderating mechanism about tourist intention to revisit ecotourism. In the mediation mechanism examination, it is suggested that tourist's revisit intention to ecotourism is affected by their motivation and their ecotourism experience transferred through their attitude. In the moderating discovery, this paper conducted two interaction models and found that destination image plays a critical moderating factor on two relationships (travel motivation-> revisit intention, and past ecotourism experience-> revisit intention). In conclusion, the results clearly demonstrate that in order to attract and retain old customer to revisit ecotourism sites, tourists need to be impressed with the image to engage in ecotourism.

REFERENCES

- [1] T. K. C. Nguyen, "Understanding the effects of eco-label, eco-brand, and social media on green consumption intention in ecotourism destinations," *Journal of Cleaner Production*, vol. 321, 2021, doi: 10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.128995.
- [2] T. K. C. Nguyen, "Environmentally responsible behaviour in outdoor recreation: the moderating impact of COVID-19 related risk perception", *Journal of Tourism Futures*, Vol. ahead-of-print, 2022, doi: 10.1108/JTF-09-2021-0234.
- [3] S. Huang and C. H. Hsu, "Effects of travel motivation, past experience, perceived constraint, and attitude on revisit intention," *Journal of travel research*, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 29-44, 2009.
- [4] T. K. C. Nguyen and V. H. Phuong, "Studying tourist intention on city tourism: the role of travel motivation," *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 2021, doi: 10.1108/IJTC-03-2021-0042.
- [5] C. M. Hsieh, S. H. Park, and R. McNally, "Application of the extended theory of planned behavior to intention to travel to Japan among Taiwanese youth: Investigating the moderating effect of past visit experience," *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, vol. 33, no. 5, pp. 717-729, 2016.
- [6] S. Um, K. Chon, and Y. Ro, "Antecedents of revisit intention," *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 33, pp. 1141-1158, 2006.
- [7] J. Alegre and J. Garau, "The factor structure of tourist satisfaction at sun and sand destinations," *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 78-86, 2011.
- [8] Y. C. Huang and C. H. S. Liu, "Moderating and mediating roles of environmental concern and ecotourism experience for revisit intention," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, vol. 29, no. 7, pp. 1854-1872, 2017.
- [9] Y. Luo and J. Deng, "The New Environmental Paradigm and nature-based tourism motivation," *Journal of Travel research*, vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 392-402, 2008.
- [10] P. Sharma and J. K. Nayak, "Testing the role of tourists' emotional experiences in predicting destination image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: A case of wellness tourism," *Tourism Management Perspectives*, vol. 28, pp. 41-52, 2018.
- [11] C. Tosun, B. B. Dedeoğlu, and A. Fyall, "Destination service quality, affective image and revisit intention: The moderating role of past experience," *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 222-234, 2015.
- [12] J. F. Hair Jr, M. L. Gabriel, and V. K. Patel, "Modeling of Covariance-Based Structural Equations (CB-SEM) with or AMOS: Orientations about your application as a Marketing Search Engine," *Revista Brasileira de Marketing*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 44-55, 2014.
- [13] R. B. Kline, *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. Guilford publications, 2015.
- [14] T. K. C. Nguyen, "Innovation capability: the impact of e-CRM and COVID-19 risk perception," *Technology in Society*, vol. 67, no. 4, pp. 1141-1153, 2021