



# Cruise travelers' environmentally responsible decision-making: An integrative framework of goal-directed behavior and norm activation process

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## ABSTRACT

Building on theories with pro-social and self-interest motives, we developed a new model that comprehensively explains travelers' pro-environmental decision-making process in an environmentally-responsible cruise context. Results of an online survey and structural model revealed that our theoretical framework which merged a Model of Goal-directed Behavior (MGB) and Norm Activation Model (NAM) had satisfactory accountability for pro-environmental intentions. Its prediction power was greater than that for the MGB and NAM. Findings also showed that integrating the sequential model of the NAM into the model was more effective in explicating an eco-friendly decision-making process than incorporating the alternative moderator model of the NAM. A salient role of personal norm in determining intention was identified; this personal norm and desire were significant mediators. This study is the first to provide a conceptual framework merging the MGB and NAM in the domain of pro-environmental behavior.

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## 1. Introduction

In the increasingly environmentally conscious marketplace, considerable attention is being given to customers' concern for the environment, marketing to eco-conscious customers, and customers' purchasing behaviors (Paco and Rapose, 2009). It has recently become apparent that the cruise industry causes various environmental harms (e.g., ocean pollution, climate change, excessive use of natural resources). In order to fulfill customers' growing green needs, this industry is under great pressure to alleviate environmental impacts, reduce water/energy consumption, improve energy efficacy, and implement eco-friendly technologies and sustainable practices (GTG, 2014; IGLU Cruise, 2012). Greening the cruise and understanding cruise travelers' decision-making process with regard to their environmentally responsible purchasing behavior are important issues with which cruise lines need to be familiar in order to be competitive in the increasingly environmentally conscious cruise market.

Although there are a variety of complementary approaches in the domain of pro-environmental behavior, the existing literature on this domain is mainly comprised of two streams: one that focuses on self-interest motives and the other on pro-social motives (Bamberg et al., 2007; Bamberg and Möser, 2007; Harland et al., 1999; Oreg and Katz-Gerro, 2006). A number of studies in the first research stream have shown that environmentally friendly behavior mainly relies on rational choice theories (e.g., Theory of Reasoned Action [TRA], Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, Theory of Planned Behavior [TPB], Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980, Model of Goal-directed Behavior [MGB], Perugini and Bagozzi, 2001), employing socio-psychological constructs such as beliefs, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, emotions, and desire in predicting pro-environmental intentions/behaviors (e.g., Chen and Tung, 2014; Han et al., 2010; Kim and Han, 2010; Kim et al., 2013). Studies included with the second stream consider pro-environmental behavior to be pro-social behavior and often rely on the Norm Activation Model (NAM) (Schwartz, 1977), utilizing awareness of consequences, personal norm, and ascribed responsibility in explicating eco-friendly decision-making processes or behaviors (e.g., Klöckner, 2013; Stern, 2000; Zhang et al., 2013).

These two research streams are based on the premise that one's pro-environmental decisions/behaviors can either be explicated via socio-psychological theory with self-interest motives or

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theory with pro-social motives. However, answers to the question, “What motives determine individuals’ environmentally responsible decisions/behaviors?” remain unclear. Recently, researchers have asserted that the mixture of theories based on self-interest and pro-social motives can be efficient in predicting pro-environmental intentions/behaviors, suggesting the integration of two theoretical frameworks (e.g., Bamberg et al., 2007; Bamberg and Möser, 2007; Onwezen et al., 2013). However, efforts to combine both the goal-directed behavior framework with a self-interest basis and a norm activation framework with a pro-social basis have not occurred in studies of pro-environmental consumer behavior. In addition, an independent role of normative, motivational, cognitive, volitional (attitudinal and normative), non-volitional, and emotional processes within such a comprehensive framework has not been explored. Moreover, no research has examined the intricate associations among such procedures in determining pro-environmental intentions/behaviors in hospitality and tourism. In fact, despite the importance of both theories to vital processes in green consumer behavior, research that has tested the application of either the MGB or the NAM is rare in the cruise industry.

The present study was therefore designed to merge the MGB and NAM into one theoretical framework in order to offer a more comprehensive and apparent understanding of the pro-environmental decision-making process in an environmentally responsible cruise context. Specifically, we attempted to test the capability of the research model in predicting pro-environmental intention; to conduct modeling comparisons with the proposed model, MGB, and NAM; to compare the effectiveness of the two conflicting interpretations of the NAM (sequential model vs. moderator model), to identify the comparative importance among diverse processes (i.e., normative, motivational, cognitive, volitional, non-volitional, and emotional) within our integrated MGB-NAM model; and to test the mediating effect of personal norm and desire.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Environmentally responsible cruises

Environmentally responsible cruises are eco-friendly/green/sustainable cruises that are conducted in ways that minimize environmental impacts on the ocean/water and the wider environment. Green technologies to reduce environmental harms are being incorporated into environmentally responsible ships (GTG, 2014; IGLU Cruise, 2012). Environmentally responsible cruise lines are eager to develop effective greening practices and encourage crews and passengers to engage in diverse green practices through environmental education programs (GTG, 2014; IGLU Cruise, 2012; Paloti and Poma, 2014). In addition, these cruise lines participate in donation programs for charities and the environment (Paloti and Poma, 2014). Moreover, on environmentally responsible cruises, guestrooms usually have cotton towels, unbleached linens, and air cleaners with carbon filters; and environmental officers are onboard for environmental advisories/training and to encourage green practices (GTG, 2014; IGLU Cruise, 2012; Paloti and Poma, 2014). Diverse green technologies, policies, guidelines, and practices for manufacturers, managers, crews, and passengers on environmentally responsible cruises are believed to help minimize environmental degradations.

### 2.2. Norm activation model and the interpretation of it

The NAM has been broadly applied to explain a variety of individuals’ pro-social behaviors (Zhang et al., 2013). Within the NAM, personal norm, awareness of consequences, and ascription

of responsibility play key roles in generating pro-social intention or behavior (Stern, 2000; Stern et al., 1999). Harland et al. (1999) indicated that “personal norms reflect commitment with internalized values and are experienced as feelings of personal obligation to engage in a certain behavior” (p. 2507). Ascription of responsibility refers to “feelings of responsibility for the negative consequences of not acting pro-socially” (De Groot and Steg, 2009, p. 426). Awareness of consequences can be defined as “the extent to which someone is aware of the adverse consequences of not acting pro-socially for others or for other things over values” (Steg and De Groot, 2010, p. 725).

Within the norm activation framework, individuals’ awareness of consequences builds ascription of responsibility; this ascribed responsibility influences personal norm; and personal norm in turn determines pro-social intention or behavior (i.e., awareness of consequences → ascription of the responsibility → personal norm → pro-environmental intentions/behaviors) (Schwartz, 1977; Stern, 2000; Stern et al., 1999; Onwezen et al., 2013). That is, according to these researchers, one’s pro-social intentions/behaviors forms through problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norm in sequence. Such awareness of consequences is alternatively called problem awareness; the terms, ascription of responsibility and outcome efficacy, are interchangeably used; and personal norm is alternatively utilized with moral norm.

Since environmentally responsible actions occur such that individuals benefit others without direct advantage from engaging in such behaviors, pro-environmental behaviors are in general regarded as a vital part of pro-social behaviors (De Groot and Steg, 2009). Thus, the NAM has also been widely applied and extended to examine why individuals engage in pro-environmental behaviors. Indeed, the norm activation framework appeared to be successful in explicating diverse types of pro-environmental intentions/behaviors such as reduction of car use (Eriksson et al., 2006), recycling (Hopper and Nielsen, 1991; Vining and Ebreo, 1992), environmental citizenship (Stern et al., 1999), electricity-saving behavior (Zhang et al., 2013), travel-mode choice or public transportation use (Bamberg et al., 2007; Klöckner and Matthies, 2004), and general environmental behavior (Harland et al., 1999; Onwezen et al., 2013).

Despite a great amount of support for the norm activation framework in pro-social and pro-environmental domains, the interpretation of the NAM in previous studies has been contradictory (De Groot and Steg, 2009; Steg and De Groot, 2010). While many researchers have indicated that the NAM is a sequential model (mediator model), some studies have shown the NAM to be a moderator model. In particular, unlike our postulation in the proposed model, some have argued that interpreting the NAM as a moderator model, where problem awareness and ascribed responsibility are used as moderators in the relationship between personal norm and intentions/behaviors, is more efficient in explaining one’s pro-social/pro-environmental behavior (Hopper and Nielsen, 1991; Schultz and Zelezny, 1998; Schwartz, 1973; Schwartz and Howard, 1980; Vining and Ebreo, 1992). Due to such confusion, drawing distinct conclusions about the benefits of utilizing this theoretical framework is problematic; and the operationalizations of key variables within the NAM differ across pro-social/pro-environmental behavior studies (Steg and De Groot, 2010).

Despite this conflict related to the interpretation of the NAM, De Groot and Steg’s (2009) and Onwezen et al. (2013)’s recent studies supported the adequacy of the sequential model. In comparing the mediator model and moderator model of the NAM in various types of pro-social intentions, they found weak support for the moderator model. In addition, relatively fewer numbers of studies have supported the moderating impact of the awareness of consequences and ascription of responsibility in comparison to the

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