International Journal of Intellectual Human Resource Management (IJIHRM)

2021; 2(2): 01-07
https://journals.gulfuniversity.org/index.php/ijhrm
DOI: 10.46988/IJIHRM.02.02.2021.001
ISSN: 2535-9800 (Print); ISSN: 2536-0043 (Online)

Towards Eco-Friendly Environment - Influential Factors of Attitude towards Eco-Friendly Dining

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Article Info

Article history:
Received 25 May 2021
Received in revised form 25 June 2021
Accepted 29 August 2021
Published 01 October 2021

Abstract

Restaurants and dining industry is an important sector in Far East Russia, especially with the dining habits of citizens. If emerged with the fact that restaurants are one of the highest sectors in harming the environment, the eco-friendly dining behavior of customers and food providers becomes essential to protect the environment. The study aims to measure the antecedents of consumers' intention and actual behavior in choosing restaurants and foods based on eco-friendly consideration in Russia Far East. The most common theories that were used to explore consumers' evaluation of the sustainable restaurant concept include the theory of planned behavior, stakeholder theory, theory of social identity, and theory of self-congruity. The proposed model for this study includes attitude that depends on environmental beliefs, outcome evaluation, environmental awareness, health awareness, self-identity, social identity, attitude towards eco-friendly products. The population for this research is all the residents who live in the Russian Far East. According to the official Russian statistics, there are around 8.4 million people living in the Russian Far East, distributed among different age groups and the targeted sample size is 385. Data obtained from the survey is analyzed by using the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 25) and SmartPLS 2.0.

Keywords: Environmental Beliefs, Outcome Evaluation, Environmental Awareness, Health Awareness, Self-Identity, Social Identity, Attitude towards Eco-Friendly Products

1. Introduction

Air pollution also became a problem in other places across the country increasing the population awareness of industrial environmental impact (Harper, Harper, & Snowden, 2017). With the increased awareness of ecological problems and natural disasters, environmental protection is gaining relevance (Epstein, 2018; Oates, 2017). Companies across all industrial sectors take efforts to introduce products and practices that lessen the environmental effect (Alkadash, and Aljileedi, 2020; Carson, 2018). These practices are considered not only as part of social responsibility, but also a way to occupy a new niche for environmentally cautious consumers. Environmental concern is essential for the hospitality industry due to the fact that the whole business is often associated with the availability of a clean natural environment. In recent years the world population has become more aware of the environmental problems, especially in developed countries where greening is incorporated in every business aspect (Oates, 2017). As more customers recognize the dangerousness of environmental problems, they give their preferences to eco-friendly products or services, paying great attention to food safety (Han et al., 2010). Greening has become a popular way to promote a business, solve some eco problems, and minimize the environmental impact. As a part of the hospitality industry, restaurants play an important role in enhancing environmental problems. This part of Russia has some environmental problems same as other places in the world, Russian far east environment has many environmental problems, including deforestation, energy irresponsibility, pollution, nuclear waste, bad use and disposal of resources by the business which is the area of concern in this study (Danilov-Danil'yan & Reyf, 2018).

The less are the investments the more is the damage to the environment, that is why this study will measure other factors that could play role in improving the environment depending on customers dining behavior (Minakir & Prokapalo, 2017). The consumers' views on greening possibilities are neglected by business owners and policymakers, thus the study aims to find out the consumers' attitude towards green attributes and dining intentions at full-service restaurants in emerging economies (Ottman, 2017). Business owners increasingly change their attitudes towards environmental and nutritional issues and try to implement certain improvements in order to promote a healthier environment and healthier foods (Escaron et al., 2016). Recently, concerns for the environment seem to be too little too late, one must consider that the issues surrounding this expanding concept of "green living" have been around for centuries. Concepts that are known today including conservation, erosion, the necessity of reduction of use, and others have all been seen before. The

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information which was gathered then is in some ways the starting point for what environmentalism is today The concept of environmentalism in its rudimentary form can be traced back to the 14th century when the word “conservancy” was first adopted in Britain (Verbeek & Boelens, 2016).

A series of studies relating to deforestation, pollution and climate control, marine life conservation and tree planting were conducted by two French authors, Pierre Poivre & Bernardin de Saint Pierre (Deng & Cheshmehzangi, 2018). Poivre and Saint Pierre outlined their specific environmental concerns on the island they inhabited in the French colony of Mauritius. Their research and achievements concerning the environment were later used in the Caribbean to aid with similar problems of drought, deforestation and over development (Stapleton, 2019). Beyond the assumption that the term “green” shows environmentally preferable attributes, the term is quite vague and subject to multiple interpretations depending on any number of factors, including local, national, and international business practices; market structures; societal norms; politics; and government regulations. In fact, due to the ambiguity surrounding the term, some government guidelines even discourage use of it altogether (Wong et al., 2016).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Environmental Beliefs

Belief is a state or habit of mind in which trust, or confidence is placed in some person or things like belief in God or belief in democracy (Huang, 2016). Environmental beliefs generally relate to environmental issues such as water shortages, ozone layer depletion, climate change and global warming (Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008). Despite the increase in awareness and concern for environmental issues over the last several decades (Nordfjærn & Rundmo, 2019) there would appear to be a gap between consumers' environmental attitudes and behaviour as evidenced by the fact that environmentally concerned consumers do not seem to show any consistent preference for environmentally friendly products in their purchase behaviour (Hsu, Boarnet, & Houston, 2019). There is also a suggestion that the environmental movement has failed to deliver changes in environmental behaviour in developed economies including the United States despite a perceived increase in environmentalism (Ziegler, 2017). Kilbourne and Pickett (2008) propose a values beliefs concern behaviour model in which they argue that if individuals perceive that the environment as a valued object is threatened then their concern for the environment will increase which is likely to influence their environmental behaviour. Individuals’ knowledge about the environment also influences how they perceive risk which then impacts individuals’ environmental behaviour (Wang et al., 2019).

2.2. Outcome Evaluation

Product evaluation is made by using evaluative criteria, which are those features or potential benefits that consumers use to compare products, Perceptual attributes are those visually obvious determinant attributes that help the consumer differentiate among choices (Bo et al., 2017). Whenever a customer makes a purchase, they are consciously or sub-consciously evaluating the product on a variety of attributes that are important to them. For any given product, a consumer may be extremely price-sensitive, or may want the highest quality product, no matter the cost (Jones et al., 2018). In order to successfully price and market your social enterprise’s goods or services, you must develop a deep understanding of who your customers are and what it is that they value when making a purchasing decision (MacGeorge et al., 2017). The attributes that your customers place the most value on when making a purchasing decision are known as your customers’ key purchasing criteria (Plummer et al., 2017). The products attributes to be green the more the consumers will prefer to have it in the evaluation process, it can be considered as a competitive advantage for some firms (Jones et al., 2018).

2.3. Environmental Awareness

Awareness is the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or to be cognizant of events. More broadly, it is the state of being conscious of something. (Moore, Djugash, and Ota 2018b) Another definition describes it as a state wherein a subject is aware of some information when that information is directly available to bring to bear in the direction of a wide range of behavioral actions. The awareness is always built based on knowledge and information gathered by the person (Yucedag, Kaya, & Cetin, 2018). Promoting environmental awareness is an easy way to become an environmental steward and participate in creating a brighter future for our children (Yang & Chen, 2018). Staying up to date on environmental news and reading comprehensive books about environmental threats are both great resources, but if you’re the type of person who prefers a more interactive approach, attending environmental seminars is a great option (Yu, Han, & Hu, 2016). When the pressure exceeds the carrying capacity of the environment to repair or replace itself, it creates a serious problem of environmental degradation (Moore, Djugash, & Ota, 2018b). While efforts are being made at the national and international level to protect our environment, it is also the responsibility of every citizen to use our environmental resources with care and protect them from degradation (Mei, Wai, & Ahamad, 2016).

2.4. Health Awareness

The word “health” refers to a state of complete emotional and physical well-being. Healthcare exists to help people maintain this optimal state of health (Hao, Liu & Ge, 2018). Health is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease" according to the World Health Organization (WHO) (Lyson et al., 2019). Many factors influence health status and a country's ability to provide quality health services for its people (Brundage et al., 2019). On the other hand, Awareness is about developing an understanding of one's mental or physical health needs and the potential to be vulnerable to further episodes of mental or physical illness (Dimoff, Kelloway, & Burnstein, 2016). Such awareness increases the likelihood people with mental illness, their families, and the services they are in contact with, will engage in health promoting and illness preventing actions (Ayers et al., 2016). Awareness is a developmental process. It does not necessarily occur after a first episode of mental or physical illness, nor require a diagnostic label (Weiss, Sharp, & Klinger, 2018). Awareness is a complex and individual learning process that involves a growing understanding of the self and the place of mental or physical illness within the self-identity (Bragazzi et al., 2017).

2.5. Self-Identity

Identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and/or expressions that make a person (self-identity) or group (particular social category or social group) (Cuypers, 2017). The definition of identity is who you are, the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you (Pan et al., 2017). A psychological identity relates to self-image (one's mental model of oneself), self-esteem, and individuality (Kraak et al., 2017). Self-Identity is composed of relatively permanent self-assessments, such as personality attributes, knowledge of one's skills and abilities, one's occupation and hobbies, and awareness of one's physical attributes. Self-identity is important because it strengthens your character (Gustafsson et al., 2018). Self-identity has been defined as the label used to describe oneself (Cuypers, 2017) which relates to a particular behaviour (Pan et al., 2017). Hence, an environmental self-identity as the extent to which you see yourself as a type of person who acts environmentally-friendly. Researchers think environmental self-identity is particularly relevant to understanding pro-environmental actions, as it more directly reflects pro-environmental actions, rather than only the importance of the environment as such for the self (Konopka, Neimeyer, & Jacobs-Lentz, 2018). These specific self-identities are likely to be related to behaviors related to that self-identity but are probably less predictive of other types of pro-environmental actions (Konopka, Neimeyer & Jacobs-Lentz, 2018).

2.6. Social Identity

Social identity refers to the ways that people's self-concepts are based on their membership in social groups (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). Examples include sports teams, religions, nationalities, occupations, sexual orientation, ethnic groups, and gender (Best et al., 2016). Social identity allows people to be part of groups and gain a sense of belonging in their social world. These identities play an important role in shaping self-image (Pegg et al., 2018). Individuals also judge in-group members as more likable, knowledgeable, and trustworthy (Fielding & Hornsey, 2016). One is social identity, which Tajfel (1981) defines as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”. Human basic needs theories suggest that individuals search for a sense of belonging, relatedness, group identity, and identification (Meynhardt, 2009). Specifically, the level of cooperation is significantly higher when social identity is more salient, and group members identify themselves more strongly with the social group (Best et al., 2016).

2.7. Attitude towards Eco-Friendly Products

Sometimes these feelings are based on the beliefs (a person feels nauseated when thinking about a hamburger because of the tremendous amount of fat it contains), but there may also be feelings which are relatively independent of beliefs (Kumar, 2017). Consumer attitudes vary by country and are dependent on development status, the extent to which irradiated foods are available and media exposure (Andaç & Güzel, 2017). Attitudes have been of interest to researchers mainly because it creates a connection to behaviour (Prakash et al., 2019). Needed to be mentioned is that, while connected, the two variables are distinctly different as attitudes are held and behavior is performed (Pricilla & Shameem, 2020). "Attitudes are expected to predict and explain human behavior", because positive attitudes will have stronger chances of elicitation as compared to negative attitudes. Research has placed increased stress on evaluation as the primary element of attitude (Saluja, 2016).

3. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The research framework of this particular study has determinates of environmental beliefs, outcome evaluation, environmental awareness, health awareness, self-identity, social identity as independent variables that have a direct impact to attitude towards eco-friendly products. (As seen in Figure 1).

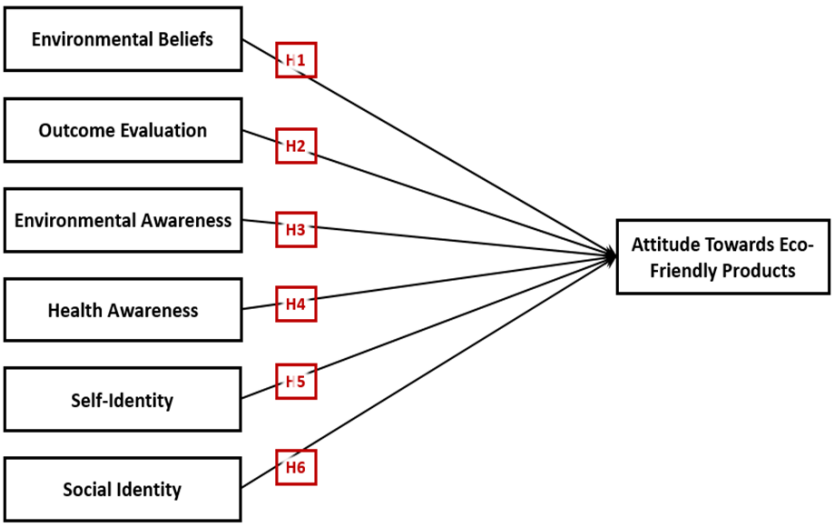

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

4. Research Methodology

Researchers differentiate themselves into the merits of the two approaches (quantitative and qualitative), largely because of different views about the nature of knowledge and how knowledge is best acquired. Quantitative researchers abandon the beliefs about striving for absolute truth in research, thus they continue to develop sophisticated statistical techniques to measure social phenomena. Quantitative research is used to determine the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent or outcome variable within a population. Quantitative research designs are either descriptive or experimental. A descriptive study establishes only associations between variables; an experimental study establishes causality (Muijs, 2010). It deals with numbers, logic, and an objective stance, focuses on numeric and unchanging data and detailed, convergent reasoning rather than divergent reasoning and focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon (Muijs, 2010). The population for this research is all the residents who live in a Russia Far East. According to the official Russian statistics, there are around 8.4 million people living in the Russia Far East, distributed among different age groups and the targeted sample size is 385. Data obtained from the survey is analyzed by utilizing the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 25) and SmartPLS 2.0. The adequate sample size supposed to respect two rules of thumbs for sampling size, the first is the sample size fit for the SmartPLS requirements, and the other is the effective sample size based on the statistical power value "P" (Prajapati et al., 2010; Hair et al. 2014; Creswell, 2013).

5. Findings

5.1. Validity and Reliability of Constructs

Internal consistency can be estimated by Cronbach's Alpha or composite reliability measures. Any measure above the threshold of 0.7 is successful. In addition, 0.6 is considered successful in exploratory research (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2014). Table 1 shows the results of all the study main variables which are (attitude towards eco-friendly products, environmental awareness, environmental beliefs, health awareness, outcome evaluation, self-identity, and social identity). Whereby the values of Composite Reliability of these variables are ranging between 0.900 and 0.933. which indicated a very good and adequate internal consistency. For Cronbach's Alpha reliability, the valued are ranged from 0.848 to 0.916, which shows adequate level of internal consistency. Table 2 the matrix is a refined matrix of the latent variable's correlations. The test is successful if the value in the diagonal is higher than any other value within the crossed column and raw. OE has the value of 0.894, which is higher than all the other scores within the shared column and raw. The rest of the study's variables have a good adequate level of the discriminant validity. In order to make a better discriminant

validity, we do a cross loading which means that the constructs must have a proper and higher loading in its associated construct than any other loading in any foreign variable.

Table 1. Constructs Reliability and Validity

	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude Towards Eco-Friendly Products ATEP	0.905	0.869
Environmental Awareness EA	0.900	0.862
Environmental Beliefs EB	0.933	0.911
Health Awareness HA	0.937	0.916
Outcome Evaluation OE	0.922	0.873
Self-Identity SEI	0.908	0.848
Social Identity SOI	0.930	0.906

Table 2. Discriminant validity – Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	ATEP	EA	EB	HA	OE	SEI	SOI
Attitude Towards Eco-Friendly Products ATEP	0.810						
Environmental Awareness EA	0.501	0.802					
Environmental Beliefs EB	0.474	0.200	0.858				
Health Awareness HA	0.360	0.230	0.258	0.866			
Outcome Evaluation OE	0.457	0.388	0.195	0.235	0.894		
Self-Identity SEI	0.391	0.141	0.157	0.174	0.289	0.876	
Social Identity SOI	0.217	0.193	0.055	0.110	0.104	0.117	0.852

5.2. Relationships Examinations and Discussions

The predictive power and predictive relevance of the endogenous latent variables attitude towards eco-friendly products (ATEP). Results of the main dependent variable, attitude towards eco-friendly products (ATEP), illustrate a moderate predictive power and a moderate predictive relevance. As seen in the table 3 the related R square value is 0.524 (a power of 52.4%) and the related Q square is 0.336 (a relevance of 33.6%). The prediction constructs related to the variable can explain more 52.4% of the attitude towards eco-friendly products (ATEP) variance.

Table 3. Predictive Power and Predictive Relevance of Proposed Model

	Predictive Power		Predictive Relevance	
	R Square	Status	Q Square	Status
Attitude Towards Eco-friendly Products (ATEP)	0.524	moderate	0.336	moderate

Table 4 shows the findings of the relationships between the variables. The rule of thumb to accept or reject the relationship is either the p-value less than 0,05 or the t statistics is more than 1.98 (Hair Jr, Wolfinbarger, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2015). For the predictors of the EB the path coefficient is (0.308), the EA the path coefficient is 0.291). The predictors of the (HA) the path coefficient (0.127). The predictors of the (OE) the path coefficient (0.181), the predictors of the (SEI) the path coefficient (0.217), and the predictors of the (SOI) the path coefficient (0.087).

Table 4. Path Coefficient Assessment of the Direct Relationships

	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Value (one tailed)	Status
EA → ATEP	0.291	0.041	7.071	0.000	Significant
EB → ATEP	0.308	0.039	7.928	0.000	Significant
HA → ATEP	0.127	0.041	3.025	0.003	Significant
OE →ATEP	0.181	0.036	5.073	0.000	Significant
SEI → ATEP	0.217	0.041	5.270	0.000	Significant
SOI → ATEP	0.087	0.038	2.258	0.024	Significant

6. Contributions and Recommendations

This study proposed a developed model with new constructs and relations. While the model was assessed successfully, but further research is needed to assess the model in different environments. One of the constraints is the limited approach of implementation, which reduces the generalization, therefore replicating the same assessment in food industries in other countries is recommended to get a better understanding and generalization. Another constraint is the participant's types and selection, which reduce the generalization, therefore replicating the same assessment in other firms and wider participant's number is recommended to get a better understanding and generalization. Recommendations are extended, to test the model and the instrument in other sectors or even to test whether this model can be suitable for other industrial sectors. Simply, the recommendation is for testing the model in different scenarios and conditions to enhance the generalization of the theory. Therefore, further studies must focus in exploring, and examining additional factors, other than websites qualities (environmental beliefs, outcome evaluation, environmental awareness, health awareness, self-identity, social identity, attitude towards eco-friendly products).

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