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## Research Paper

## Stimulating visitors' goal-directed behavior for environmentally responsible museums: Testing the role of moderator variables

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## ABSTRACT

Given that little is known about museum visitors' pro-environmental behavior, this research examines the process of decision formation for environmentally responsible museums. The research employed the model of goal-directed behavior, tested its applicability, and deepened it using problem awareness, affective commitment, and non-green alternative attractiveness. Data collected from a field survey was used for analysis. Results of the structural analysis indicated that variables within the theory were in general significantly associated. Moreover, desire acted as an important mediator and had the strongest influence on intention. Moreover, the proposed model included a sufficient level of explanatory power for visitors' pro-environmental intention. Testing for structural metric invariance revealed that the role of desire in determining intention was maximized when the level of affective commitment was high and when perceived non-green alternative attractiveness was low. The findings provide a sufficient understanding of visitors' decision-making process for visiting an environmentally responsible museum.

## 1. Introduction

Given the seriousness of the environmental crisis the world is facing, museums are increasingly responding to the issue in a positive way by incorporating sustainability into their building, facilities, operations, designs, programming, and exhibitions (Brophy & Wylie, 2006, 2008; Wylie & Brophy, 2008). In the museum industry, such institutions are described as environmentally responsible museums (Brophy & Wylie, 2006; Wylie & Brophy, 2008). Although many conventional museums are still not active in practicing eco-friendly management (Sutter, 2006), green museums have recently become an important trend in the industry (Brophy & Wylie, 2006, 2008; Wylie & Brophy, 2008).

Increasing the number of visitors is an important task for every museum operator (Carey, Davidson, & Sahli, 2013). A clear understanding of visitor post-purchase decision-making process can contribute to enhancing the number of visitors. While it is not a simple task to elucidate an individual's intricate decision-making process, researchers in diverse fields have claimed that discovering key factors leading to intention to engage in a particular action offers an important clue to understanding his/her decision-making process (Ajzen, 1991; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Hsu & Huang, 2012; Hwang & Hyun, 2017; Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini, & Manzari, 2012; Lee, Bonn, & Cho, 2015;

Lyu & Hwang, 2017; Song, Lee, & Norman, 2012). In this regard, researchers have paid considerable attention to volitional and non-volitional driving forces in decision/intention (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Lee et al., 2015).

Previous studies and conceptualizations regarding the prediction of intention by focusing solely on volitional and non-volitional processes, however, are believed to be not sufficient in wholly explicating individuals' decision-making processes, particularly in a leisure, hospitality and tourism sector (Han & Yoon, 2015; Song, Lee, Kang et al., 2012; Wen, 2009). A model of goal-directed behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001) was specifically designed to clarify the individual's decision formation in a more broad and effective manner. This model theorizes that one's intention for a particular action forms through volitional, non-volitional, emotional, experiential, and motivational processes (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001, 2004). Within the framework of this goal-directed behavior theory, volitional, non-volitional, emotional, and experiential dimensions directly trigger motivation; and these dimensions work through the motivational variable in determining intention (Carrus, Passafaro, & Bonnes, 2008; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; Song, Lee, & Norman, 2012).

Due to the theory's robustness, it has been widely utilized in a

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variety of sectors including hospitality and tourism (e.g., Dijst, Farag, & Schwanen, 2008; Han & Hwang, 2014; Han & Yoon, 2015; Lee, Song, Bendle, Kim, & Han, 2012; Song, Lee, Kang, & Boo, 2012). Nevertheless, no research has employed this goal-directed behavior framework to clearly comprehend museum visitors' pro-environmental decision-making process. Moreover, a recent line of studies in environmental behavior indicates that problem awareness (Chan, Hon, Chan, & Okumus, 2014; De Groot & Steg, 2009), affective commitment (Lee, Chua, & Han, 2016; Mattila, 2001), and non-green alternative attractiveness (Bansal, Taylor, & James, 2005; Han, 2015; Hwang & Hyun, 2014) are critical influences on reasoning regarding environmentally responsible choice among diverse options. Despite its significance, little effort has been made to investigate the role of problem awareness, affective commitment, and non-green alternative attractiveness in generating visitors' intention to visit an environmentally responsible museum.

Given this research needs, the present study was designed to (1) examine visitors' decision formation for visiting an environmentally responsible museum by employing the model of goal-directed behavior, (2) deepen this theory by considering the moderating impact of problem awareness, affective commitment, and non-green alternatives' attractiveness, and (3) identify the mediating impact of desire toward the behavior in the relationship between its antecedents and visit intention.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Environmentally responsible museums

According to Byers (2008), environmentally responsible museums are 'organizations engaged in green business practices, eco-friendly facility management, and sustainable educational programming' (p. 14). Diverse sustainable practices and efforts are integrated and implemented into environmentally responsible museum operations (e.g. energy efficiency, effective HVAC [Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning] systems, recycling, efficient waste streams, reduced resource use, reuse of materials, healthy green foodservice in the café, green gift shop, energy efficient appliances, green architecture and technology, energy-efficient lighting, natural lighting, water-efficient restroom fixtures, environmentally responsible office supplies, green cleaning products, natural landscaping, green roofs/walls, encouragement of green transportation, green education, green exhibits) (Brophy & Wylie, 2008; Byers, 2008; Worts, 2004, 2006; Wylie & Brophy, 2008). In addition, unlike conventional museums, environmentally responsible museums promote sustainable choices/decision-makings to both their visitors and employees, and motivate visitors and employees to actively practice green activities at the museums and at their homes (Byers, 2008). Children's museums and zoological organizations are believed to be among the first to initiate green practices (Brophy & Wylie, 2008). Children's museums took an active role in lessening harmful environmental impacts on young visitors by creating healthy indoor environments, while zoological organizations adopted green and healthy design principles for the preservation of wildlife and their habitats (Byers, 2008).

### 2.2. Model of goal-directed behavior

Perugini and Bagozzi (2001) developed the model of goal-directed behavior to improve the sufficiency of existing socio-psychological theories (e.g. theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior) and better explicate human behavior. Such elements as affective/emotional, motivational, and experiential/habit elements are imperative to the human decision-making process but are overlooked in the theory of planned behavior were considered to be important driving forces of one's decision/action in this goal-directed behavior theory (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001, 2004; Poels & Dewitte, 2008; Song et al.,

2012a; Taylor, Ishida, & Wallace, 2009). In the model of goal-directed behavior, the role of variables and relationships among them involving constructs rooted in the planned behavior theory and incorporated constructs were redefined (Lee et al., 2012; Song, Lee, Norman, & Han, 2012b). The model of goal-directed behavior was developed based on the strong assumption that one's particular behavior is directly and largely anticipated by his/her desire to engage in the behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Perugini and Bagozzi (2001) defined such desire toward the behavior as 'the motivational state of mind wherein appraisals and reasons to act are transformed into a motivation to do so' (p. 84).

According to the theory, in combination, attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, positive and negative anticipated emotions, and past behavior give rise to human desire, leading to the formation of behavioral intention (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001, 2004). In other words, as a general rule, the more favorable or greater the attitude, anticipated emotion, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and frequency of past behavior, the stronger should be the individual's desire and intention, which is the immediate antecedent of behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001, 2004; Song et al., 2012a; Taylor et al., 2009). Attitude toward behavior refers to 'a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor' (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). While subjective norm indicates 'the perception of social pressure related to the action' (Han & Hwang, 2014, p. 1120), perceived behavioral control is defined as 'the assessed ease or difficulty of conducting the action' (Han & Hwang, 2014, p. 1120). In addition, frequency of past behavior indicates habit strength (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001); anticipated emotions refer to one's expected post-behavioral affective responses, which can be either positive or negative (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Under the model of goal-directed behavior, human decision-formation can be more efficiently and comprehensively explained due to the theory's scope, which covers not only volitional and non-volitional processes but also emotional, motivational, and automatic processes (Carrus et al., 2008; Song et al., 2012a; Taylor et al., 2009).

### 2.3. Relationships among variables in the model of goal-directed behavior

In diverse contexts, it has been repeatedly identified that one's desire toward the behavior is a significant direct driving force of his/her behavioral intention; furthermore, attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, anticipated emotions, and past behavior provide the direct impetus for such desire (Carrus et al., 2008; Han & Hwang, 2015; Lee et al., 2012; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; Taylor et al., 2009). In particular, in a tourism context, Lee et al. (2012) found that volitional, non-volitional, emotional, and experiential/habit factors are in general highly associated with desire toward the behavior, and such relationships significantly affect one's intention to travel internationally during a pandemic. Consistent with that, Carrus et al. (2008) also demonstrated the significance of such variables in a decision-formation framework. Their proposed goal-directed behavior model was empirically tested in both public transportation and recycling settings, and the high anticipation power of the model for one's intention was verified in both contexts. Results of several studies showed the insignificant influence of subjective norm or perceived behavioral control (e.g. Song et al., 2012a, 2012b). For instance, in the casino context, Song et al. (2012b) found the desire was not a significant function of subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. However, the insignificant direct associations in these studies were mostly due to the high between-construct correlations. Overall, according to the works discussed above, volitional, non-volitional, emotional, and experiential elements within the theory work through desire in building intention. In addition, direct associations between desire and such proximal factors are evident (Han & Hwang, 2015; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001, 2004; Taylor et al., 2009). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

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