



# The effect of environmentally friendly perceptions on festival visitors' decision-making process using an extended model of goal-directed behavior

Hak Jun Song<sup>a,1</sup>, Choong-Ki Lee<sup>b,\*</sup>, Soo K. Kang<sup>c,2</sup>, Sug-jin Boo<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Hotel & Convention Management, College of Tourism & Fashion, Pai Chai University, 14 Yeon-Ja 1 Gil, Seo-gu, Daejeon 302-735, South Korea

<sup>b</sup> College of Hotel and Tourism Management, Kyung Hee University, 1 Hoegi-dong, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul 130-701, South Korea

<sup>c</sup> Hospitality Management, Colorado State University, 214E Gifford, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1571, USA

<sup>d</sup> Dept. of Tourism and Leisure Management, Chungwoon University, South Korea

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of environmentally friendly perceptions on the behavioral intention of visitors at the Boryeong Mud Festival in South Korea. The results of the on-site survey ( $N = 400$ ) reveal that three environmentally friendly perceptions formed positive and significant causal relationships with the constructs in the extended model of goal-directed behavior (EMGB). Attitude, subjective norm, and positive anticipated emotion affected desire, which, in turn, influenced the behavioral intention. Three elements, volitional, non-volitional, and emotional aspects, were proven to be crucial in comprehending the perceptions and behaviors of the nature-based festival attendees. The findings of this study will shed light on a better understanding of the decision-making processes of festival visitors when environmental issues are incorporated.

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## 1. Introduction

The development of science, technology, and industrialization has resulted in serious environmental problems such as pollution and environmental degradation caused by the increased consumption of natural resources and energy. Although these changes have also brought comfort and convenience, environmental issues such as damage to or destruction of natural resources are worldwide concerns (Han, Hsu, & Sheu, 2010; Paco & Raposo, 2009). A person's strong consciousness about natural resources is positively associated with their environmental concerns, attitude, and eco-friendly behaviors (Kinneer & Taylor, 1973; Paco & Raposo, 2009; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). Bamberg (2003), and Kim and Choi (2005) asserted that customers who are concerned about environmental problems are more likely than others to purchase environmentally friendly products.

Consumers' environmentally friendly practices have expanded to include leisure and cultural activities such as dining, traveling, and vacationing. Therefore, there has been an influx of studies

conducted on environmentally friendly tourism behaviors. These environmentally friendly tourism behaviors are considered important in examining visitors' behaviors at nature-based destinations. In parallel with the increasing significance of festivals, much research was initially dedicated to exploring the economic impacts of festivals (e.g., Formica & Murrmann, 1998; Kim, Scott, Thigpen, & Kim, 1998; Thrane, 2002) and the motivations behind festival attendance (e.g., Crompton & McKay, 1997; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). In conjunction with the economic benefits that local festivals brought into the communities, the importance of the environmental impact has been recently addressed when developing events and festivals that involve natural resources. The main emphasis lies on a new wave of festivals utilizing innate natural resources in a sustainable way without compromising the environment with an invasion of visitors.

As a study site for this research, the Boryeong Mud Festival is an annual festival that takes place every summer in Boryeong, South Korea (hereafter Korea), and is considered to be one of the most successful local festivals in Korea. In 2010, the number of total visitors to the Boryeong Mud Festival was approximately 2.7 million, with 183,000 foreign visitors (Organizing Committee of Boryeong Mud Festival, 2010). The theme of the festival is mud, and a 'Mud Experience Land' was created during the festival. The festival programs include a mud marathon, mud skiing, mud wrestling, a mud skincare center, a mud pool, a mud bath, and mud slides (see Figs. 1 and 2).

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +82 2 961 9430; fax: +82 2 964 2537.

E-mail addresses: [bloodia@pcu.ac.kr](mailto:bloodia@pcu.ac.kr) (H.J. Song), [cklee@khu.ac.kr](mailto:cklee@khu.ac.kr) (C.-K. Lee), [soo.kang@colostate.edu](mailto:soo.kang@colostate.edu) (S.K. Kang), [rivaboo@chungwoon.ac.kr](mailto:rivaboo@chungwoon.ac.kr) (S.-j. Boo).

<sup>1</sup> Tel.: +82 42 520 5348.

<sup>2</sup> Tel.: +1 970 491 0293; fax: +1 970 491 7252



Fig. 1. Main view of the mud festival arena (Boryeong Mud Festival, 2011).

Mud performs the important environmental function of purifying contaminated water and air. Because of mud's sensitivity to marine environments, ecosystems, and coastal habitats (Amanullah & Yu, 2005), it is important to utilize the mud in a festival in a sustainable way that preserves the marine environment and resources. The organizing committee of the mud festival has planned and executed the festival without compromising the environment by prohibiting direct access to offshore fields. Instead, they construct artificial beachside settings for most of the programs and activities in an attempt to reduce environmental damage.

Despite the increased importance of environmentally friendly perceptions, little research has been conducted on how tourists' environmentally friendly attitudes and behaviors significantly influence their decision-making process when visiting a nature-

based festival. Therefore, the current study proposes an extended model of goal-directed behavior (EMGB) incorporating the following three environmentally related constructs of environmental concerns, perceived customer effectiveness, and environmentally friendly tourism behaviors to understand the nature-based festival visitors' behavioral intention formation process. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of the three environmentally friendly perceptions on visitors' behavioral intentions at the Boryeong Mud Festival in Korea. The behavioral intention of festival attendees was measured by using the extended model of goal-directed behavior. Theoretically, the findings of this study will contribute to enhancing our understanding of visitors' intention formation to revisit a nature-based festival by extending the model of goal-directed behavior (MGB)



Fig. 2. Giant mud bath experience (Boryeong Mud Festival, 2011).

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