



# Environmental orientations and environmental behaviour: Perceptions of protected area tourism stakeholders



Sophia Imran<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Khorshed Alam<sup>a,b</sup>, Narelle Beaumont<sup>b,c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>School of Commerce, Faculty of Business, Education, Law and Arts, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland 4350, Australia

<sup>b</sup>Australian Centre for Sustainable Business and Development, Toowoomba, Queensland 4350 Australia

<sup>c</sup>School of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Business and Law, University of Southern Queensland, Australia

## H I G H L I G H T S

- Relationship between tourism, livelihood and conservation is dynamic and complex.
- Understanding tourism stakeholders' attitudes towards protected environments is important.
- Triangulation of qualitative with quantitative analysis validated the research findings.
- There were significant differences among the stakeholders' orientations towards the environment.
- Multiple factors influenced stakeholders' intentions to engage in environmental conservation and sustainable tourism.

## A R T I C L E I N F O

### Article history:

Received 8 February 2013

Accepted 4 July 2013

### Keywords:

Environmental orientations  
Environmental behaviour  
Stakeholder groups  
Protected area tourism  
Conservation  
Mixed method

## A B S T R A C T

There are numerous studies in the academic literature which assert that environmental attitudes can influence the process of sustainable tourism in protected areas. To test this claim, this research was undertaken in Central Karakoram National Park, Pakistan. The purpose of the research was to examine the differences in environmental orientations of four stakeholder groups associated with protected area tourism and to determine the factors that might influence their intentions to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour. The New Ecological Paradigm scale was used to assess environmental orientations. In addition, interviews were conducted to examine the factors that impacted these orientations. The results show significant differences among the stakeholders' orientations towards the environment and multiple factors that influence stakeholders' intention to engage in environmental conservation and sustainable tourism, namely economic benefits, awareness and information, top down governance and resource use rights.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Research suggests that the relationship between tourism, livelihood and conservation is dynamic and complex (Njole, 2011; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011). Equally complex are the environmental and ecological perceptions of the multiple stakeholders driving the process of protected area tourism. Lately, researchers, policy makers and practitioners have recognized the importance of understanding these perceptions. The reason is that environmental issues have become a central concern for policy makers as stakeholders' attitudes and behaviour towards the environment can lead to the success or failure of the sustainable tourism process (Kim,

Borges, & Chon, 2006; Lewis, 2006). Moreover, the complex interaction of people with the environment makes it crucial to examine the link between environmental issues and people's perceptions of the environment (Gray, Canessa, Rollins, Keller, & Dearden, 2010). Researchers suggest that factors such as perceptions, attitudes and participation towards protected areas are highly correlated and can affect stakeholders' intent to engage in conservation (Sirivongs & Tsuchiya, 2012).

On the other hand, it is also argued that tourism can empower and can provide direct incentives to the local stakeholders and consequently help develop positive attitudes toward the environment and conservation (Arnberger, Eder, Alex, Sterl, & Burns, 2012; Clements et al., 2013; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011). Research conducted on linkages among biodiversity, livelihood, and tourism around Chitwan National Park, Nepal, revealed that local residents in the highly developed tourism sites were more empowered and more supportive of conservation programmes (Nyaupane & Poudel,

\* Corresponding author. School of Commerce, Faculty of Business, Education, Law and Arts, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland 4350, Australia. Tel.: +61 7 46311272.

E-mail addresses: [Sophia.Imran@usq.edu.au](mailto:Sophia.Imran@usq.edu.au), [sophiamiran@yahoo.com](mailto:sophiamiran@yahoo.com) (S. Imran).

2011). Tourism, therefore, if managed effectively and sustainably, is increasingly being identified as a tool for conservation and livelihood enhancement (Bushell & Eagles, 2007; Harrison & Schipani, 2007; Udaya Sekhar, 2003).

Keeping in perspective the complex inter-linkages between people and protected areas, the study examined the differences in environmental orientations of four stakeholder groups, namely local communities, protected area authorities, tourism enterprises and tourists, associated with protected area tourism in the Central Karakoram National Park (CKNP) in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. These stakeholders are central players of protected area tourism and an insightful understanding of their attitudes towards the environment is important for the achievement of sustainable tourism development. Moreover, what factors influenced their environmental orientations and how these environmental orientations in turn might impact on stakeholders' intention to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour was also researched.

## 2. Literature review

There are numerous studies in the academic literature which assert that environmental attitudes, place attachment, and commitment to the environment and conservation are predictors of environmentally responsible behaviour (Corral-Verdugo, Bechtel, & Fraijo-Sing, 2003; Davis, Green, & Reed, 2009; Kerstetter & Bricker, 2009; Lee, 2008). Research also suggests that people with attachments to the natural environment develop a sense of identity with the environment which can lead to pro-environmental behaviour (Cheng & Monroe, 2012; Halpenny, 2010; Vaske & Kobrin, 2001).

Place attachment is defined as a positive or negative relationship that people develop with a place, creating an emotional bond with it (Alam, 2011; Kyle, Mowen, Absher, & Havitz, 2006). Scholars argue that place attachment consists of two components: place identity, which denotes a symbolic or affective attachment to a place, and place dependence, which refers to the functionality of a place (Lee, 2008).

Research also suggests that economic incentives motivate people to become committed to the environment and conservation, particularly in remote protected areas (Campbell, Kartawijaya, Yulianto, Prasetya, & Clifton, 2013; Novelli & Scarth, 2007; Udaya Sekhar, 2003). Tourism is recognized as an extremely promising source of finance in protected areas. It is argued that the income associated with tourism in protected areas can change the local communities' perceptions of their environment (Coad, Campbell, Miles, & Humphries, 2008; Sirivongs & Tsuchiya, 2012) and can increase their commitment to the environment and conservation. The results from a study conducted by Udaya Sekhar (2003) in Sariska Tiger Reserve in India showed a correlation between benefits from wildlife tourism and support for protected area conservation, suggesting that benefits impact people's attitudes towards the environment and conservation.

Similarly, Lee (2008) asserts that sustainable use of the environment can be increased when its users have positive perceptions about conservation and the benefits of tourism. A study on tourism for sustainable local livelihood and the conservation of Lake Manyara National Park revealed that increased environmental conservation awareness and sharing of the economic benefits delivered from tourism increased local support for the conservation of the area (Njole, 2011).

On the other hand, it is observed that restricted rights to resources and displacement of people in protected areas often causes people to develop negative attitudes towards the environment and conservation, which can result in biodiversity loss (Coad et al., 2008). Törn, Siikamäki, Tolvanen, Kauppila, and Rämetsä (2008) explored the opinions of local people about nature conservation

and the development of tourism which showed that most of the negative attitudes toward nature conservation were influenced by the lack of involvement of local people in the foundation and management of protected areas, the lack of perceived benefits from protected areas, and inadequate interactions between local people and conservation administrators. When local stakeholders had a chance to commit to the planning process they had positive perceptions of and opinions about nature conservation and tourism development (Törn et al., 2008). Marcus (2001, in Novelli & Scarth, 2007) argues that people are happier about the creation and maintenance of protected areas when they feel they are benefiting from them. This parks and people debate, therefore, requires stakeholders to acknowledge the trade-offs involved in achieving conservation outcomes (Voyer, Gladstone, & Goodall, 2012). Social research such as the assessment of stakeholders' attitudes towards the protected area environment and their perceptions about the conservation of the protected area resources could play an important role in building an understanding and appreciation of the key factors that influence conservation. Such factors can help inform management decisions. In addition to the reasons given above that could influence the perceptions of stakeholders about the environment and conservation, research has indicated the existence of a three-dimensional structure of environmental perceptions (Albrecht, Bultena, Hoiberg, & Nowak, 1982; Schultz, 2001; Stern, Dietz, & Guagnano, 1995; Thompson & Barton, 1994). Amérigo, Aragonés, de Frutos, Sevillano, and Cortés (2007) also confirmed a three factorial structure of environmental beliefs in their study on the underlying dimensions of environmental beliefs. These were: an anthropocentric dimension based on the instrumental value of the environment for human beings (humans above nature), a biospheric dimension that values the environment for its own sake (natural balance) and, lastly, an ego-bio-centric dimension that values human beings within nature as a whole (limits to growth).

Similarly, it has been empirically established that people's environmental orientations are likely to form three different categories, namely importance of self over the environment (egoistic), importance of the environment for people (socio-altruistic), importance of the environment for itself (eco-centric) (Schultz, 2001; Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). People who emphasize the importance and worth of the environment for one's own benefit seem to have an egoistic orientation; those who underscore the importance of the environment and its use and protection for human beings in general have a socio-altruistic orientation; and, lastly, those who call attention to the intrinsic value of the environment and ecosystems have an eco-centric orientation. These orientations guide their level of interest in conserving the environment.

Keeping in perspective the above discourse and in view of this importance given to the stakeholders, the research attempts to explore the human–environment relationships within the protected area tourism context. It explores the differences in environmental orientations among protected area tourism stakeholders and factors that influence these orientations to help shape future investigations in conservation and livelihood development through sustainable tourism initiatives.

## 3. The study area

Central Karakoram National Park (CKNP) located in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, was officially established and notified as a national park in 1993 (Fig. 1). It is the largest protected area in Pakistan, covering over 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Hagler Bailly Pakistan, 2010). It includes the world's greatest concentration of high peaks including K2, the second highest peak in the world, the world's largest glaciers outside the polar regions (Hagler Bailly Pakistan, 2010), and a

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7422338>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7422338>

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