



The Impact of Awareness on Responsible Tourism Behavior Intentions among Generation Z

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Abstract: The recovery of tourism post-pandemic is showing promising progress, albeit through novel approaches. Currently, in many countries and businesses, there is a focus on developing safer and more sustainable tourism. Destinations closely tied to natural environments and communities are becoming increasingly popular, attracting significant interest from young adults. This article investigates the impact of responsibility awareness on the travel intentions of Generation Z tourists. Specifically, it explores the relationships between responsibility awareness, attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions. A combined offline and online survey was conducted using printed questionnaires and Google Forms, yielding 357 valid responses. The research results indicate that responsibility awareness – encompassing environmental, socio-cultural, and economic aspects – influences attitudes, subjective norms, and the formation of responsible travel intentions among the younger generation. In this context, the attitudes and subjective norms of young adults play a crucial role in shaping their responsible travel intentions. Finally, this article provides recommendations to promote responsible tourism in Vietnam.

Keywords: responsible tourism; behavioral intentions; responsibility awareness; younger generation.

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1. Introduction

The global tourism industry has undergone a profound transformation following the COVID-19 pandemic, with a heightened emphasis on sustainable and safe travel practices. According to the United Nations (2020), international tourist arrivals fell by 73% in 2020, and global losses amounted to USD2.4 trillion in 2021 (United Nations World Tourism

Organization [UNWTO] 2021), with Vietnam alone losing approximately USD23 billion. In response, Vietnam's tourism sector has shifted towards eco-friendly and community-based tourism (Hai Binh 2021), aligning with trends such as touchless travel, staycations, and adventure tourism.

Moreover, tourists have become more conscious of responsible behavior, with studies (Booking.com 2020; Le Anh 2022) indicating that the pandemic significantly shaped awareness regarding environmental, socio-cultural, and economic impacts.

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Despite these global shifts, responsible tourism in Vietnam remains underdeveloped and underrecognized. While the Vietnamese government has initiated efforts through programs like the “Capacity Development Program for Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism” (2010) and “Building Sustainable and Responsible Tourism in Central Vietnam” (2014–2016), there remains a gap in widespread awareness.

This article does not seek to develop a new theory but rather to extend the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to a specific cultural and generational context. By focusing on Generation Z in Ho Chi Minh City, the research provides contextual evidence of how responsibility awareness shapes attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions in an emerging tourism market. A further contribution lies in conceptualizing responsibility awareness as a multidimensional construct comprising environmental, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions, reflecting the three pillars of sustainable development. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the antecedents of responsible tourism behavior and offers policy-relevant insights that are tailored to the characteristics of Vietnamese youth.

2. Literature Review

Recent literature on responsible tourism behavior has predominantly focused on environmental aspects. Responsible environmental behavior includes actions that protect nature, respect local culture, and minimize environmental damage (Lee and Lin 2001). Studies at various nature-based destinations, such as Taiwan’s Taichung National Park and Iran’s Sorkheh Hesar National Park, explore how awareness, environmental concern, and perceived harm influence responsible environmental actions

(Wu et al. 2022; Chiu et al. 2014). However, behavioral differences often emerge depending on whether tourists are at home or traveling (Barr et al. 2011).

While environmental responsibility dominates the discourse, fewer studies examine the cultural, social, and economic dimensions of responsible tourism. Chen et al. (2021) identify four areas of responsibility: environmental, cultural, social, and financial. Scholars such as Chiu et al. (2014) and Lee et al. (2013) emphasize respecting local traditions, supporting community development, and sharing economic benefits as essential components of responsible behavior.

Regarding cultural and social responsibility, researchers argue that responsible tourists engage in practices that preserve local heritage and foster respectful interactions (Witkowski and Reddy, 2010). Young travelers, in particular, demonstrate a growing interest in cultural immersion and show increased awareness of their social responsibilities during trips (UNWTO 2016; Diallo et al. 2015).

Finally, economic responsibility focuses on supporting local economies through the consumption of local goods and services. It is evaluated through factors like service quality, infrastructure, local product use, and charitable giving (Gong et al. 2019). As responsible tourism evolves, these broader dimensions, beyond just environmental concern, are gaining scholarly attention.

2.1. Responsibility Awareness

According to Straughan and Roberts (1999), individuals concerned about environmental issues are likely to engage in environmentally positive behaviors only when they perceive that their individual actions can meaningfully contribute to solving environmental problems. Ajzen's (1991) theory supports this by suggesting

that awareness can influence both intention and behavior, provided individuals believe their actions are controllable and impactful. Similarly, Taylor and Todd (1995) assert that a sense of personal responsibility reinforces essential information that guides behavioral intentions. Schwartz (1977) also emphasizes that individuals who are aware of their responsibilities, especially regarding actions that may affect others, are more likely to form corresponding behavioral intentions.

Awareness of responsibility is defined as the individual's inclination to acknowledge accountability for minimizing the consequences of negative actions (Henseler et al. 2015). This awareness involves recognizing one's capacity to perform actions perceived as effective in addressing specific issues (Montada and Kals 2000; De Groot and Steg 2009). Such awareness influences individuals to develop guiding behavioral principles (i.e., subjective norms) and maintain a responsible attitude when performing certain actions. Its positive impact is particularly evident in behaviors associated with environmental protection and cultural respect, as shown in research on tourists visiting world natural heritage sites in China (Gao et al. 2017).

Furthermore, Generation Z exhibits a stronger sense of environmental responsibility compared to previous generations, driven by self-awareness (Kaplan 2020). This relationship between responsibility awareness and subjective norms has been validated in recent studies on tourists' behavioral intentions regarding environmental conservation (D'Arco et al. 2023; Confente and Scarpi 2021). As Dwyer et al. (2009) note, the rising demand for meaningful travel experiences that foster personal growth and social-environmental awareness reflects this emerging trend.

Therefore, the following three hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Responsibility awareness has a positive impact on the intention to engage in responsible tourism behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Responsibility awareness has a positive impact on behavioral attitudes.

Hypothesis 3: Responsibility awareness has a positive impact on tourists' subjective norms.

2.2. Attitude on Responsible Tourism Behavioral Intention

Attitude is a key determinant of behavioral intention, particularly in the context of green consumerism and responsible tourism, as supported by the TPB developed by Ajzen (1991). According to TPB, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control directly affect one's behavioral intentions, which in turn guide specific behaviors. Jaiswal and Kant (2018) highlight the central role of attitude in shaping green behavior, while Thomas and Zaniecki (1974) define it as a psychological orientation toward a particular value. Positive attitudes have been shown to lead to stronger behavioral intentions (Tsang et al. 2004), and ultimately, actual behavior (Lin 2011; Mazhar et al. 2014). For example, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) illustrated this relationship using exam cheating scenarios, noting that the attitude toward the act, shaped by contextual cues, directly influences behavioral intention. In tourism, a tourist's positive attitude toward responsible travel actions motivates them to perform those behaviors (Gao et al. 2016). Although perceived behavioral control (PBC) is a central element of the TPB (Ajzen 1991), this construct was deliberately excluded from the present study. Our model specifically emphasizes responsibility awareness as a cognitive antecedent and its

attitudinal and normative pathways toward behavioral intention. As no validated PBC measures were included in the survey instrument, adding this construct post-hoc could have compromised measurement validity. We therefore acknowledge the omission of PBC as a limitation of the current framework and recommend its inclusion in future research for a more comprehensive test of TPB. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Attitude toward responsible tourism behavior has a positive impact on tourists' responsible tourism behavioral intention.

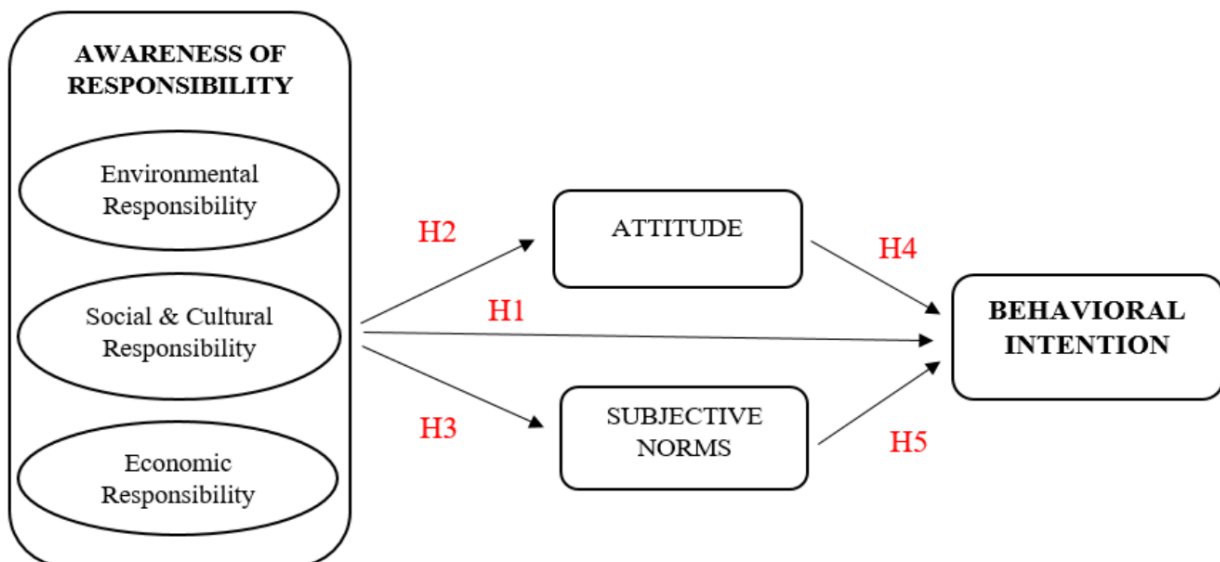
2.3. Subjective Norms on Responsible Tourism Behavioral Intention

Subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a specific behavior, as defined by Ajzen

(1991), and previously elaborated by Ajzen and Fishbein (1975). These norms reflect the influence of significant others on an individual's decisions, encouraging behavioral compliance with perceived social expectations. Building on Schwartz's (1977) norm activation model (NAM), Abrahamse and Steg (2009) integrated the role of perceived behavioral control, suggesting it moderates the relationship between subjective norms and behavioral intention. Similarly, Schwartz and Howard (1981) argued that when individuals have a high awareness of responsibility, subjective norms are more likely to significantly influence their intentions. Based on this theoretical foundation, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: Subjective norms have a positive impact on the intention to engage in responsible tourism behavior.

Figure 1: Proposed research model



3. Research Method

3.1. Data Collection

The study utilized both secondary and primary data sources to ensure the comprehensiveness and reliability of the research findings. Secondary data were collected from official and reputable sources such as the Vietnam National Tourism Administration, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST), provincial newspapers, Booking.com surveys, and the UNWTO, as well as various academic journals, master's theses, and previous research studies. These sources provided an essential background and contextual foundation for the analysis of responsible tourism behaviors and trends, particularly among the younger generation in Vietnam.

The core methodology employed in the study was quantitative research, which was conducted through a combination of online surveys via Google Forms (251 responses) and in-person questionnaires (128 responses), targeting members of Generation Z living, studying, or working in Ho Chi Minh City. A total of 357 valid responses were collected, significantly exceeding the recommended sample size of 140 based on the 5:1 ratio suggested by Hair et al. (2014), thereby ensuring the robustness and statistical validity of the findings.

A non-probability sampling method was applied, and the survey was structured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Totally Disagree to 5 = Totally Agree). The questionnaire covered four key constructs: responsibility awareness – fourteen items (with sub-variables for environmental, socio-cultural, and economic responsibility based on Goodwin and Francis 2003; Chao 2012; Lee et al. 2013; Olga and Aneta 2014; Nga et al. (2023), attitude – six items (Gao et al. 2017; Hoai et al. 2023), subjective norms – four

items (D'Arco et al. 2023; Salinero et al. 2022), behavioral intention – four items (Song and Kim 2018; Diallo et al. 2015; Nga et al. 2023).

This methodical approach facilitated the testing of the proposed hypotheses and provided quantifiable insights into the behavioral intentions of young Vietnamese tourists regarding responsible tourism.

3.2. Data Analysis

In this study, data collected from the surveys were processed using SPSS 22 to perform descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean values, to understand the demographic and behavioral characteristics of respondents aged 15 to 28 years. The researcher then used AMOS 22 to conduct structural equation modeling (SEM) for hypothesis testing and model building.

To ensure measurement reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was applied to test internal consistency, followed by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using criteria such as Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test (KMO) > 0.5, Bartlett's test significance < 0.05, and factor loadings ≥ 0.5 (Hair and Anderson 1998). This was followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to verify convergent and discriminant validity through model fit indices like Chi-square/df, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Finally, the SEM technique allowed the researcher to explore complex relationships between observed and latent variables, offering comprehensive insight into the impact of awareness on responsible tourism behavioral intentions (Haenlein and Kaplan 2004).

4. Empirical Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Based on the survey of 357 valid respondents, the sample consisted of a slightly higher proportion of female (53.8%) to male participants (46.2%). In terms of age, the largest group was aged from 19 to 22 years (40.9%), followed by those aged 23 to 28 years (36.1%), indicating that the majority of respondents were young adults.

Regarding education level, more than one-third of respondents had a university degree (37.8%), while college graduates accounted for 25.2%. Notably, students made up the majority of the sample (61.9%), with office staff (14.6%) and freelancers (12.9%) being the next largest groups. This suggests that the sample is largely comprised of young, educated individuals who are currently studying or newly entering the workforce, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Characteristics		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	165	46.2
	Female	192	53.8
Age	15 to 18 years	82	23.0
	19 to 22 years	146	40.9
	23 to 28 years	129	36.1
Educational level	High school	89	24.9
	Intermediate	29	8.1
	College	90	25.2
	University	135	37.8
	Postgraduate	14	3.9
Occupation	Student	221	61.9
	Civil servants	31	8.7
	Office staff	52	14.6
	Freelancers	46	12.9
	Unemployed	7	2.0

4.2. Scale Reliability Tests

The results from the reliability testing of the measurement scales indicate that the Environmental Responsibility (ENR) Scale has an acceptable level of internal

consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.760. However, one item (ENR_4) showed a low total item correlation ($0.171 < 0.3$) and was excluded from further analysis. The remaining four items: ENR_1, ENR_2,

ENR_3, and ENR_5, were retained as they met the reliability requirements.

The Attitude (ATT) Scale demonstrated excellent reliability with a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.861. However, ATT_6 did not meet the minimum total item correlation threshold ($0.271 < 0.3$) and was therefore removed. The other five items within this scale were kept and considered reliable.

In addition, the other four measurement scales: Cultural and Social Responsibility (CSR), Economic Responsibility (ECR), Subjective Norms (SJN), and Behavioral Intention (BHI), all achieved high internal consistency, with Cronbach’s Alpha values of 0.874, 0.830, 0.853, and 0.869, respectively. Each observed variable in these constructs had a total item correlation greater than 0.3, confirming their reliability. Consequently, all five refined scales are

deemed suitable for the subsequent EFA using principal axis factoring and promax rotation.

4.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using 26 observed variables that passed the reliability assessment through Cronbach’s Alpha testing. The principal axis factoring extraction method and promax rotation were applied. The results confirmed the suitability of EFA for the dataset. As shown in Table 2, the KMO test value of 0.920 (≥ 0.5), and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity showing a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05), Chi-square = 5404.882, and $df = 325$. These values strongly support the validity of applying factor analysis to the data structure.

Table 2: Bartlett’s test results and KMO coefficient

KMO		0.920
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5404.882
	df	325
	Sig.	0.000

Based on the EFA results in Table 3, six factors were extracted with an eigenvalue ≥ 1 (1.221) and a total variance explained of 70.214%, exceeding the standard threshold of 50%. All factor loadings were greater than 0.5, satisfying Hair et al.’s (2010) recommendation for acceptable observed variable quality. This confirms that the retained variables are appropriate for measuring the corresponding constructs.

Table 3: Summary of EFA results

Factor	Items	Factor Loading	Initial Eigenvalues	Total Variance Explained
Attitude (ATT)			9.886	38.022
	ATT_3. I prioritize using green and environmentally friendly products when traveling.	0.860		

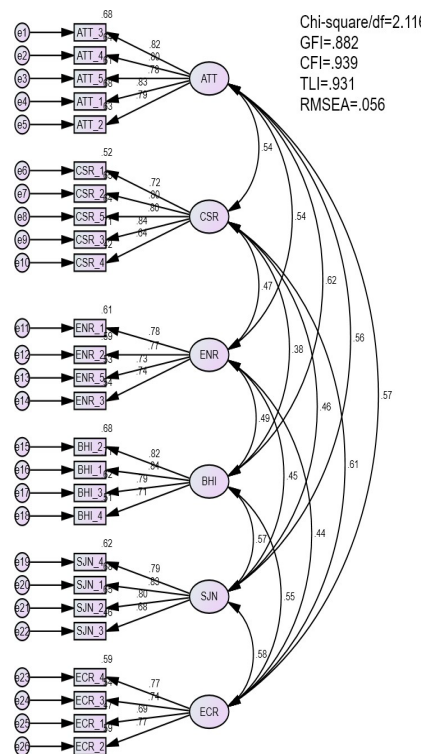
	ATT_4. I am excited to communicate with local residents.	0.806		
	ATT_5. I care about activities that can help others during my journey.	0.802		
	ATT_1. I always find out information about the customs and cultural traditions of the place that I am going to come before each trip.	0.779		
	ATT_2. I use technology and social networks wisely during my travels.	0.700		
Cultural - Social Responsibility (CSR)			2.234	46.615
	CSR_1. Respecting the customs and practices of the indigenous population, preserving and promoting cultural and social diversity.	0.812		
	CSR_2. Respect and preserve monuments and heritage for future generations.	0.810		
	CSR_5. Ensuring tourism contributes significantly to health and education improvements.	0.772		
	CSR_3. Traditional festivals, traditional craft villages and local cuisine should be preserved and promoted.	0.743		
	CSR_4. Thoroughly solve social problems such as sexual abuse in tourism, especially for children and use of banned substances.	0.660		
Behavioral Intention (BHI)			1.863	53.779
	BHI_2. I plan to join responsible tourism in the near future.	0.889		
	BHI_1. I will make an effort to participate in responsible tourism as soon as possible.	0.812		
	BHI_3. I am willing to take part in responsible tourism.	0.716		
	BHI_4. I intend to invest time and money to participate in responsible tourism.	0.595		
Subjective Norms (SJN)			1.589	59.888
	SJN_4. Tourists should take the responsibility to minimize negative impacts on the environment, culture, and society when engaging in travel.	0.827		
	SJN_1. I have an obligation to adhere to the laws, national regulations, and rules at the destination.	0.793		
	SJN_2. Complying with human rights and protecting children from labor exploitation in tourism is crucial.	0.762		
	SJN_3. Every individual participating in tourism should exhibit respectful behavior towards local residents.	0.604		
Environmental Responsibility (ENR)			1.463	65.516
	ENR_1. Dispose of garbage in designated places and classify garbage if possible.	0.816		
	ENR_2. Limit the use of single-use plastic packaging products.	0.762		
	ENR_3. Use electricity and water savings during stay and visit.	0.720		
	ENR_5. Know how to protect natural landscapes and comply with destination regulations.	0.639		

Economic Responsibility (ECR)		1.221	70.214
	ECR_4. Supporting SMEs towards long-term development.	0.780	
	ECR_3. Tourism is a branch linking sectors should promote the overall economic development of the local.	0.731	
	ECR_1. Support local products and services to boost the economy at the destination.	0.705	
	ECR_2. Development is associated with the goal of the poor, creating jobs, encouraging the participation of local communities, helping to improve their living standards.	0.682	

4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Following the EFA, the researcher conducted CFA to validate the structure of the proposed model and assess the quality of the observed data. The model fit indices reported in Figure 2 confirm the adequacy of the model: the CMIN/df = 2.116, which is below the threshold of 3, indicating a good model fit. Additionally, GFI = 0.882 (> 0.8), TLI = 0.931, and CFI = 0.939 (both > 0.9), all meet the criteria for excellent fit. The RMSEA = 0.056, which is well below the acceptable cutoff of 0.08.

Figure 2: Results of the CFA analysis of the scale



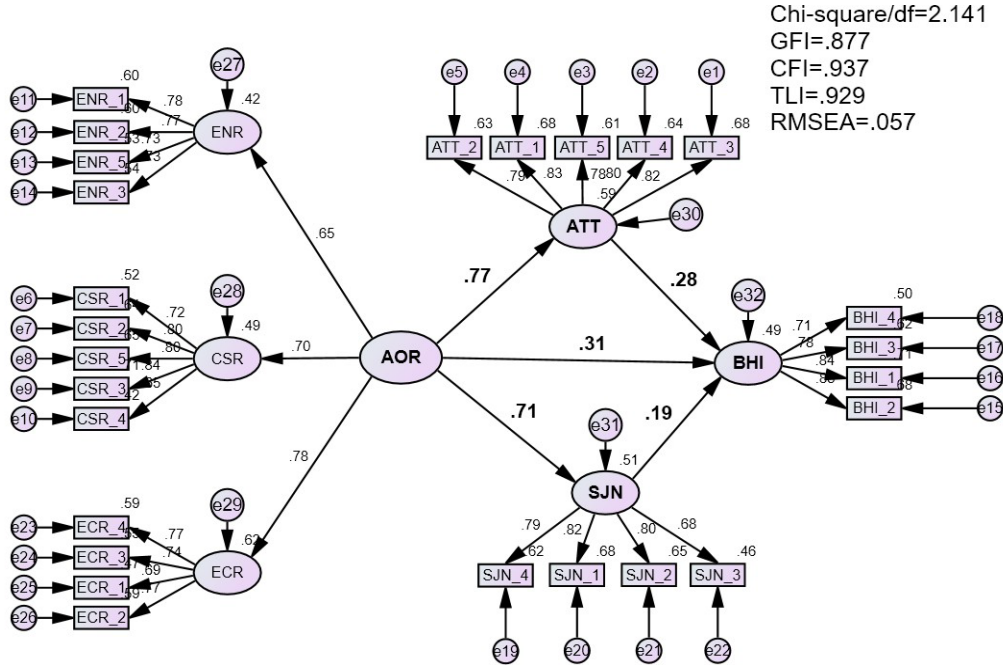
4.5. Structural Equation Modeling

The results of the structural equation model (SEM) analysis for the theoretical

model (according to Figure 3) show that the model has degrees of freedom, with a ChiSquare/df = 2.141, which is less than 3. GFI = 0.877 (> 0.8). CFI = 0.937 (> 0.9). TLI = 0.929 and RMSEA = 0.057 (< 0.08).

These results meet the required standards, suitable for the research data, indicating that the theoretical model is

Figure 3: SEM results of theoretical model (standardized)



After analyzing the appropriate overall structural model, it is assessed and validated. The next step is to consider the estimated values to test causal relationships. The standardized estimation results in Figure 3 and Table 4 indicate that all estimated weights have positive signs (+), so all hypotheses – H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 – are accepted in the theoretical research model.

Table 4: Results of testing research hypotheses (standardized)

No.	Hypothesis	Estimate	SE	CR	P	Conclusion
1	H1: AOR → BHI	0.313	0.260	2.229	0.026	Supported
2	H2: AOR → ATT	0.771	0.169	8.706	***	Supported
3	H3: AOR → SJN	0.712	0.150	8.198	***	Supported
4	H4: ATT → BHI	0.278	0.094	2.853	0.004	Supported
5	H5: SJN → BHI	0.190	0.091	2.249	0.025	Supported

Note: ***<0.05; S.E (Standard error); C.R. (Critical Ratio)

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1. Discussion

The author conducted specific hypothesis testing within the research model and obtained the following results:

Hypothesis H1 posits that awareness of responsibility (AOR) has a positive effect on the behavioral intention in responsible tourism (BHI). Based on the SEM analysis results, with a $p = 0.026 (< 0.05)$, this hypothesis achieves a statistically significant level of support. The standardized regression coefficient, showing a positive value of 0.313 demonstrates that AOR is positively related to BHI. This effect implies that the participants in this study have a clear awareness of three aspects – environmental, socio-cultural, and economic – and it is related to their intention to engage in responsible tourism behavior. Therefore, this hypothesis aligns with the findings of previous studies (Schwartz 1977; Taylor and Todd 1995).

Hypothesis H2 states that awareness of responsibility (AOR) has a positive influence on Attitude (ATT). The SEM results show that $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that this hypothesis is statistically significant. An estimate of 0.771 demonstrates a strong and positive relationship between AOR and ATT. This suggests that young tourists in Ho Chi Minh City with a strong awareness of responsibility towards the environment, society and culture, and economics tend to value individual behavior principles when engaging in responsible tourism. Therefore, Hypothesis H2 is accepted.

Hypothesis H3: Awareness of responsibility (AOR) has a positive influence on subjective norms (SJN). The SEM results indicate that $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, demonstrating the statistical significance of this hypothesis. An estimate of 0.712 reveals

a strong and positive relationship between AOR and SJN. Thus, Hypothesis H3 is accepted and aligns with similar findings in previous studies by Gao et al. (2017) and Kaplan (2020), which also highlight the significant impact of awareness of responsibility on attitudes towards responsible tourism behavior.

Hypothesis H4 suggests that attitude (ATT) has a positive influence on behavioral intention (BHI) in responsible tourism. Based on the SEM results, with $p = 0.004 < 0.05$, this hypothesis reaches a statistically significant level of standard significance. The standardized regression coefficient, which is a positive value of 0.278, indicates a positive relationship between ATT and BHI. This aligns with the findings of previous studies by Tsang et al. (2004), Lin (2011), and Mazhar et al. (2014), which suggest that individuals with a more positive attitude towards a behavior are more likely to have a higher intention to engage in the behavior. Therefore, Hypothesis H4 is accepted.

Hypothesis H5 posits that subjective norms (SJN) have a positive influence on behavioral intention (BHI) in responsible tourism. The SEM results show that $p = 0.025 < 0.05$, and the standardized regression coefficient is a positive value of 0.190, indicating a positive relationship between SJN and BHI. In other words, the Generation Z in Ho Chi Minh City, with their deep awareness of responsibility and their adherence to their principles during travel, strongly influence their intention to engage in responsible tourism behavior. Therefore, Hypothesis H5 is accepted and is consistent with the findings of previous studies by authors such as Esfandiar et al. (2020), Cheng et al. (2019), Filimonau et al. (2018), and Gursoy et al. (2019).

An important observation from the structural model is that the path from

awareness of responsibility (AOR) to attitude (ATT) ($\beta = 0.712$) is considerably stronger than the direct path from awareness of responsibility (AOR) to behavioral intention (BHI) ($\beta = 0.313$). This suggests that attitude plays a powerful mediating role, amplifying the influence of awareness on intention. In other words, awareness alone may not be sufficient to directly trigger responsible tourism behaviors among Generation Z; rather, it must first shape positive attitudes that then translate into intention. Similarly, the significant relationship between awareness of responsibility (AOR) and subjective norms (SJN), and between subjective norms (SJN) and behavioral intention (BHI), highlights the mediating role of perceived social expectations. These findings align with the logic of the TPB, where indirect pathways through attitudinal and normative constructs often exert stronger effects than direct ones. By making these mediating mechanisms explicit, our study underscores the importance of designing interventions that both strengthen young people's pro-responsibility attitudes and foster supportive social norms to more effectively translate awareness into behavioral intentions.

It is also important to acknowledge the well-documented intention-behavior gap – namely, the fact that positive behavioral intentions do not always translate into actual responsible actions. Although our model demonstrates strong effects of responsibility awareness on intentions, external and situational factors may intervene to prevent these intentions from materializing in practice. This limitation highlights the need for caution when interpreting behavioral intentions as direct predictors of real-world responsible tourism behaviors.

5.2. Implications

Importantly, these recommendations are strongly grounded in our statistical findings. The path from awareness of responsibility (AOR) to attitude (ATT) was particularly robust ($\beta = 0.771$, $p < 0.001$), much stronger than the direct path from awareness of responsibility (AOR) to behavioral intention (BHI) ($\beta = 0.313$, $p < 0.001$). This highlights that interventions should not merely prescribe responsible behaviors, but rather cultivate genuine positive attitudes and values among young travelers. Educational programs, social media campaigns, and experiential activities that internalize sustainability as a personal value are therefore more likely to be effective in translating awareness into lasting behavioral intentions. Similarly, the significant pathway from awareness of responsibility (AOR) to subjective norms (SJN) ($\beta = 0.707$, $p < 0.001$) underscores the role of peer influence, suggesting that campaigns leveraging community leaders, influencers, or peer networks can strengthen the social expectation of responsible travel. By explicitly linking interventions to these statistical relationships, the recommendations become both evidence-based and persuasive for policymakers and industry stakeholders.

General Implications for Promoting Responsible Tourism in Vietnam

To enhance responsible tourism in Vietnam, a wide range of practical strategies must be adopted across environmental, cultural, community, and governance dimensions. Key measures include enforcing environmental regulations, promoting eco-certified businesses, offering educational content through digital media, and implementing penalties for violations. Respect for local culture should be

emphasized through tourist education, behavior guidelines, and participation in local customs. Strengthening community-based tourism, investing in infrastructure using sustainable resources, and conducting impact assessments for large-scale projects are crucial for minimizing environmental degradation and empowering local populations.

Regulatory reforms are essential, including tightening licensing processes and enforcing standards for safety, waste management, and sustainability. Raising awareness through training sessions, campaigns, and social media outreach is critical for educating tourists and tourism workers about the long-term value of responsible behavior. Other essential initiatives include promoting the use of public and eco-friendly transport, supporting responsible tourism businesses through incentives and certification, and creating marketing campaigns that highlight Vietnam's unique cultural and environmental assets to attract socially conscious travelers.

Stakeholder-Specific Recommendations

For local tourism authorities, transparent strategies and training programs are necessary to facilitate responsible tourism practices, while recognizing and rewarding outstanding initiatives. Tourism businesses must embed responsibility into their core policies by developing sustainable products, training staff, and creating reward systems for responsible actions. Hotels and restaurants should prioritize energy and water efficiency, food safety, and the use of green materials.

The local community plays a key role by maintaining a welcoming attitude toward visitors, participating in structured tourism programs, and showcasing their cultural and

natural resources responsibly. Finally, tourists are encouraged to respect local customs, support responsible businesses, conserve resources, and engage in environmental and cultural protection efforts. Together, these collective actions will lay a solid foundation for the sustainable development of Vietnam's tourism sector as outlined in the national strategy toward 2030.

Given that Generation Z is highly engaged with digital media, social media platforms represent a powerful channel for fostering responsible tourism. Campaigns that use interactive content, storytelling, and influencer advocacy can significantly raise responsibility awareness, while also shaping positive attitudes and reinforcing supportive subjective norms. For example, collaborations with travel influencers or youth communities on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook could normalize sustainable practices and make responsible choices more attractive and accessible to young travelers. Integrating social media strategies with formal educational and community-based initiatives would therefore maximize the reach and impact of responsible tourism promotion.

5.3 Limitations and Research Directions

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The study relied on a convenience sample drawn solely from Ho Chi Minh City, with 357 respondents aged 15 to 28 years. While this urban context provides valuable insights, the limited sample size and geographical scope reduce the external validity of the findings and restrict their generalizability to the wider Vietnamese youth population, especially those in rural or culturally diverse regions. Future studies should employ probability-based sampling and multi-site designs across multiple cities and provinces

with larger samples to improve representativeness. Another limitation is the exclusion of perceived behavioral control (PBC), one of the three core components of the TPB. This omission allowed the model to remain parsimonious and focused on attitudinal and normative pathways, but it also reduces theoretical completeness. Future research should incorporate PBC to provide a more comprehensive test of the framework. In addition, the study measured behavioral intentions but not actual responsible tourism behaviors. This raises the well-documented issue of the intention–behavior gap, in which positive intentions do not always translate into real actions. Subsequent research should explore situational factors such as cost, convenience, and the availability of responsible tourism options that may facilitate or hinder the conversion of intentions into behaviors among young travelers. Finally, the study treated responsibility awareness as a single construct without separately analyzing its environmental, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions. Future studies could investigate how these three aspects differently influence attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions in tourism. Such an approach would provide a more nuanced understanding and open promising directions for subsequent research on responsible travel behavior.

Finally, another limitation is that although the study conceptualized awareness of responsibility as a higher-order construct composed of environmental, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions, the author did not conduct a separate second-order CFA to validate this hierarchical structure prior to SEM. While the strong and significant loadings in the SEM provide some empirical support for this aggregation, future research should explicitly perform a second-order CFA to confirm the validity of the higher-

order specification before proceeding to structural modeling. This additional step would further enhance the methodological rigor and robustness of the findings.

Declaration of AI Use

The author declares that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the research, writing, or editing of this manuscript.

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