

The Responses of Responsible Tourists: Limitations and Gaps in Prosocial Consumer Research

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This article is based on the concept of responsibility in tourism from the perspective of the tourist. The aim of this paper is the consideration of the question of the suitability of responsible consumer behaviour, which is gaining in importance in the context of sustainable tourism development. Modern forms of responsibility in tourism (e.g. sustainable tourism, ethical tourism, eco-tourism, green tourism) have emerged as responses of tourism stakeholders in global economic, social and environmental issues since the turn of the millennium. Such forms of tourism coming to the fore are taking responsibility for the impacts that tourism has on the social, economic and natural environments (Goodwin & Pender, 2005). Changes have always been an intrinsic part of human evolution, and in the modern world changes occur ever more rapidly. The tourist is the key actor in the network of tourism. This conceptual paper is based on an overview of scientific literature and a comparison between various concepts derived from empirical studies of responsible consumer behaviour.

Keywords: tourist, responsibility, prosocial consumer, consumer behaviour, sustainable tourism.

Introduction and Literature Review

Tourism, in essence, is a primary economic industry, dependent on natural, cultural and other aspects of the environment. Its development has both positive and negative effects on the environment and society. Mihalič (2006) highlighted the paradox of tourism development, which shows its economic dependency on the quality of the environment on one hand and its destruction of the environment on the other. It appears that the development of tourism and the preservation of the environment are not compatible concepts but still their integration is paramount for the implementation of sustainable tourism development and the desire for tourism to remain competitive in the long-term by fulfilling economic, socio-cultural and environmental goals. Since the turn

of the millennium, the competitiveness and environment-friendly models of sustainable development have been widely studied, both from international and tourist location perspectives and from a micro-level within the scope of companies (Dwyer, 2005). With the ever-growing co-dependency of the world, both in the sense of phenomena and relations, and on a systemic and institutional level (Sassen, 2007), international organizations quickly have quickly grown into a global organization, which implemented global rules of conduct in tourism (Urry, 2001). Several documents were created that promote sustainable development and responsibility in tourism on a global level. One of these is Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992) and the Global Ethics Codex (WTO, 2005). Other supporters of these principles and

rights are numerous government and non-government tourist organizations and institutions, e.g. the UN, Greenpeace, UNWTO, the International Centre for Responsible Tourism, and others. Such common programs and policies are effective tools for the reduction of the negative effects of tourism and the increase of positive effects on the economy, society and environment (UNEP, 2009)

This trend is also followed by tourist companies, which frequently implement responsible practices in relation to their stakeholders and the environment. Business practices have established the concept of sustainability in measuring the effects, by using the triple bottom line (TBL) approach of three sustainability pillars: economy, environment and society (Elkington, 1997). Another widely established model is that of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (OECD, 2001).

The key to the desired systemic changes is the individuals and the joint power of responsibility. Changes have been an intrinsic part of human evolution and in the modern world changes occur ever more rapidly. In the network of tourism, the tourist is the key actor; the tourist is also the modern consumer according to Urry (1995) and is linked to aesthetic cosmopolitanism, characterized by an interest in places, people and cultures as well as the ability to positively evaluate and accept all that is different (Urry, 1995), which is the foundation of responsibility awareness in tourism. In post-modern marketing theory, the discourse of a new consumer is identified by characteristics that describe the consumer as an integral person who expresses their view of the world and global social problems with their purchases (Jančič, 1999).

Despite different names of models and practices, the terms “responsibility” and “sustainability” appear in the context of connected or equal evaluations that are re-established by post-modern society with its mainly liberal rules. Modern capitalism places importance on the individual as well as on the benefit and well-being of a greater number of people. (Harris, 2002). Harris emphasizes: “If we act in a way that our actions benefit as many people as possible, we will contribute to the improvement of the world” (2002). Similarly, Holden (2003) places the task of the sustainable tourism development on people and the natural environment, democracy and “bottom-up”

planning. This reflects the approach of the responsibility for the preservation of the sustainable state of the tourist system, which is necessary for the existence and development of tourism on a higher level of quality.

The wider research field of responsible consumerism shows the use of different terms that stem from empirical research on responsible consumers in relation to sustainable tourism development. The research is focused on environmental and ecological aspects (Hopper & Nielsen, 1991; Bratt, 1999; Van Vugt 2001; Ebreo et al., 1999; Matthies et al., 2006) as well as social and cultural aspects (Howard & Sheit, 1969). The responsible consumer is identified as a prosocial consumer, determined by their responsibility and concern about the influence of consumerism on the environment and society. The literature mentions terms such as “socially-aware consumers” (Anderson & Cunningham, 1972), “environment-friendly consumers” (Tucker, 1980; Minton & Rose, 1997; Kalafatis et al., 1999), “green consumers” (Schlegelmilch et al., 1996; Wagner, 1997; Straughan & Roberts, 1999), “environmentally responsible consumers” (Tucker, 1980; Roberts & Bacon, 1997; Follows & Jobber, 2000; Laroche et al., 2002), “socially responsible consumers” (Anderson & Cunningham 1972; Webster 1975; Roberts 1995; Laroche et al., 2001) and “ethical consumers” (Strong, 1996; Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). The constant behind these terms is “responsibility”, which is often linked to the terms “ethical” and “moral”. In essence, the term “responsibility” includes a wider meaning that references the obligation to do something. The individual takes on the moral responsibility for their own behaviour; this separates the term “responsibility” from the concept of sustainable tourism, since identifying the responsibility of the consumer follows the definition relating to the awareness, decision and activities that support the fulfilment of sustainable tourism (Tourism Sustainability Group – TGP, 2012; Mihalič, 2013). On this basis, the “responsibility” of a consumer in tourism can be defined as their “duty to do something” about the negative effects of tourism and to influence positive change. This definition is similar to Goodwin’s (2002) in that it summarizes the essence of responsibility in tourism with the idea that all forms of tourism can be organized and implemented in a responsible manner.

At the same time, however, responsible tourism is not an absolute concept. It is a fact that consumers can be responsible in different ways. This awareness of responsibility in tourism is predicated on different consumer motives and practices that reduce the negative effects of tourism at different levels of intensity. These findings support the thesis that the response of society in the context of global awareness is reflected in consumers themselves and their shift to responsibility.

The need for a response is apparent in consumers of tourism as well, because they are becoming increasingly aware of their responsibility for social and cultural problems, and they have a responsible attitude towards them (Mihalič, 1993; Urry, 1995; Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Harrison et al., 2005). Research findings show that consumers express their responsible attitudes via a positive view of green practices of companies and their products and services (Jančič, 2002). They also demand socially responsible practices on the part of companies and tourist destinations (Miller, 2001; Weeden, 2002). The pressure of consumers that are interested in both the price/quality ratio and the production background of the services and products has been an influence on the rising importance of the social responsibility of business subjects that implement socially responsible practices in relation to their stakeholders and the environment (Juhard & Golob, 2011). When researching the responsibility of consumers, it is important to take into account their response that is shown in actively implementing responsible initiatives. These are realized with a reduction of negative influences on the environment, e.g. by using environmentally friendly transportation, waste recycling, the reduction in the use of natural resources, etc. (Ebreo et al., 1999; Matthies et al., 2006). There are also more radical approaches that are shown by the refusal to purchase tourist services because of unethical behaviour and/or approaches of tourist companies. This group of consumers is known as "healthy and sustainability-friendly consumers" (Ray & Anderson, 2000). It is proven that the goodwill of responsible consumers toward positive practices is shown in the purchase of more expensive products and services that are aligned with their own personal views, values and ethical principles (Cowe & Williams, 2000). The report of the international relief and development charity Tearfund

(2002), which engages in ending poverty and injustice in some of the communities in the world, states that tourists are willing to accept increasing responsibility for their part in the sustainable tourism. This is reflected in the fact that half of all tourists search for information on how to act in the poorest tourist destinations. In this context, Stanford (2006) concludes that it is no longer possible to overlook the collective activity of individual consumers toward a more responsible behaviour.

The future development of tourism is the responsibility of tourists who are an important link in the development and design of tourist offers. In researching this topic, the focus will be on the understanding of the actions of a responsible consumer. Key indicators of the actions of responsible consumers in relation to the sustainable development of tourism based on the method of comparing existing empiric research will be established.

The Responses of Responsible Tourists

To research responsibility in the framework of the dominant social paradigm in tourism, a critical overview of the literature concerning the aspect of actions of consumers in tourism will be summarized. An analytical and integrative approach to the literature overview will reveal key findings in relation to the definition of the term "responsible consumer" and in relation to the basic indicators that will enable the study of the responsible actions of consumers in relation to sustainability in tourism. The integrative overview will enable creating a balance between the width and the depth of the phenomenon, and it will enable combining essential elements into a unit, as well as exposing the most common limitations and gaps. This will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the topic.

This with will be followed findings from studies on socially responsible consumers and studies on environmentally friendly, green consumers. These are two crucial subgroups belonging to a common, widely spread "ethical responsibility" (Young et al., 2007). In this classification, there are ecologically aware consumers, socially aware consumers and ethical consumers that act pro-socially. Because of the aim of this research they are researched as one group.

For decades, responsible consumerism has been the focal point of market research that focused on

the profiling of ecologically and socially responsible consumers and the identifications of important segments to enable companies and marketing policy authors to create effective market approaches. The relevant literature describes several behavioural theories that are commonly used for the understanding of responsible consumer behaviour in particular situations. The two dominant theories are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), presented by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), presented by Ajzen (1985, 1991). It follows from TRA that the majority of social behaviours are under the conscious control of the individual and that this makes the behaviour predictable and also represents a motivational level for a particular action or for fulfilling a goal. The actions represent the individual's decision regarding several possible actions. The subjective norms reflect the individual's willingness to comply with the desires of relevant social actors and result from normative beliefs according to social and moral values, balanced by personal motivations (Kaiser et al., 1999). The TRA and TPB are among the most utilized models for explaining attitudes/beliefs that relate to ecological behaviours, travel choices (Bamberg, 2002), willingness to pay for environmental protection (Pouta et al., 2002), the marketing of environmentally friendly products (Kalafatis et al., 1999), and green consumerism (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992). In tourism, they are used for the explanations of destination choices (Lam & Hsu, 2006), tourist segmentation (Carr, 2002) and holiday experience satisfaction (Bigne et al., 2005). Further relevant personal influence factor theories are the theory of stages of moral development (Kohlberg, 1980) and the model of personal norms (Schwartz, 1977). This model explains the activation of norms and values and the awareness of consequences and personal responsibility; it reflects a willingness to act in a specific way, marked with individual actions and subjective norms.

The research of the prosocial consumer began in the 1970s. Anderson and Cunningham (1972) developed sensitive benchmarks for market segmentation and detected a higher sensibility to social and environmental problems in particular consumer groups. In the 1970s, several more studies were conducted, including by Kinnear et al. (1974), Webster (1975) and Antil (1984), which have contributed to common

starting points of a definition stating that the socially more responsible consumers are more long-term oriented and place importance on the needs of a wider society and the environment when making their purchase decisions. Similarly, Stone, Barnes and Montgomery (1995) defined the responsible actions of a consumer as a state in which an individual expresses their willingness to act in a way that reduces the environmental problems in a way that is beneficial to the social environment of the country and to the benefit of personal economic interests. Environmental consumerism and/or green buying are similarly defined as a consumer's purchase behaviour influenced by environmental concerns (Shrum et al., 1995), which translate to seeking products and services with minimal impact on the environment (Mainieri et al., 1997).

The segmentation and profiling of a responsible consumer often take into account geographical (Samdahl & Robertson, 1989), cultural (Webster, 1975), personal (Kinnear et al., 1974) and other socio-demographic characteristics. Despite intense research, socio-demographic variables have been shown to be poor indicators of environmentally responsible behaviour (Kinnear et al., 1974; Antil, 1984; Roberts, 1996). The findings show a meaningful correlation between gender, age, income (Tognacci et al., 1972) and socio-demographic variables and personal traits (tolerance, understanding and damage prevention) that relevantly predict environmentally responsible behaviour (Kinnear et al., 1974; Antil, 1984). In other words, tolerant and more open-minded people who are understanding and have a strong desire to know how to contribute to a better environment and express concern regarding pollution are more likely to behave responsibly.

Diamantopoulos et al. (2003) believe that research that includes a range of variables (e.g. culture, personality, demography) without including other components of environmental consciousness (i.e. knowledge, attitude and behaviour) or prefers to focus solely on one of these variables is almost inevitably met with weak correlation. To remedy these shortcomings, The same authors researched all components and concluded that socio-demographic variables are useful for consumer profiling in the sense of environmental knowledge, but they could not convincingly conclude any predictions regarding behaviour.

When examining the pro-environment behaviour, Follows and Jobber (2000) studied the correlation between the values of the individual and the influence of the values that affect the purchasing intention and the later purchase of environmentally friendly products. They relied on Schwartz's (1992, based on Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987) value typology and established that these values are an important factor in the forming of the purchase behaviour in relation to the environment. Furthermore, Straughan and Roberts (1999) continued with research on the demographic and psychographic characteristics in relation to environmental awareness and the observed efficiency of consumers (Straughan & Roberts, 1999). In their research, they included additional constructs of altruism and liberalism. They have proven that altruism is a more important factor for a pro-environment purchasing behaviour than liberalism. They have also established that the meaning of environmental awareness and knowledge has a positive effect on the environmental attitude and the purchasing behaviour. In a similar study, Laroche et al. (2001) studied the importance of consumer attitudes, values and behaviour in connection with the willingness of a consumer to pay more for environmentally friendly products. Their research has shown that the persons who are prepared to pay more are convinced of the environmental issues and the importance of solving those issues on a personal and social level and thus express values that are focused on the well-being of others.

The presented studies place importance on the personal and social values; especially altruism, liberalism, taking care of others and life in harmony. In their study of the pro-social behaviour of consumers, Gilg et al. (2005) conducted research that focused on the study of perspective values rather than the demographic and psychographic profile, i.e. already accepted environmental values, demographic and psychographic variables used to examine how different types of environmental action, such as energy saving, water conservation, waste management and green consumption were related and what factors were influential in their achievement. Their research contributed to the typology of three consumer groups: "committed environmentalists", who are the most enthusiastic about sustainable behaviour; "mainstream environmentalists", who remain en-

thusiastic but less so; the "casuals", who very rarely accept green behaviour; and the non-environmentalists, who are not committed to green or sustainable behaviour. The area of classification of responsible consumers in tourism that are better prepared to undergo social and environmentally responsible activities has several established segmentations that define the groups of individuals (Wearing & Neil, 2001). An often used classification in tourism is Swarbooke and Horner's (2001) classification of the tourist according to their allegiance to three larger groups: green (intent to operate on behalf of others), grey (not interested in the well-being of others) and brown (undecided in relation to these matters.) The green tourists are the most desirable for the better future of tourism, even though they are a small fraction of the population (Lohmann, 2004). The biggest fraction of the population is undecided or not interested in the environmental issues (Fairweather et al., 2005).

The key basic conditions that define responsible behaviour of a consumer were the focus of many other studies. Stone et al. (1995) emphasized the knowledge and awareness of the consumer, the wishes and the willingness to act, the attitude toward society and ecology, the ability to act and actions as an activity. Mihalič (2013) classified responsibility as the third pillar of a sustainable, responsible model on the level of a tourist destination for the implementation of the sustainable development and upgraded it with consumer satisfaction, education-based awareness and responsible behaviour in relation to ethics based on the knowledge of sustainable practices. She defined consumer satisfaction as a condition for the retention of profitability of tourist companies and as an important factor for the realization of the sustainable development. Inskeep (1991) defined consumer satisfactions as one of the five goals of sustainable development that are connected to the economic indicators of the influence on development. Responsibility as a wider dimension in the context of sustainable behaviour and activities is conditioned on a real awareness of sustainable development, ethics, critical mass, partnership, and cooperation (Mihalič, 2009). This implies a deeper relationship between consumers and products or services, which relates not only to the product or service attributes that are important to the consumer but also to personal consequences and benefits of the use of these products. Emphasiz-

ing this point, Dolničar and Long (2009) mentioned marketing purchasing motives as good points of research together with the viewpoints of consumer behaviour in relation to social and ecological attributes in the context of consumerism. They sorted them according to main market attributes, such as information, price, shopping preferences and personal mo-

tives for the purchase of tourist services. The individual responsibility and moral choice can force the tourist (consumer) to accept or decline these market attributes and cause their action or response (Isaacs, 2011).

Indicators of Prosocial Consumer Behaviour

Socio-demographic indicators	Psychographic indicators	Consumer values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age, • gender, • socio-economic background (income level, occupation, social classes), • education, • family circumstance, • geographical belongingness, • cultural characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality • personal responsibility, • tolerance, • understanding, • environmental consciousness, • sociability, • influence on others, contemporary mindedness, • open-mindedness <p><i>Lifestyle</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities (waste management, energy saving, use of environmental-friendly transport), • interests (health, living life in harmony, company ethics, fair trade) • Purchasing intentions • personal motives, • willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly products, • willingness to act pro-socially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health, • environmental values, • fulfilment of sustainable development, • self-fulfilment, • moral choice, • altruism, • liberalism, • partnership, • cosmopolitanism

Limitations and Gaps in Responsible Consumer Behaviour Studies

From the viewpoint of the neo-classical economic sovereignty of consumers and the benefit maximization of an individual, this approach implemented several demographic, behavioural and other correlations (which are fascinating from a lifestyle point of view) and also implemented determinants for the study of the responsible consumer behaviour. However, despite several attempts to identify correlations and determinants, responsible consumer behaviour turned out to be difficult to predict (Jackson, 2005; McCarty & Shrum, 2001). The researchers empha-

sized several reasons for the limited study of this field, which are related to four key restraints:

- a) the temporal distance of public benefits of responsible consumerism, i.e. responsible consumerism is not immediately effective and does not fulfil its intent at the moment of purchase (McCarty & Shrum, 2001);
- b) consumers are limited to their own cultural and institutional contexts and norms (Sanne, 2002);
- c) consumers do not trust the companies and their motives regarding responsible behaviour (Peattie & Crane, 2005); and

- d) responsible behaviour is complex and dynamic, and cannot be effectively explained by using conventional reductionist theories (Thompson & Troester 2002).

McCarty & Shrum (2001) established that the connection between the responsible consumer and the positive effects cannot be adequately explained in the frame of the mainstream individualistic and rational model of consumer behaviour, because of its physical abstractness and the characteristics of temporally distanced public benefits that stem from direct decisions of personal consumerism.

The limitations of the study of consumer behaviour are also relevant when choosing the alternatives of services and products being offered with the intent of satisfying local standards and sustainability demands (Mont et al., 2007). The environmental alternatives could mean worse accessibility, poor comfort when travelling, prolonged travel time, e.g. when choosing travelling by train instead of by plane. If tourists want to accept such alternatives, additional resources, such as time, money and information must be available to enable this behaviour. Internal barriers preventing people from purchasing environmentally friendly products come from individuals' lack of knowledge and ability to understand the consequences of their acts, and habits (Shove & Warde, 2002). Individual decisions to act are also determined by external aspects that relate to the availability of benign products and services, the convenient to access them, and to the belief that one person cannot make a difference. External barriers are stronger than internal knowledge and motivations in hindering tourist environmental behaviour (Kaiser et al., 1999; Tanner et al., 2004). An important limiting factor for tourist choices is the availability of financial resources.

In contrast, there are frequent findings that consumers are divided (Shrum, McCarty & Lowery, 1995) and often confused in relation to the implementation of their responsible consumerism in practice. Mainieri et al. (1997) discovered that consumers had pro-environment viewpoints but did not behave in a way congruent with their expressed viewpoints.

In several studies, these limitations are apparent in the discrepancy between the consumer's intent and the actual responsible behaviour, which means that consumer intent remains a poor indicator of ac-

tual purchasing habits, not only because of the difference between viewpoints and behaviour but also because of an apparent social desirability that affects the answers (Schlegelmilch et al., 1996; Laroche et al., 2001). It is unclear if knowledge of the environmental impact of their consumption automatically leads to more environmental purchasing behaviour.

The relevance of studies of consumer responsibility in tourism has shown that, in addition to the aforementioned different behaviour aspects of the study of personal factors, there is also a need to emphasize situational factors that cloud a clear overview of the situation and limit the extents of the studies in this field.

The Future Power of Understanding Responsible Tourist: Conclusion

The literature overview has shown a clear connection between prosocial consumers who are aware of their responsibility and the primary factors that are embedded in their purchasing decisions. The findings of research that show the development of a broad understanding of the motivators of prosocial aware consumers have been presented. For instance, despite different consumer typologies, it has been established that the purchasing behaviour of prosocial consumers is affected by different motives. This paper also explained the semantic challenges regarding the new terminology that is used to describe the key research theme, i.e. "consumer responsibility", which covers a spectrum of responsible practices in relation to society, environment and ethics under the hypernym "prosocial consumer groups".

The key common determinants for the research of responsible consumer group behaviour are the personal factors, such as personal viewpoints, values, ethics, knowledge and the related awareness, the motives that can be personal or related to the main market attributes such as information, price or preferences, and the motives for purchasing tourist services in relation to social and ecological attributes. This paper has also presented the findings of studies that show a weak correlation and weak prediction of responsible consumerism, if the prediction is based only on socio-economic and personality variables. The situational factors that stem from social norms, other attractive alternative choices or economic limitations are also significant. The purchase decisions of

the consumer before, during and after the purchase phase should also not be disregarded. The study of identified types of responsible consumers and their response (behaviour) in reference to the importance of particular attributes of tourist services and products requires the inclusion of the direct consumer experience that is connected to the expectations and the context of satisfaction. It is proven that satisfaction is an influential economic indicator of potential changes and the development of tourism products and services. When applied to the responsibility of the development of such products and services, it means that the tourist service provider must understand the consumer's conceptualization and interpretation of responsibility in order to be able to understand their expectations and develop accordingly.

It is difficult to wholly evaluate all the contributions and their possible limitations, but these papers are used to illustrate the appeal of understanding the complex phenomenon of consumer responsibility. Based on the extensive research, the responsible consumer with a prosocial viewpoint will continue to be the focal point of research, because the entire dimension of this behaviour is still under-researched and remains to be fully explained. This research overview has shown that the typologies of responsible consumers are different and contingent upon the included variables. The answers to the questions "Who are these people, what motivates them and how to fulfil these motives?" require an integral and multi-faceted approach; as a result, this research will continue. The key topic has a great research potential in tourism as well, since tourists are influenced by changes in the natural, social and economic circumstances of the 21st century. They have started to show motivation and pro-activity regarding the reduction of negative influences and the increase of positive influences of tourism. Responsible tourists are more sensitive to the environmental and social consequences, but the fact remains that tourist service providers retain an inappropriate attitude to resource usage, work misuse and a low level of empathy toward consumers and other participants as active citizens or cosmopolitans. The goal of the transformation of the tourist system into a sustainable system that would enable the development of tourism on a higher level is focused on responsibility, which represents power in different forms (Stuck-

elberger & Mathwig, 2007) and also plays a key role in the dynamic interaction between consumers and service providers in tourism. Their synergy helps to promote the growth of the entire tourist system and is intertwined with the motivation of responsible behaviour that differs among consumers and service providers and remains an uncompleted challenge and a field for further research.

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