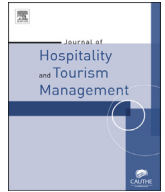




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management

journal homepage: <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-hospitality-and-tourism-management>

# Environmental knowledge, attitudes, and willingness to pay for environmentally friendly meetings – An exploratory study

Eunha Myung, Ph.D.

*Hospitality and Tourism Management, College of Health and Human Sciences, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115, USA*

## ARTICLE INFO

*Article history:*

Received 8 November 2016

Received in revised form

3 March 2017

Accepted 10 March 2017

Available online xxx

## 1. Introduction

Meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) are resource-intensive and potentially contribute to a negative impact on the environment (MICE report, 2013). The industry not only consumes substantial quantities of energy, water, and non-durable products but also impacts many other areas such as energy, accommodations, facilities, and products used to produce MICE events (Spatisano & Wilson, 2008). The industry has responded by incorporating environmentally friendly practices and developing green standards, guidelines, and strategies for planning and implementing green meetings. As a result, an increasing number of meeting and event professionals have tried to build sustainability into the events they organize, the facilities they operate, and the products and services they supply (GMIC, 2015).

The term “environmentally friendly meeting or green meeting” is defined as an organization’s efforts to incorporate environmental considerations throughout all stages of the meeting to reduce the negative impact on the environment (CIC, 2015). While there are several benefits of green meetings, such as saving costs through the efficient use of resources and the reduction of waste, enhancing the image of a company, gaining competitive advantage, improving the quality of the meeting experience, and complying with corporate social responsibility along with customer demand (Gecker, 2009; Lee, Barber, & Tyrrell, 2013; Mair & Jago, 2010), organizations adopting green meetings may also face several challenges. Mair and Jago (2010) identified that a lack of financial resources in addition

to a lack of knowledge/awareness/skills are two of the four major barriers for going green (the other barriers are lack of time and operations timeframe). Likewise, environmental initiatives such as investing in sustainable practices and facilities may require additional costs associated with implementing environmental management systems and purchasing environmentally friendly supplies and products. These costs may then be passed on to consumers through higher prices (Kuminoff, Zhang, & Rudi, 2010).

Previous research on the environmental behavior of individuals has been addressed in several ways, such as willingness to pay (WTP) more for environmentally friendly products or services, compromising convenience associated with being environmentally friendly, and willingness to patronize environmentally friendly firms. Many of these studies included environmental knowledge and attitudes to understand the influence of such variables on the environmental behavior of individuals. While there are still disagreements regarding the relationship between environmental knowledge and attitudes related to environmental behavior, previous research suggests that environmental knowledge and attitudes are important predictors of environmentally related behaviors of individuals (e.g., Brosdahl & Carpenter, 2010; Han, Hsu, Lee, & Sheu, 2011; Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001; Levine & Strube, 2012; Mostafa, 2006; Polonsky, Vocino, Grau, Garma, & Ferdous, 2012).

Within the green meeting literature, a few studies have addressed the relationship between environmental attitudes and the environmental behaviors of meeting attendees (Lee et al., 2013; Mykletun, Bartkeviciute, & Puchkova, 2014; Park & Boo, 2010; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012). However, research on the relationship between environmental knowledge and behaviors of meeting attendees is absent. To address this gap in the literature, this study examined the influence of environmental knowledge and attitudes on environmental behavior from the perspectives of meeting attendees by focusing on willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly meetings. In turn, the findings of this study provide some empirical support to the green meeting literature by demonstrating how environmental knowledge and attitudes lead to a higher willingness to pay for environmentally friendly meetings. The findings also provide managerial implications to meeting professionals for how to enhance the effectiveness of green meeting strategies.

E-mail address: [emyung@niu.edu](mailto:emyung@niu.edu).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2017.03.004>  
1447-6770/© 2017 The Authors.

## 2. Literature review

Previous research has addressed the environmental behaviors of individuals in several ways, such as willingness to pay (WTP) more for environmentally friendly products (Laroche et al., 2001; Dutta, Umashankar, Choi, & Parsa, 2008; Lee, Hsu, Han, & Kim, 2010), compromising convenience associated with being environmentally friendly (Han, Hsu, & Lee, 2009; Laroche et al., 2001; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007; Myung, 2016), or willingness to patronize environmentally friendly firms (Hu, Parsa, & Self, 2010). Among them, the most convincing evidence supporting environmentally friendly behaviors is the growing number of individuals who are willing to pay extra for green products (Laroche et al., 2001). Ambec and Lanoie (2008) stated that an environmental strategy is more likely to be effective when individuals are willing to support and pay extra money for environmental features.

Environmental knowledge has been an important variable that explains environmentally friendly behavior. Environmental knowledge indicates how much individuals know about environmental issues and “general knowledge of facts, concepts, and relationships concerning the natural environment and its major ecosystems” (Fryxell & Lo, 2003, p. 45). Do Paco and Raposo (2010) state that, in general, knowledge is an important concept that affects consumers' opinions that affect decision making about products and services.

Previous studies on the relationship between environmental knowledge and pro-environmental behaviors have yielded mixed results. The studies supporting a positive relationship identified that consumers with a higher level of environmental knowledge were willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products (Ogbeide, Ford, & Stringer, 2015) and were more likely to purchase green products (Brosdahl & Carpenter, 2010; Mostafa, 2006). Levine and Strube (2012) also found that environmental knowledge was a significant predictor of environmental behavior, suggesting that increased knowledge about the environment may promote environmentally friendly behavior.

On the other hand, other studies found a weak relationship between environmental knowledge and environmentally friendly behaviors (e.g., Laroche, Tomiuk, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2002; Tanner & Kast, 2003). For example, Laroche et al. (2002) found an insignificant relationship between environmental knowledge and pro-environmental behaviors, suggesting that environmental knowledge was not a good predictor of pro-environmental behaviors, including willingness to pay more for green products.

Polonsky et al. (2012) stated that environmental knowledge can be general or more specific. Barber, Taylor, and Strick (2009) also argued that two types of environmental knowledge (i.e., general environmental knowledge vs. specific environmental knowledge) might contribute to different types of behavior. While a few studies (Brosdahl & Carpenter, 2010; Ogbeide et al., 2015; Tanner & Kast, 2003) used environmental specific knowledge, other studies used general environmental knowledge (Laroche et al., 2002; Levine & Strube, 2012; Mostafa, 2006) or both (Barber et al., 2009; Polonsky et al., 2012) to examine a relationship between environmental knowledge and environmentally friendly behaviors but found inconclusive results. For example, Barber et al. (2009) examined the relationship between general environmental knowledge and environmental specific knowledge using wine and found that only product specific environmental knowledge significantly impacted willingness to buy environmentally friendly product, whereas general environmental knowledge was far less important. On the other hand, Polonsky et al. (2012) found that both general and specific knowledge were positively related to environmental behaviors. The study suggested that this is because consumers becoming more knowledgeable about specific

environmental issues may modify their attitudes and behaviors and become more mindful consumers.

Environmental attitudes have also been used to predict the environmental behaviors of individuals. While a few studies found a weak relationship between environmental attitudes and behavior (e.g., Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007), a majority of the studies found that environmental attitudes were an important predictor of environmental behaviors (e.g., Do Paco & Raposo, 2010; Han et al., 2009; Laroche et al., 2001; Mobley, Vagias, & DeWard, 2010). For example, Han et al. (2009) found that consumers' environmentally friendly attitudes were strongly associated with willingness to pay more for green hotels. Laroche et al. (2001) also found that the environmental attitudes were the most significant predictors of consumers' willingness to pay more for green products and not perceive it as an inconvenience to behave in an eco-friendly manner. On the other hand, Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) found that although customers had positive attitudes toward green practices in the hotel industry, these attitudes did not translate into willingness to pay more for staying at green hotels.

In the context of MICE, a few studies have examined the relationship between environmental attitudes and environmental behaviors of meeting attendees. Limited research, however, exists in regard to the relationship between environmental knowledge and behaviors of meeting attendees. Only one study examined such a relationship from the perspective of meeting planners (Boo & Park, 2013). The study examined meeting planners' basic environmental knowledge facing the meeting industry and their willingness to implement green meeting practices and found that meeting planners who had a higher level of environmental knowledge were more likely to implement green meetings, suggesting that environmental knowledge plays an important role in enhancing individuals' intention to engage in pro-environmental behavior.

In a study of environmental attitudes and behavioral intentions of green conventions from three groups of convention stakeholders, Park and Boo (2010) found that conventioners who possessed a positive attitude toward green conventions showed high willingness to participate in environmentally responsible practices. The attendees, in particular, reported the highest positive attitudes about traveling closer to their destination than other groups, and as a result, they were more willing to use public transportation for their convention travel than suppliers. Lee et al. (2013) also identified that the meeting attendees who had a positive attitude toward a meeting facility making an effort in green practices showed their intention to spread positive word-of-mouth feedback about the meeting facility.

MICE research on willingness to pay more for green practices had mixed results. For example, Rittichainuwat and Mair (2012) found that, overall, meeting attendees had positive attitudes toward green meetings, but they were not willing to pay extra money for green meetings. Mykletun et al. (2014) also found that although meeting stakeholders had positive perceptions regarding green meetings, they were not willing to pay environmental taxes on business travel. Such results indicated that people may hold positive attitudes toward being environmentally friendly, but they may act differently when it comes to paying extra money just to be environmentally responsible.

On the other hand, Sox, Benjamin, Carpenter, and Strick (2013) found that meeting planners and attendees were willing to pay more for green meetings if the convention center staff was educated on sustainable practices. In a study of meeting planners' perception of local food in sustainable meeting planning, Lee and Slocum (2015) also found that meeting planners were willing to pay more for locally sourced food.

Such inconsistency among these findings might be due to the difference in the studies' samples or to the geographic locations of

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/11005039>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/11005039>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)