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Investigating the Responsible Tourist Behaviour in Ecotourism Destination: A Study on Saint Martin's Island in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Though measuring and monitoring tourists' responsible behavior is considered as a key indicator of assuring Responsible Tourism (RT), it is highly ignored in most of the tourist destinations in Bangladesh. Hence, this research aims at investigating how responsibly the tourists behave in the context of an ecotourism destination, Saint Martin Island, Bangladesh. To address the research aim, this paper follows the quantitative research approach where both primary and secondary data are used. The study employed 18 RT behavioral traits under five broad themes to measure Responsible Tourist Behavior (RTB). The findings show that there exists a positive significant relationship between RTB and behavioral trait themes (environmental, economic, cultural, development and promotional, legal and ethical behavioral traits). It is also found that the tourists are very careless about using usual tourist path, local tourist guide, creating noise and wearing local dresses but they play a significant role for the promotion and development of the destination during their visit.

Keywords: Responsible Tourism, Responsible Tourist Behavior, Ecotourism Destination, Saint Martin Island, Bangladesh

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Introduction

Climate change, natural disasters, resource depletion, and other global threats push the tourism industries to assess their impact on the environmental, social, and economic surroundings (Frey & George, 2010). The present world is witnessing a global crisis, COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has resulted in global issues and economic crisis that has spillover influence on international industries, including the tourism and hospitality industry (Abbas et al., 2021; Horaira, 2021). According to the report of the World Travel & Tourism Council (2021), due to COVID-19, the entire tourism industry has already suffered losses of almost USD 4.5 trillion resulting in a 3.7 percent decline in global GDP, 45 percent decrease in domestic tourist spending, 69.4 percent drop in international visitor expenditure, and the loss of 62 million jobs in 2020. However, the United Nations World

Tourism Organization (UNWTO) considers this pandemic period as an opportunity to rethink how tourism intersects with our communities, business activities, environmental resources, and ecosystems. Therefore, added to this process, it is also important to reassess how responsibly the tourists behave while visiting a destination as the mass tourism segment will be replaced by the sustainable segment in the post-pandemic context, and the destinations will look for more responsible tourists (Dias et al., 2021).

Notwithstanding the importance of measuring and monitoring tourist responsible behavior, Bangladesh has paid less attention to this field of research. Hence, this research attempts to fill this gap and aims at assessing how responsibly the tourist behaves during their visit to an ecotourism destination of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is blessed with a lot of tourism treasures (Hoque, Ara, & Rahman, 2018; Muneem & Avi, 2017). The country is so rich in tourism resources that even the rural villages of this country offer unique experiences to the tourists (Rahman et al., 2018). Beside many archeological, cultural, and religious attractions, this country hosts a range of unique natural attractions including world's largest mangrove forest (Sundarban), world's longest unbroken sandy sea beach (Cox's Bazar), hilly island, and live coral island (Saint Martin Island). As a part of single holistic approach (Yin, 2014), this research paid attention to investigate the responsible tourist behavior in the context of Saint Martin Island.

Saint Martin Island is one of the most beautiful eco-tourism destinations in Bangladesh. The island is located 9 kilometers south of Teknaf, Cox's Bazaar. Clear water and coral reefs encircle the entire island. This small island attracts more 5000 tourists each day (Environmental Justice Atlas 2017). Saint Martin, the country's unique coral island, is also a sea turtle nesting area. According to many sources, this island hosts 68 coral species, 151 algae species, 191 mollusk species, 40 crab species, 234 marine fish species, 5 dolphin species, 4 amphibian species, and 28 reptile species. There are 20 mammalian species, 175 plant species, 120 bird species, 2 bat species, and many more. Many of these species are currently critically endangered. Pollution is causing these bio-diversities to dwindle. Excessive tourist pressure, unregulated hotel and motel construction, uncontrolled deforestation, and the dumping of various wastes have impacted negatively on the island's environment. Furthermore, biodiversity, especially corals, is threatened by a variety of damaging activities, such as continuous water pumping with electric pumps, the development of multi-story structures, building sewers, and the installation of open latrines to suit tourist demand (Tashfik, 2021).

In addressing the research aim, this paper also unfolds some other specific objectives including, knowing the present status of this island; finding out the behavioral traits by which the tourist behavior can be assessed. The novelty of this research is that it is one of the first attempts that investigate the responsible behavior of tourists in the context of an ecotourism destination in Bangladesh. This study is guided by the quantitative research approach where both the primary and secondary data collection methods are employed to collect data. The findings of this research have wider applicability for the policymakers of the tourism industry of Bangladesh.

The paper is organized into three sections. Firstly, after reviewing a handful of secondary literature, a conceptual framework is developed for this study. In the next section, the detailed research method, sampling techniques, data collection, and data analysis methods are presented. Finally, in the third part, the findings are presented with some policy guidelines and future research directions.

Literature Review

This section tries to clarify the key concepts regarding responsible tourism, responsible tourists, responsible tourist behavior, and responsible tourist behavioral traits; explores the recognized environmental, economic, cultural, promotional, legal, and ethical behavioral traits of the responsible tourists; and develops research hypothesis and conceptual framework of this study.

Responsible Tourism (RT)

RT is concerned with the impact of tourism on human beings, the natural resources, and societies, and aims to mitigate these impacts by offering tourism activities that greatly benefit the host communities, enhance better working conditions, ensure the participation of the local community, preserving and promoting the sustainable environment and cultural resources (Leslie, 2012). The Cape Town Declaration defines, widely accepted and recognized definition, RT as a form of tourism that minimizes negative economic, environmental, and social impacts, maximizes economic benefits for the locals, enhances their (hosts) well-being, supports improving working conditions, and providing access to the industry, involves locals in decision-making, conserves and respect natural, cultural, and local resources, ensures more enjoyable visitor experiences engaging locals, promotes greater understanding of local cultural, social, and environmental issues, allows access for physically challenged people, and boosts local pride and confidence (Goodwin, 2014).

Responsible Tourists (RTs)

RTs are those who meet and make interaction with various people, native customs, and other visitors, explore authenticity by exercising cognitive and emotional effort, leave no negative impact on the local natural and cultural resources, contributes to the local economy, and respect and promote local resources (Shahzalal, 2016).

Responsible Tourist Behavior (RTB)

RTB is the combination of different behavioral traits that encourage the tourist to more responsibly behave in the tourist destination (Leslie, 2012; Shahzalal, 2016). It should be related to preserving the destinations' environments, considering the economic interest of the local community, respecting the local culture and norms, obeying the legal and ethical aspects, and also working for the promotion and development of the destination (Lea, 1993; Chafe, 2005; Leslie, 2012; Goodwin, 2014; Shahzalal, 2016; Said, 2018).

Responsible Tourist Behavioral Traits (RTBT)

RTBTs make tourists act responsibly during their visit to any destination. The following Table 1 summarizes the most recognized RTBTs by many of the scholars and a few numbers of new traits are identified and introduced by the authors of this research.

Table 1. Categorization of different behavioral traits of the responsible tourists

Trait's theme	Statements	Sources
Environmental Behavioral Traits (EBT)	I used the usual tourist path	Tearfund (2000); Chafe (2005); SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (2009); Weeden (2014, pp. 71-72); Shahzalal (2016); Said (2018).
	I do not buy souvenir made from any elements of local animals and plants	
	I do not destroy any plants and animals	

	I bin for waste plastics and others	New
	I don't create noise by playing music	New
Economic Behavioral Traits (ECBT)	I eat only local food	Tearfund (2000); Shahzalal (2016); Said (2018).
	I use local tourist guides	
	I donate for community development	
Cultural Behavioral Traits (CBT)	I wear local dress whilst visiting a destination	Lea (1993); Mann (2000, p. 201); Tearfund (2000); Chafe (2005); SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (2009); Weeden (2014, pp. 71-72); Shahzalal (2016); Said (2018).
	I learn local language	
	I show respect to the local customs	
	I show respect to the community people	
Development and Promotional Behavioral Traits (DPBT)	I volunteer for the conservation of destination environment, animals and plants	Shahzalal (2016)
	I make positive word of mouth about destination	New
	I post destination beauty via social media	New
	I request someone not to destroy any plants and animals	New
Legal and Ethical Behavioral Traits (LEBT)	I obey the local customs and laws	Tearfund (2000); Shahzalal (2016), Budiarta et al., (2018, September)
	In case of emergency, I like to take help from tourist police or security guard	New

Research Hypothesis and Conceptual Framework Development

Environmental Behavioral Traits (EBT)

EBT is the activities of tourists that consider the environmental losses and preservation of the destination's natural resources and biodiversity (Neto, 2003, August; Muhanna, 2006; Belsoy et al., 2012). Erdogan and Baris (2007) emphasized on developing an integrated system of policy and practice regarding environmental preservation in destination area and they also suggested practicing these by all the parties concerned with environmental protection and sustainability. It is well recognized in tourism literature that environmentally responsible tourists prefer traveling to nature-based tourism destinations and they expect both economic and environmental sustainability (Duerden & Witt 2010; Lee & Jan, 2015; Han et al., 2016). Some of the specific elements of ETB are using the usual tourist path, avoiding buying souvenirs made from any elements of animals and plants, escaping to destroy any plants and animals, using bins for waste plastics and others, and disengaging to create noise in the destination (Tearfund, 2000; Chafe, 2005; SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, 2009; Weeden, 2014; Shahzalal, 2016; Said, 2018). Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik (2012) argued that sustainable tourism development mainly includes environmental preservation and conservation and it also

promotes RTB. It also recognised that responsible tourism not only minimize the negative impact of tourism but also optimize the benefits of local communities and environments (Caruana et al., 2014; Eichelberger et al., 2021). It is evident that the environmentally responsible behavior has a great contribution on environmental sustainability that could have impact on the RTB (Su and Swanson, 2017; Eichelberger et al., 2021). Based on the arguments, we assume that there could be relationship between the practices of EBT and RTB. Hence, following hypothesis has been created to be tested in this study.

Alternative hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between the practices of EBT and RTB.

Economic Behavioral Traits (ECBT)

Sustainable tourism development has a positive significant influence on the economic development of Bangladesh (Huq & Alam, 2016). Sustainable tourism and RTB are complementary to one another. Goodwin (1998, October) also argued that tourism has become an important sector for developing countries with the aim of increasing foreign exchange earnings, increasing employment and providing financial resources for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. It is also found that the RTs are very careful about the activities of buying local food, using local tourist guides and donating for community development (Tearfund, 2000; Shahzalal, 2016; Said, 2018). ECBT are the activities of tourists by which the local entrepreneurs and community people are financially benefited that could have relationship with RTB. It also includes the activities, i.e., tourists eat only local foods, use local tourist guides, and donate for community development. Hence, we assume that there could be relationship between the practices of EBT and RTB. Therefore, following hypothesis has been created.

Alternative hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between the practices of ECBT and RTB.

Cultural Behavioral Traits (CBT)

Culture is considered as a significant tool for tourism development, and it also contributes for economic growth of a country (Hvizdová, 2014). The physical and cultural environments have values that go beyond their value as tourism assets (Witt & Gammon, 1991). Such assets should be preserved by ensuring the RTB and CBT are also the major components of it (Lea, 1993; Said (2018). CBT comprises the activities of tourists that promoting and respecting the local culture (SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, 2009; Shahzalal, 2016; Said, 2018). Some of the major CBT are wearing the local dress while visiting a destination; trying to learn the local languages; showing respect to the local rituals and customs and also the community people that also contribute to tourism sustainability (Lea, 1993; Mann, 2000, p. 201; Tearfund, 2000; Chafe, 2005; SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, 2009; Weeden, 2014, pp. 71-72; Shahzalal, 2016; Said, 2018). Thus, following hypothesis has been developed.

Alternative Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between the practices of CBT and RTB.

Development and Promotional Behavioral Traits (DPBT)

DPBT comprises the actions of tourists working for the promotion and the development of the tourist destination as well as the community. The major DPBT actions are volunteering for the conservation of destination environment, animals, and plants (Shahzalal, 2016), creating positive word of mouth about the destination, posting their travel experiences with

the destination's positive image via social media; and requesting others not to destroy any plants and animals. Branding and customer oriented promotional strategy helps to create a distinctive position in the customer mind about a destination and he also emphasized on knowledge sharing for tourism development (Million, 2020). Teo et al., (2014) argued that visitors' responsible behavior is determined not only by their socioeconomic or demographic characteristics, but rather by their attitudes, actions, and motivation towards the promotion and development of tourist destination. Hence, we assume that there could be a positive relationship between the practices of DPBT and RTB. Therefore, following hypothesis has been created.

Alternative Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the practices of DPBT and RTB.

Legal and Ethical Behavioral Traits (LEBT)

Budiarta et al., (2018, September) identified that the application of customary law is very effective in preserving the marine environment and they also emphasized to obey the local laws for sustainable tourism development. LEBT is the activity of the tourist to obey the local laws and customs. Some of the LEBT activities of the tourists are obeying the local customs and laws and taking help from tourist police or security guard that have significant influence on sustainable tourism development (Tearfund, 2000; Shahzalal, 2016). Hence, we assume that there could be a positive relationship between LEBT and RTB. Therefore, following hypothesis has been developed.

Alternative Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between the practices of LEBT and RTB.

Conceptual Framework Development

The conceptual framework shows a positive relation with the behavioral themes (environmental, economic, cultural, development and promotional, legal and ethical behavioral traits).

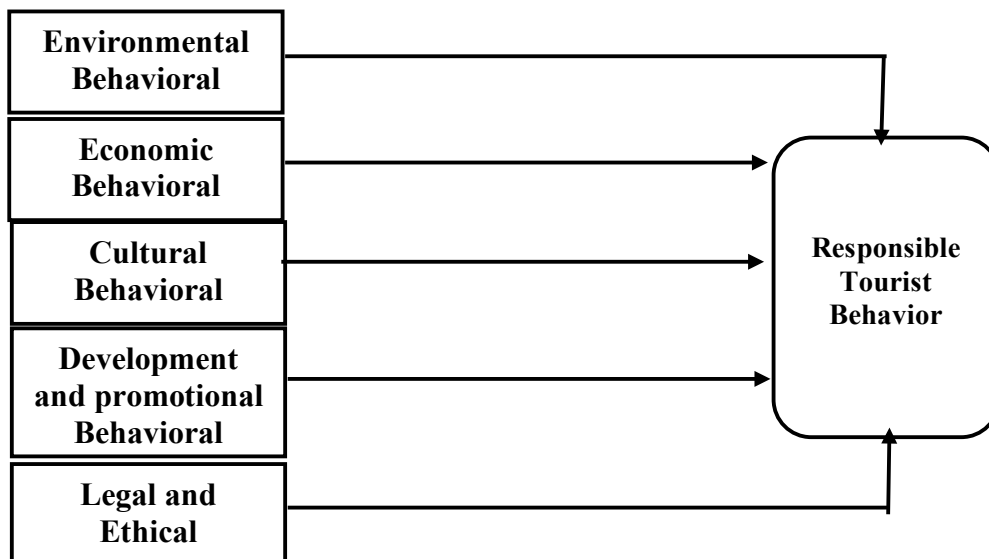


Figure1: Conceptual framework of RTB assessment

Research Methods

Research approach

The quantitative research approach is followed to conduct this research.

Data collection and analysis techniques

The data collection technique comprises both primary and secondary strategies. The primary data is collected by using the questionnaire survey method, whereas a wide range of published and unpublished materials including journal articles, research reports, newspaper writings, etc. are reviewed as a part of collecting secondary data. To assess the practices of RTB, the study used 18 behavioral traits which are designed by a five-point Likert scale, where, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree with statements. In addition, some socio-demographic and two open-ended questions are employed to gain more insights into this study. The respondents are randomly selected from the tourist visited the St. Martin Island on February 19 to 20, 2020. In total 100 questionnaires were distributed and 94 were received, and finally, 86 were selected for data analysis. Collected data are analyzed and interpreted based on the research objectives.

Analysis of the Findings

Socio-Demographic Profile

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents in this research is presented in the following table 2. From the table it is evident that 62.8 percent of the respondents are students, 17.4 percent are services holders and 19.8 percent are businessmen in this study. It is also found that 93 percent of the respondents in this research are young and their age limit is 18-35 years. About 55 percent of the respondent's hobby is traveling. The table 2 also displays that about 41.9 percent of the respondent's monthly expenses is Tk. 10000 or less, and 29 percent of the respondent's expenses is Tk. 10000-30000. Most of the respondents (97%) in this research prefer natural tourist destinations as their destination choice.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Traits	Sub-Criteria	N	Percentage
Respondents' profession	Services	15	17.4
	Business	17	19.8
	Student	54	62.8
Age of respondent	18-35 years	80	93.0
	35-50 years	6	7.0
Respondent education level	Secondary education	5	5.8
	Tertiary education	81	94.2
Respondent's hobby	Traveling	55	64.0
	Listening music	6	7.0
	Playing	14	16.3
	Social media browsing	5	5.8
	Others	6	7.0

Monthly expenses level	Below tk. 10,000	36	41.9
	Tk. 10,000-30,000	25	29.0
	Tk. 30,001-50,000	17	19.8
	Tk. 50,000-100,000	6	7.0
	More than tk. 100,000	2	2.3
Preferred tourist destination	Man made	2	2.3
	Natural	84	97.7

Environmental Behavioral Traits

This research finds that very insignificant number of tourists, only 33.7 percent of the tourists (16.3 strongly agree + 17.4 agree) visiting this island, used the usual path whereas most of the tourists (73 percent) engaged themselves with the noise creation activities that is very critical for the environmental health of this island. Besides, it is also found that most of the tourists (83.8%) did not buy any souvenirs made from any elements of local animals and plants. Only 8.2 percent of the respondents found unaware regarding natural setting or environmental elements of this island and engaged in the activities that contribute destroying plants and animals. Approximately 74% of tourists used litter bins for placing unused plastics and other items. The descriptive statistics regarding respondents' environmental behavioral traits is portrayed in the following table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics regarding respondents' EBTs

EBT	Frequency and Percentage					Mean	SD	CV	
	F	SD	D	N	A				SA
I use the usual tourist path	F	14	25	18	15	14	2.88	1.332	1.775
	%	16.3	29.1	20.9	17.4	16.3			
I do not buy souvenirs made from any elements of local animals and plants	F	0	4	10	47	25	4.08	.770	.593
	%	0	4.7	11.6	54.7	29.1			
I do not destroy any plants and animals	F	4	3	9	15	55	4.33	1.100	1.210
	%	4.7	3.5	10.5	17.4	64.0			
I use bin for waste plastics and others	F	3	4	15	27	37	4.06	1.056	1.114
	%	3.5	4.7	17.4	31.4	43.0			
I do not create noise	F	42	21	15	5	3	1.91	1.102	1.215
	%	48.8	24.4	17.4	5.8	3.8			

Economic Behavioral Traits

The following table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the respondents' ECBTs. From the table, it is evident that the respondents or tourists' ECBT performance is very insignificant. The analysis result shows that about 43.1 percent of the tourists preferred eating local food, 36.1 percent for using local tourist guides, and 45.3 percent for donating to community development.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the respondents' ECBTs

ECBT	Frequency and Percentage						Mean	SD	CV
		SD	D	N	A	SA			
I eat only local food	F	4	18	27	20	17	3.33	1.152	1.328
	%	4.7	20.9	31.4	23.3	19.8			
I use local tourist guides	F	18	20	17	25	6	2.78	1.269	1.609
	%	20.9	23.3	19.8	29.1	7.0			
I donate for community development	F	14	10	23	32	7	3.09	1.21	1.474
	%	16.3	11.6	26.7	37.2	8.1			

Cultural Behavioral Traits

The study finds that most of the respondents (more than 90 percent) respect community peoples and their customs. The statistical result also shows that only 20 percent of the respondents supported wearing local dress while visiting a destination and 48 percent for learning local languages. The descriptive statistics regarding respondents' CBTs are presented in the following table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics regarding respondents' CBTs

CBT	Frequency and Percentage						Mean	SD	CV
		SD	D	N	A	SA			
I wear local dress whilst visiting a destination	F	20	23	21	17	5	2.58	1.212	1.470
	%	23.3	26.7	24.4	19.8	5.8			
I learn local languages	F	8	14	16	37	11	3.34	1.174	1.379
	%	9.3	16.3	18.6	43.3	12.8			
I respect local customs	F	2	2	5	27	50	4.41	.886	.785
	%	2.3	2.3	5.8	31.4	58.1			
I respect community people	F	1	0	4	36	45	4.44	.696	.485
	%	1.2	0	4.7	41.9	52.3			

Promotion and Development Behavioral Traits

This research finds a satisfactory performance in case of promotional and developmental behavior of the tourists visiting the island. More than 65 percent of the tourists promoted volunteering and engaged in the activities to preserve the destination environment, animals, and plants on this island. It also found that more than 70 percent of the tourists promote positive word of mouth about the island by posting on social media and 78 percent of the tourists request others not to engage in such activities that lead to destroying plants and animals of this island. The descriptive statistics of the respondents' PDBTs are presented following.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the respondents' PDBTs

PDBT	Frequency and Percentage						Mean	SD	CV
		SD	D	N	A	SA			
I volunteer for the conservation of destination environment, animals and plants	F	6	5	19	34	22	3.71	1.126	1.267
	%	7.0	5.8	22.1	39.5	25.6			
I make positive word of mouth about destination	F	2	4	18	29	33	4.01	1.000	1.000
	%	2.3	4.7	20.9	33.7	38.4			

I post destination beauty via social media	F	2	6	11	42	25	3.95	.957	.915
	%	2.3	7.0	12.8	48.8	29.1			
I request someone not to destroy any plants and animals	F	2	3	14	25	42	4.19	.988	.977
	%	2.3	3.5	16.3	29.1	48.8			

Legal and Ethical Behavioral Traits

The study finds a significant percentage of tourists obey the legal and ethical behavior during their visit to this island. More than 80 percent of the respondents support following the local customs and laws, and 89.6 percent of them prefer taking help from tourist police or security guard, in case of emergency. The descriptive statistics of the respondents' LEBTs are presented in the following table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of the respondents' LEBTs

LEBT	Frequency and Percentage						Mean	SD	CV
		SD	D	N	A	SA			
I obey the local customs and laws	F	1	4	10	34	37	4.19	.901	.812
	%	1.2	4.7	11.6	39.5	43.0			
In case of emergency, I like to take help from tourist police or security guard	F	4	1	4	30	47	4.34	.978	.956
	%	4.7	1.2	4.7	34.9	54.7			

Regression Analysis

As per the following model summary table 8, the value of adjusted R^2 , the coefficient of determination, implies that "Responsible Tourist Behavior" has explained 76.4% by the independent variables, i.e., promotion and development behavioral traits, environmental behavioral traits, cultural behavioral traits, economic behavioral traits, legal and ethical behavioral traits.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.874 ^a	.764	.749	.33897

a. Predictors: (Constant), promotion and development behavioral traits, environmental behavioral traits, cultural behavioral traits, economic behavioral traits, legal and ethical behavioral traits

According to the following table 9 (ANOVA), the P-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. So, the alternative hypothesis is accepted at the 95% level of confidence. This also implies that the model is significant and indicates that the promotion and development behavioral traits, environmental behavioral traits, cultural behavioral traits, economic behavioral traits, legal and ethical behavioral traits can significantly explain responsible tourist behavior.

Table 9: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.738	5	5.948	51.763	.000 ^b
	Residual	9.192	80	.115		
	Total	38.930	85			

a. Dependent Variable: Responsible Tourist Behavior

b. Predictors: (Constant), promotion and development behavioral traits, environmental behavioral traits, cultural behavioral traits, economic behavioral traits, legal and ethical behavioral traits

Added to this, the following table 10 presents that the sig. value of environmental behavioral traits, economic behavioral traits, cultural behavioral traits, legal and ethical behavioral traits, and promotion and development behavioral traits is 0.000. The sig. value of each indicator indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between responsible tourist behavior and EBT; ECBT; CBT; LEBT and PDBT.

Table 10: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-2.208	.427		-5.178	.000
	Environmental behavioral traits	.312	.083	.208	3.746	.000
	Economic behavioral traits	.356	.059	.348	6.042	.000
	Cultural behavioral traits	.439	.072	.354	6.134	.000
	Legal and ethical behavioral traits	.243	.058	.288	4.220	.000
	Promotion and development behavioral traits	.243	.065	.257	3.736	.000

a. Dependent variable: responsible tourist behavior

Test of Hypothesis

Table 11: Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis Number	Statement of the Hypothesis	P-value	Analysis	Comment
Alternative Hypothesis 1	There is a positive relationship between the practices of EBT and RTB.	.000	$0.000 \leq 0.05$	Alternative hypothesis is accepted
Alternative Hypothesis 2	There is a positive relationship between the practices of ECBT and RTB.	.000	$0.000 \leq 0.05$	Alternative hypothesis is accepted
Alternative Hypothesis 3	There is a positive relationship between the practices of CBT and	.000	$0.000 \leq 0.05$	Alternative hypothesis

	RTB.			is accepted
Alternative Hypothesis 4	There is a positive relationship between the practices of DPBT and RTB.	.000	$0.000 \leq 0.05$	Alternative hypothesis is accepted
Alternative Hypothesis 5	There is a positive relationship between the practices of LEBT and RTB.	.000	$0.000 \leq 0.05$	Alternative hypothesis is accepted

Discussions

The study found a positive relationship between the practices of environmental behavioral traits (EBT) and the responsible tourist behavior which also found in different previous studies i.e., Caruana et al, (2014); Eichelberger et al., (2021). So, the environmentally responsible behavior has a great contribution on environmental sustainability (Su and Swanson, 2017; Eichelberger et al, 2021). This study also found that the practice of economic, cultural, development and promotional, legal and ethical behavioral traits have a positive relationship with responsible tourist behavior and these are also consistent the previous studies i.e., Lea, (1993); Chafe, (2005); Weeden, (2014), Shahzalal, (2016); Said, (2018); Budiarta et al., (2018). Thus, the findings of the study validate the previous arguments of different studies. However, this study has some significant limitations, therefore, the findings of the study should be used cautiously. In this regard, the study grounds implications for the current literature and practice. The study enriches the current arguments of the relating to the RTB and its determinants such as ECBT, CBT, DPBT and LEBT that have been examined in this study. However, the future researchers can extend the arguments of the study by conducting similar studies in different contexts.

Conclusion and Some Policy Guidelines

This study investigates a detailed understanding regarding how responsibly tourists behave during their visit to an ecotourism destination, Saint Martin Island, Bangladesh. The study considered a number of recognized behavioral traits and categorized those traits under environment, economy, culture, marketing, legal, and ethical theme. From the statistical result, it is evident that there exists a positive significant relationship between RBT and behavioral themes (EBT, ECBT, CBT, LEBT, and PDBT). To gain additional insights, the researchers employed two more open-ended questions related to the existing promotional initiatives and maintenance of this island. Here, the answer reveals that the island authority has taken some initiatives, though it is insufficient. Moreover, the issue of low monitoring and improper management were underscored by most of the respondents of this research.

In light of these findings, firstly, this paper suggests the formulation and implementation of a sustainable master plan for this natural coral island. Because formulation and implementation of tourism master plan is prioritized as key to tourism development (Muneem et al., 2020). Secondly, this research suggests application of innovative technologies in promoting, administering, and managing this destination. As tourism is an information-intensive industry, the effectiveness of technological applications such as social media as a tool for tourism destination promotion and administration in the context of Bangladesh is well recognized (Avi et al., 2020). Finally, this paper suggests controlling number of visitors in order to ensure quality tourism, environmental conservation, and destination development.

This paper endorses continuous measurement and identification of issues that impact the visitation of responsible tourists. Therefore, future research should focus on investigation of issues affecting RT and maximizing the satisfaction of responsible tourists visiting this island.

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