

Tourists' Intentions Towards Eco-friendly Destinations and Their Significance in Sustainable Tourism Development

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ABSTRACT

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The study aims to investigate the influence of the personal values of tourists on their attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Furthermore, the study aims to evaluate the subsequent impact of these factors on tourists' intentions to visit eco-friendly destinations. Additionally, the study examines the moderating role of environmental consciousness in shaping the relationship between personal values and attitudes towards sustainable tourism practices. The study uses convenience sampling to gather data from tourists at two distinct eco-friendly tourist sites, Bulbule and Kankrebihar, located in the Surkhet district of Nepal. The study involves accessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model, followed by path analysis of the structural equation modelling, followed by path analysis of the structural model. The study conducts confirmatory factor analysis to validate the latent constructs. Survey data from 405 tourists reveal significant positive relationships between tourists' values of resultant self-transcendence and conservation and TPB factors, except for the relationship between conservation and perceived behavioural control. Moreover, TPB factors and perceived green image positively influence tourists' intentions to visit eco-friendly destinations. Likewise, environmental consciousness moderates the relationships between the two Schwartz values and attitudes. In addition, the study offers valuable implications for sustainable tourism operators and eco-friendly destination managers, highlighting the need to consider individual values and environmental consciousness in promoting eco-friendly behaviours.

1. INTRODUCTION

The sustainable tourism sector has experienced significant growth due to the heightened awareness within contemporary society regarding the collective environmental impact of human activities. The

Sustainable Travel Report indicates that a substantial proportion of international travellers (87 percent) prefer adopting eco-friendly travel practices, with 19 percent more inclined to select eco-conscious travel companies (Hamid & Bano, 2021). Environmentally conscious tourists proactively choose destinations that prioritize the mitigation of environmental issues such as carbon emissions and biodiversity conservation. Extant marketing literature underscores the link between consumers' environmentally responsible purchasing behaviours and their underlying values, particularly self-improvement and conservation (Follows & Jobber, 2000). Similarly, Nordlund and Garvill (2002) emphasized the interaction between environmental values, problem awareness, personal norms, and pro-environmental behaviour in shaping sustainable choices. Despite their predictive capacity in consumer behaviour, personal values have received limited scholarly attention within the context of sustainability-oriented tourism research (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Liobikienė & Juknys, 2016; Ye et al., 2018).

The intention to visit eco-friendly destinations encompasses both pro-environmental and pro-social behaviours and self-interested motivations to maximize environmental benefits and minimize related risks (Miller et al., 2015). Scholars contend that engaging in eco-friendly behaviour, such as visiting environmentally sustainable destinations, remains a topic of ongoing debate and complexity, influenced by pro-social and self-interested motivations (Miller et al., 2015). Moreover, research suggests that visiting intentions possess predictive value for subsequent green behaviours (Follows & Jobber, 2000). Therefore, models based on rational choice theory are appropriate for evaluating travellers' intentions to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour. In light of this, the study suggests a strategy by creating a conceptual framework based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Schwartz's value (1992). Furthermore, based on the proposed framework, the study aims:

- (a) to examine the influence of tourists' value on their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control;
- (b) to assess the impact of these factors on tourists' intentions to visit eco-friendly sites; and
- (c) to investigate the moderating effect of tourists' environmental consciousness on the association between personal values and attitudes.

This study is significant to the existing literature by proposing and validating a framework rooted in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and personal values to examine tourists' intention to visit environmentally sustainable destinations. Responding to Ballantyne et al. (2018), it incorporates Schwartz's higher-order dimensions into eco-friendly behaviour analysis. Additionally, it introduces environmental consciousness as a moderating factor of environmental awareness, aligning with Law et al.'s (2017) recommendations. Focusing on Nepal, an emerging tourism market, it offers comprehensive insights into market dynamics, guiding eco-friendly destination management and sustainable tour operators in strategy development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theory of personal values

Schwartz (1999) proposed a widely embraced framework for personal values that has undergone extensive cross-cultural validation. This framework can be integrated within various cultural models, including Hofstede and GLOBE, designed to evaluate individual-level differences (Burgess & Steenkamp, 2006). According to the theory of values, individuals possess a unique set of values that reflect their priorities and guiding principles (Schwartz, 1992). In this context, values are desirable and transcendent goals that affect behaviour across different situations. Furthermore, at the individual level,

people's actions are determined by their value orientations, according to Schwartz's ground breaking research (Schwartz, 1999). The Schwartz Values Survey (SVS) identifies ten unique low-level value types grouped into four overarching value domains and two basic bipolar dimensions: resultant conservation (conservation versus openness-to-change) and resultant self-transcendence (self-transcendence versus self-enhancement). Therefore, the current study employs these two bipolar dimensions. Remarkably, despite its applicability, the Schwartz values framework has not been extensively employed to investigate visiting intentions toward eco-friendly destinations, although suggestions for its utilization have been made (Ye et al., 2018). Hence, this study endeavours to bridge this gap in the literature by leveraging this theory as a foundational framework for examining the phenomenon at hand.

2.2 Theory of planned behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991), is widely utilized in explaining behavioural intentions, as evidenced by numerous studies (Han, 2015; Han et al., 2016; Kim & Han, 2010; Mancha & Yoder, 2015; Ye et al., 2018). Furthermore, this model is focused on three core components: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Similarly, behavioural beliefs reflect attitudes toward a specific behaviour, subjective norms entail perceptions of social expectations, and motivation to comply, and perceived behavioural control denotes one's perceived ability to overcome obstacles. Despite the acknowledged influence of personal values and TPB factors on eco-friendly behaviours, empirical research concerning their combined impact on tourists' intentions to engage in environmentally sustainable travel remains scarce (Ballantyne et al., 2018). Consequently, a pressing need exists to develop theoretical models that amalgamate variables from both the personal values framework and the TPB to elucidate tourists' motivations to visit eco-friendly destinations (Wei et al., 2017).

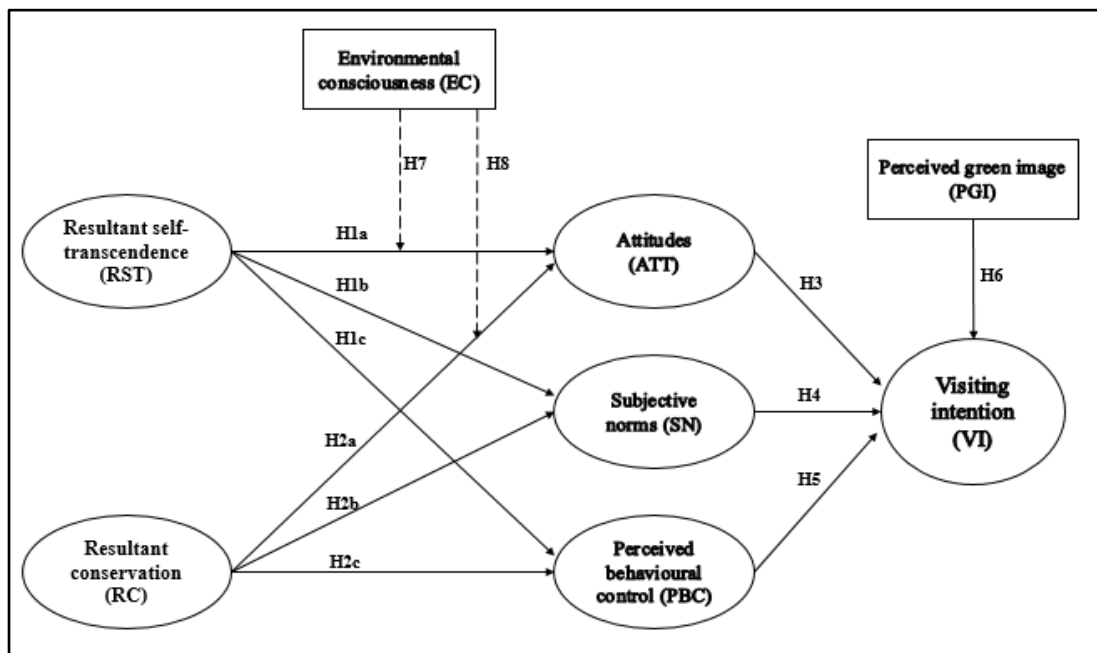


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 integrates Schwartz's personal values theory with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to examine tourists' intentions to visit eco-friendly destinations. It hypothesizes the relationship between self-transcendence and conservation values on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, thereby shaping visiting intentions. Moreover, the framework incorporates environmental consciousness as a moderating variable, influencing the relationship between personal values and attitudes.

2.3 Hypotheses development

2.3.1 Personal values and TPB factors

Personal values are crucial in guiding behaviours during decision-making processes, as Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) suggested. Empirical evidence supports this, indicating that values such as self-transcendence and conservation positively influence attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioural control in various contexts, such as environmental consciousness and sustainable consumption (Steg et al., 2014; Ye et al., 2018). By Schwartz's ideals of self-transcendence and conservation, Ye et al. (2018) found a strong correlation between visitor intentions and (attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) in travel decisions. In light of this, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: Resultant self-transcendence is positively associated with tourists' (a) attitudes, (b) subjective norms, and (c) perceived behavioural control.
- H2: Resultant conservation is positively associated with tourists' (a) attitudes, (b) subjective norms, and (c) perceived behavioural control.

2.3.2 TPB factors and visiting intentions

Empirical research has consistently underscored the significance of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) factors in elucidating individuals' decision-making process (Han, 2015; Han et al., 2016; Han & Hyun, 2017; Kim & Han, 2010; Mancha & Yoder, 2015; Wang et al., 2018). For instance, Han and Hyun (2017) discovered beliefs, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control affect tourists' intentions to visit ecologically friendly museums. Han (2015) showed how these elements impact travellers' intentions to stay at green hotels. Kim and Han (2010) also used TPB to forecast travellers' willingness to pay for eco-friendly lodging. Mancha and Yoder (2015) emphasized how attitudes, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms influence people's intentions to behave sustainably. Additionally, the data confirms these correlations by showing that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control of visitors all have a favourable impact on their intentions to engage in environmentally conscious behaviour (Wang et al., 2018). Consequently, based on supporting literature, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H3: Tourists' attitudes positively related with their intentions to visit eco-friendly destinations.
- H4: Tourists' subjective norms positively related with their intentions to visit eco-friendly destinations.
- H5: Tourists' perceived behavioural control positively related with their intentions to visit eco-friendly destinations.

2.3.3 Perceived green image and visiting intention

The significance of a destination' image in decision-making processes has brought considerable attention from scholars in the tourism sector. Notably, researchers promote a perceived green image as a critical motivator in investigations of behavioural intentions (Jeong et al., 2014). For instance, the

study emphasizes the positive impact of overall image on consumer word-of-mouth and revisiting intentions (Durna et al., 2015). Cognitive and affective destination-image components significantly influence tourists' preferences for natural and theme-park destinations (Lin et al., 2007). Furthermore, a green image fosters favourable behavioural intentions, such as revisiting, positive recommendations, and intention to pay premium value (Lee et al., 2010; Jeong et al., 2014). Furthermore, overall image, as influenced by attitudes and green behaviour, has a considerable impact on customer visit intention, word-of-mouth intention, and willingness to pay more (Han et al., 2009). Consequently, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H6: The perceived green image of a destination is positively related to tourists' visiting intentions.

2.3.4 Moderating role of environmental consciousness

Environmental consciousness, defined as individuals' concern for environmental issues and willingness to engage in pro-environmental behaviours, guides environmentally friendly actions (Abd'Razack et al., 2017). Studies show that higher environmental consciousness fosters positive attitudes and green consumption (Law et al., 2017; Lin & Niu, 2018), reflecting environmental commitment (Law et al., 2017). According to Schwartz's values theory, individuals with greater self-transcendence and conservation align their commitments to nature and society. This study investigates how environmental consciousness influences the relationship between personal values, tourists' perceptions of eco-friendly places, and their travel intentions. Wang et al. (2018) and Huang et al. (2014) found that people with higher environmental consciousness are more likely to use ecologically friendly products and services and are willing to pay more for green lodgings. Additionally, environmental consciousness moderates the relationship between personal values and customer attitudes, with ecologically conscious individuals exhibiting stronger preservation-oriented attitudes towards eco-friendly destinations (Jeong et al., 2014). Based on these insights, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H7: Tourists' environmental consciousness moderates the relationship between self-transcendence values and attitudes towards eco-friendly destinations.

H8: Tourists' environmental consciousness moderates the relationship between conservation values and attitudes towards eco-friendly destinations.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed convenience sampling to gather data from two distinct eco-friendly tourist sites, Bulbule and Kankrebihar, in the Surkhet district of Nepal. Participants were chosen based on their intention to visit at least one environmentally friendly site within a year. The selection process prioritized individuals demonstrating a solid commitment to environmental consciousness and social responsibility, characteristics often influenced by their exposure to a media-saturated environment (Barber et al., 2010). Data collection transpired from October to November 2023, with the researcher personally administering the survey in the field. Initially, the sample comprised 500 respondents, with subsequent removal of incomplete or low-quality responses, resulting in a dataset of 405 usable responses. A personally administered questionnaire was designed based on multi-item measures adapted from prior studies. The questionnaire has five sections. Table 1 provides an overview of the constructs measured, the instruments used for measurement, the scale employed, and the number of items for each section of the study.

Table 1:
Structure of Questionnaire Development

Section	Constructs measured	Source	Scale	No survey questions/ Items
First	Demographic information	-	-	Age, gender, education, income level
Second	Self-transcendence and conservation values	Schwartz (1992)	Five-point Likert scale	Six questions for each value dimension
Third	Attitude	Ajzen (1991); Ajzen and Fishbein (2005)	Semantic differential scale	Five items
	Subjective norms Perceived behavioural control	Ajzen (1991)	Three-item scale	Three statements each
Fourth	Environmental consciousness	Huang et al. (2014)	Eight-item	Eight statements
	Perceived green image	Huang et al. (2014).	Seven-point Likert scale	Four statements
Fifth	Tourists visiting intentions	Ajzen (1991)	Seven-point Likert scale	Three statements

Face and content validity was ensured through review by a marketing expert, who provided valuable input to refine instruments. A pilot test involving 40 tourists confirmed the reliability and validity of the constructs' scales, with Cronbach's α scores above .70 on all constructs. Participant feedback on wording and design further refined the questionnaire to its finalization.

This study adopts Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step structural equation modelling (SEM) technique. The study begins by analysing the measurement model's reliability and validity and then examines the structural model's path analysis. This sequential strategy seeks to confirm the measurements' reliability and validity before investigating their structural relationships. Furthermore, the study used confirmatory factor analysis to determine the validity of the latent components.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Demographic analyses

The demographic profile of the respondents shows a slightly male-dominated sample, with 56.79 percent males and 43.21 percent females. The age distribution is observed towards young to middle-aged adults, with 64.45 percent aged between 26 and 35. Similarly, the income level of respondents reveals that 34.81 percent earn between 10,001 and 20,000 NRS per month, and 29.14 percent earn less than 10,000 NRS. Likewise, education level seems 45.43 percent have completed intermediate education (Class 12), 30.12 percent have education up to SEE (Class 10), 16.54 percent hold a bachelor's degree, and 7.90 percent have a master's degree. Regarding travel frequency, 30.12 percent travel annually, 26.17 percent semi-annually, and 21.48 percent biennially. This demographic profile highlights a young, moderately educated, and middle-income group of regular travellers, providing a solid basis for analysing their intentions for eco-friendly destinations.

4.2 Measurement model

The study examines the fitness of the stated model by using Hooper et al. (2008) goodness of fit index categorization, which included absolute fit measurements, incremental fit measures, and parsimonious

adjusted measures. The goodness of fit indexes was measured following the criteria proposed by Schreiber (2008). Four indexes were used to confirm absolute fit measures: Chi-square/degree of freedom (χ^2/df), which should be below 3.0; RMSEA, with values below 0.08 indicating a good fit; GFI, with values of 0.90 or above indicating a good fit; and AGFI, with values above 0.80 indicating an acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacCallum & Hong, 1997).

Table 2
Confirmatory factor analysis (n= 405)

Constructs	Indicators	SFL	CR	AVE	α
Resultant self-transcendence (RST)	RST1	0.748	0.82	0.6	0.83
	RST2	0.776			
	RST3	0.774			
	RST4	0.777			
	RST5	0.908			
	RST6	0.761			
Resultant conservation (RC)	RC1	0.771	0.89	0.58	0.88
	RC2	0.879			
	RC3	0.900			
	RC4	0.826			
	RC5	0.707			
	RC6	0.852			
Environmental consciousness (EC)	EC1	0.710	0.87	0.63	0.86
	EC2	0.797			
	EC3	0.723			
	EC4	0.735			
	EC5	0.823			
	EC6	0.904			
	EC7	0.866			
	EC8	0.798			
Attitude (ATT)	ATT1	0.822	0.89	0.64	0.9
	ATT2	0.729			
	ATT3	0.840			
	ATT4	0.802			
Social norms (SN)	SN1	0.783	0.84	0.68	0.86
	SN2	0.776			
	SN3	0.850			
Perceived behavioural control (PBC)	PBC1	0.889	0.86	0.62	0.85
	PBC2	0.864			
	PBC3	0.709			
Perceived green image (PGI)	PGI1	0.735	0.81	0.59	0.81
	PGI2	0.880			
	PGI3	0.837			
Visiting intention (VI)	VI1	0.752	0.79	0.57	0.8
	VI2	0.720			
	VI3	0.738			
Average					

Abbreviations: α : Cronbach's alpha; AVE: average variance extracted; CR: composite reliability; SFL: standardized factor loadings; R1: substantive factor loading; R2: method factor loading; $p < .001$

The measuring model's appropriateness was confirmed by testing the constructs' reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity (Table 2). Composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.79 to 0.89, surpassing the suggested standard of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011). Similarly, convergent validity was assessed using the standards proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). All factor loadings should be significant and more remarkable than 0.70, and each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.50. The factor loadings for all items were significant and greater than 0.70, while the AVE values ranged from 0.57 to 0.68, beyond the 0.50 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2011). These findings validate the measurement model's reliability and convergent validity.

In addition, discriminant validity was assessed using two established criteria. First, correlations between constructs have to fall below the 0.85 level (Kline, 1998). Second, the average variance extracted (AVE) square root must be greater than the correlations between a construct and other latent constructs in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The measurement model analysis validated compliance with both requirements, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Discriminant validity: Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria

Constructs	RST	RC	EC	ATT	SN	PCB	PGI	VI
RST	0.774	0.391	-0.016	0.125	0.272	0.158	0.153	0.272
RC		0.761	0.023	-0.045	-0.065	-0.61	-0.049	-0.431
EC			0.793	0.062	0.201	0.016	-0.061	0.018
ATT				0.8	0.374	0.433	0.019	0.297
SN					0.824	0.278	0.026	0.365
PCB						0.787	0.033	0.391
PGI							0.768	0.116
VI								0.754
Mean	3.77	3.41	3.93	2.96	3.58	3.16	3.78	3.36
SD	1	0.73	1.02	1.26	1.01	1.16	1.07	0.98
VIF	1.942	1.881	1.162	1.388	1.432	1.595	1.120	1.398

Note: The bold numbers in diagonal row are square roots of AVE

Table 4 indicates a strong fit for the model, with $\chi^2/df = 1.949$, RMSEA = 0.052, GFI = 0.90, and AGFI = 0.91. For incremental fit measures, the normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and relative fit index (RFI) all above the 0.90 threshold (Hu & Bentler, 1999), with NFI = 0.931, IFI = 0.914, CFI = 0.914, and RFI = 0.921. Parsimonious adjusted measures included the parsimony comparative fit index (PCFI), parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI), and parsimonious goodness of fit index (PGFI), all of which should exceed 0.50 to indicate a satisfactory fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The results showed PCFI = 0.826, PNFI = 0.831, and PGFI = 0.747. These findings suggest that the suggested model well describes the interactions between constructs (Hair et al., 2011). SPSS was used to assess for any multicollinearity concerns. VIF values ranged from 1.120 to 1.942, below the recommended cut-off of 3.0, indicating no multicollinearity issues with the data in Table 3.

4.3 Hypotheses results

The study's hypotheses are examined through structural model path analyses conducted at 1 percent and 5 percent significance levels. The hypotheses testing results in Table 5 indicate that resultant self-

transcendence positively influences all three TPB factors: attitude (H1a: $\beta = .467, t = 2.882, p < .01$), subjective norms (H1b: $\beta = .384, t = 3.573, p < .001$), and perceived behavioural control (H1c: $\beta = .424, t = 3.213, p < .05$), thereby supporting H1. H2 is partially supported, as resultant conservation significantly impacts attitude (H2a: $\beta = .336, t = 2.294, p < .05$) and subjective norms (H2b: $\beta = .298, t = 2.674, p < .05$), but not perceived behavioural control (H2c: $\beta = .100, t = 1.832, p > .05$). Furthermore, all TPB factors significantly affect eco-friendly destination visiting intention: attitude (H3: $\beta = .482, t = 3.214, p < .001$), subjective norms (H4: $\beta = .557, t = 4.120, p < .001$), and perceived behavioural control (H5: $\beta = .524, t = 3.349, p < .001$). Thus, H3, H4, and H5 are accepted. Additionally, perceived green image significantly influences visiting intention (H6: $\beta = .476, t = 3.354, p < .001$), thereby supporting H6.

Table 4
Results of hypotheses

Path	Coefficient estimate (β)	t statistic	p-value	Relationship
H1a. Resultant self-transcendence → attitude	0.467	2.882	0.000	Supported
H1b. Resultant self-transcendence → subjective norms	0.384	3.573	0.000	Supported
H1c. Resultant self-transcendence → perceived behavioural control	0.424	3.213	0.035	Supported
H2a. Resultant conservation → attitude	0.336	2.294	0.028	Supported
H2b. Resultant conservation → subjective norms	0.298	2.674	0.017	Supported
H2c. Resultant conservation → perceived behavioural control	0.100	1.832	0.067	Unsupported
H3. Attitude → visiting intention	0.482	3.214	0.000	Supported
H4. Subjective norms → visiting intention	0.557	4.120	0.000	Supported
H5. Perceived behavioural control → visiting intention	0.524	3.349	0.000	Supported
H6. Perceived green image → visiting intention	0.476	3.354	0.000	Supported
H7. Resultant self-transcendence × environmental consciousness → attitude	0.390	2.682	0.000	Supported
H8. Resultant conservation × environmental consciousness → attitude	0.357	2.430	0.041	Supported
	Structural model	Cut-off value		
Model fit statistics	Chi-square = 656.92 <i>d.f.</i> = 337 <i>p-value</i> = 0.0000			
Absolute fit measures	Normed chi-square = 1.949	1.0–3.0		
	RMSEA = 0.052	<0.08		
	GFI = 0.90	>0.90		
	AGFI = 0.91	>0.80		
Incremental fit measures	NFI = 0.931	>0.90		
	IFI = 0.914	>0.90		
	CFI = 0.914	>0.90		
	RFI = 0.921	>0.90		
Parsimonious adjusted measures	PCFI = 0.826	>0.50		
	PNFI = 0.831	>0.50		
	PGFI = 0.747	>0.50		

***p* < .01. **p* < .05.

The study subsequently investigated the moderation of metric factors by examining the direct impact of the independent and the moderating variables on the dependent variable. Additional tests were run for resultant self-transcendence and consequent conservation; as environmental consciousness modifies their interaction with attitude. The interaction impact of self-transcendence and environmental consciousness on attitude was statistically significant ($\beta = .390$, $t = 2.682$, $p < .01$). There was a significant interaction impact between conservation and environmental consciousness on attitude ($\beta = .357$, $t = 2.430$, $p < .05$). Thus, H6 and H7 were supported.

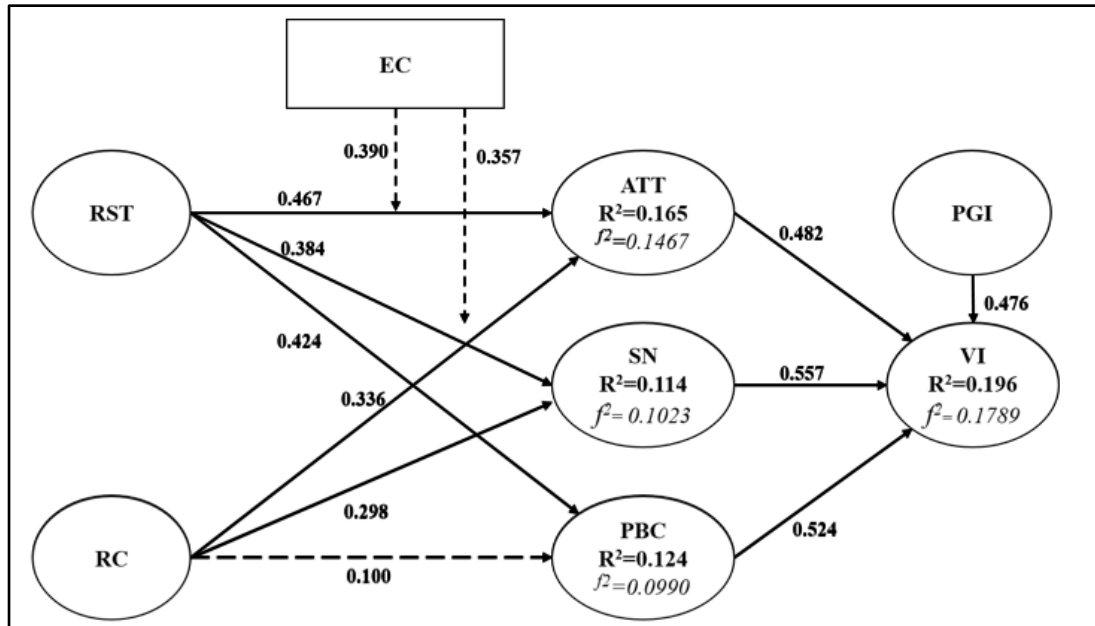


Figure 2: Confirmation of the proposed model

Figure 2 displays the predictive power (R^2) for each dependent variable, indicating the percentage of total variance the independent variables explain. The results show R^2 values of 16.50 percent for attitude, 11.45 percent for subjective norms, 12.40 percent for perceived behavioural control, and 19.65 percent for visiting intention, all exceeding the recommended minimum criterion of 10 percent (Falk & Miller, 1992). Additionally, Cohen's (1988) effect size (f^2) was assessed to evaluate the substantive impact of the research model. Effect sizes of 0.03, 0.16, and 0.37 correspond to small, medium, and significant effects. The model demonstrated large effect sizes for attitude ($f^2 = 0.1467$) and visiting intention ($f^2 = 0.1789$), while subjective norms ($f^2 = 0.1023$) and perceived behavioural control ($f^2 = 0.0990$) exhibited medium and small effect sizes.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study develops a framework elucidating tourists' intentions towards eco-friendly destinations, emphasizing the importance of tourists' self-transcendence and conservation values alongside TPB factors. The study reveals that self-transcendence and conservation values significantly influence TPB factors of attitude and social norms, consistent with previous research (Miller et al., 2015; Follows & Jobber, 2000). Prior empirical evidence supports personal values' role in enhancing the TPB's predictive power (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Liobikiene & Juknys, 2016; Ye et al., 2018; Bonne et al.,

2007). Nepalese tourists prioritize societal and environmental welfare, with conservation values significantly influencing their attitudes, consistent with findings by Bonne et al. (2007). Therefore, this reflects a vital concern for nature and societal values, influencing their eco-friendly visiting intentions (Miller et al., 2015).

In addition, the study confirms that all TPB factors positively influence tourists' intentions to visit eco-friendly destinations, with subjective norms exerting a notably higher impact ($\beta = 0.557$) compared to attitude and perceived behavioural control. This contrasts with previous research findings, such as Wang et al. (2016), indicating the significant influence of social norms on consumers' eco-friendly behaviours. Tourists' intentions are substantially influenced by societal expectations, driven by perceived pressures from peers, family, and community leaders to engage in environmentally friendly behaviour. Furthermore, environmental consciousness significantly moderates the relationship between tourists' values and attitudes, consistent with prior pro-environmental research (Abd'Razack et al., 2017; Huang et al., 2014; Jeong et al., 2014). The increasing environmental awareness among tourists, facilitated by higher education and exposure to social media, underscores the interplay between personal values and environmental consciousness. Notably, the interaction effects of resultant self-transcendence and conservation are more potent when environmental consciousness is high. Additionally, the study shows a positive effect of perceived green image on tourists' visiting intentions, particularly among those with high environmental consciousness, aligning with previous research on destination-related factors and behavioural intentions (Durna et al., 2015; Jeong et al., 2014; Lin et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2010).

The study significantly contributes to understanding the consumers' eco-friendly behaviours in several aspects. Firstly, it enhances comprehension of the role of personal values in predicting visiting intentions within the theory of planned behaviour framework, filling a gap in empirical research models (De Groot & Steg, 2008; Liobikiene & Juknys, 2016; Schultz & Zelezny, 1999). Secondly, it contributes to the empirical development of Schwartz's values in tourism research, investigating visiting intentions to eco-friendly destinations (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2018). Thirdly, the study extends eco-friendly benefits by examining the moderating role of environmental consciousness in destination contexts, expanding beyond previous research focused on green behaviours (Abd'Razack et al., 2017; Jeong et al., 2014; Law et al., 2017). Finally, the study investigates Nepalese tourists' behaviour to provide valuable insights given Nepal's status as the fastest-growing tourism market and its unique cultural values, contributing to both local and global tourism operators' understanding (Ye et al., 2018). Overall, the study facilitates the identification and expansion of conceptual frameworks associated with tourists' decision-making processes.

The study findings have significant implications for business strategies in eco-friendly tourism. Tourists' values of self-transcendence and conservation suggest the need for eco-friendly destinations to offer engaging environmental experiences that align with these values (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2018). Further marketing strategies targeting tourists' values should be prioritized, emphasizing memorable experiences consistent with their values. In addition to experiences, the management of tourist destinations should design interpretive materials that encompass stimulating, competitive, traditional, conformity, and achievement values to attract tourists (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2018). Strong attitudinal intentions towards eco-friendly destinations underscore the importance of promoting eco-friendly practices and implementing sustainable policies, supported by holistic promotional strategies involving public and private sectors (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2018). Likewise, decision support systems can aid tourism organizations in tracking current trends, measuring travel motivators, and evaluating marketing strategies (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2018). Similarly, sustainable tour operators should prioritize environmentally sustainable destinations and

advocate for higher green standards in accommodations (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2018). Therefore, to remain competitive, eco-friendly destinations must adopt sustainable policies and attract environmentally conscious tourists (Ballantyne et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2018).

The limitations of the study could provide caution in generalizing results. Firstly, using cross-sectional data in the study limits generalizability, suggesting the need for controlled experiments or longitudinal approaches. Secondly, focusing solely on data from Nepal calls for cross-cultural investigations to validate the research model across different countries. Lastly, while this study examined environmental consciousness, augmenting the analysis with additional concepts such as involvement and knowledge value could enrich a comprehension of tourists' behaviours in eco-friendly contexts. These considerations guide future research in eco-friendly tourism contexts.

In conclusion, the study addresses tourists' behaviour in ecotourism contexts, emphasizing the significance of eco-friendly destinations in the Nepalese tourism industry. The research model incorporates Schwartz's values, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), and environmental consciousness as a moderator, providing original insights into this emerging topic. Findings underscore the importance of personal values and TPB factors in influencing tourists' intentions to visit eco-friendly destinations, with resultant self-transcendence and conservation playing pivotal roles. Additionally, environmental consciousness moderates the relationship between Schwartz's values and tourists' attitudes. Overall, the study offers valuable implications for sustainable tourism operators and eco-friendly destination managers, highlighting the need to consider individual values and environmental consciousness in promoting eco-friendly behaviours.

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