Effect of Green Marketing Tools on Green Consumer Behavior of Tourists

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ABSTRACT

In the past few decades across the globe, the tourism sector has showcased significant economic growth and provides employment opportunities to a considerable percentage of the population. However, it has been observed that along with the positive impact on society, culture, and economy, an increase in mass tourism also negatively affects the environment. As the tourism industry shares a close association with the environment it becomes important to understand how tourism consumption in the most well-known tourist destinations impacts the environment and disturbs many social and economic elements. Hence, the stakeholders of the tourism industry become more sensitive towards the environment and introduce techniques and policies that promote sustainable development. Sustainable tourism is also a part of that and it refers to a responsible way of traveling that considers the environmental, social, and economic impact of tourism. To promote sustainability in the tourism industry, more focus has been paid to the green marketing aspect. To comprehend the significance of green marketing, certain techniques have been formulated and used exclusively in the tourism sector (Punitha & Rasdi, 2013).

The present study was conducted in a Rural Sub-Himalayan State, Himachal Pradesh known for its stunning tourist spots. This study adds value to the literature from the geographical perspective of an Asian nation, India. A descriptive research design has been adopted for the present study. In light of the prior studies, pertinent research objectives and hypotheses have been developed. A research instrument has been developed based on standardized questionnaires to gather quantitative data. Simple Random Sampling has been used to collect the data from the tourists visiting Himachal Pradesh. SPSS version 28 will be used to analyze and interpret the data. The study will assess the effect of socio-demographic aspects of tourists on green marketing tools. Along with that, the study will also examine various green marketing tools such as eco-brand, eco-label and eco-friendly advertisement in detail with the help of descriptive statistics.

Keywords: *Green Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Tourism*

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector plays a vital role in the advancement of several economies around the world. This is particularly relevant in developing nations, where tourism fosters social development, economic growth, and poverty reduction through offering employment opportunities and encouraging social inclusion. (UNWTO, 2021). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), before the COVID-19 pandemic, international tourism receipts reached US$1.8 trillion in 2019, representing a 9% increase from the previous years (WTTC, 2019). During the past few decades, researchers recognized how important tourism is to the growth of the economy, and hence, they have thoroughly examined tourism and its different aspects including its effects on the economy, society, culture, and the environment as a research area (Liu et al., 1987; Ramkissoon, 2023; Travis, 1982; J. Wang, Huang, Gong, & Cao, 2020). Scholars found that, as every coin has two sides, similarly the tourism industry has the potential to both positively and negatively impact the

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environment. On the one hand, tourism promotes environmental conservation by supporting conservation efforts, conducting awareness campaigns, promoting sustainable tourism practices(Snyman & Bricker, 2019; Strydom et al., 2019) and cultural resources (Salinas Fernández et al., 2020; Zadeh Bazargani & Kiliç, 2021). On the other hand, extensive tourism and allied activities adversely affect the environment resulting in climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, and pollution (Baloch et al., 2023; Zeng et al., 2021). According to a study by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), tourism leads to the overuse of water resources, particularly in arid regions (UNEP, 2022) and in another study conducted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) it has been found that tourism accounts for around 5% of global greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2018). A study by Kelman (2021) highlights that tourism can lead to the overuse of waste disposal facilities, particularly in small island states. In addition, tourism also contributes to littering and marine pollution, particularly through single-use plastics and other disposable products (Clayton et al., 2021).

As the tourism industry and the environment are closely related, all stakeholders of the tourism industry must understand the value of sustainable tourism practices, which strive to reduce the harmful environmental effects of tourism while enhancing its economic and social gains (Nepal et al., 2019). According to a study by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), consumers increasingly seek sustainable tourism options and are willing to pay a premium for them(GSTC, 2021). Tourism is a complex industry that greatly affects a destination's environment, society, and economy. Thus, environmental sustainability is one of the key dimensions of sustainable tourism which helps in minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment. Sustainable tourism talks about initiatives for the conservation and preservation of natural resources, promotion of eco-friendly tourism activities, sustainable accommodation, support for local conservation efforts, and environmental education. Past studies have also highlighted that prioritizing sustainability over economic profit has gained attention to ensure long-term environmental and social well-being (Chaigneau et al., 2022; Kasim, 2006; Ngan et al., 2019). Sustainability practices lead to long-term economic benefits by promoting innovation, reducing waste and inefficiency, and creating more resilient communities. A study by the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership found that companies focusing on sustainability tended to outperform their peers regarding financial performance, risk management, and stakeholder engagement(CISL, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent times along with sustainability, researchers majorly emphasized on "green tourism" and "rural tourism" particularly in the tourism and hospitality sector (Chan, 2000; Kim et al., 2016).Overall, rural and green tourism serve as alternative tourism practices that promote the sustainability of environmental resources by preserving natural and cultural resources(Aronsson, 1994; Bramwell, 1994; Guaita Martínez et al., 2019). The studies by Law et al. (2016 and 2017) and Pan et al. (2018) present a green economy indicator framework for tourism destinations. Since more tourists are interested in environmentally friendly activities, green marketing strategies have gained importance in the hospitality and tourism sectors. Marketing and green marketing are closely related because both focus on creating customer value and building relationships with them. However, green marketing places a special emphasis on environmental sustainability and social responsibility. Thus, green marketing often targets environmentally conscious consumers interested in sustainable products and services. According to a study by the University of Gdansk, "green marketing is a form of market segmentation that identifies consumers motivated by environmental concerns" (Paço, Shiel, & Alves, 2019). Additionally, green marketing often involves eco-labeling and other certification forms to signal environmental sustainability to customers. The study by (Zhang et al., 2018) highlighted that "green marketing can enhance a company's brand image and reputation, leading to increased customer loyalty and positive word-

of-mouth". Simultaneously, green marketing often uses eco-friendly messaging and imagery to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. Green advertising can effectively reach environmentally conscious consumers and build brand loyalty (Amoako et al., 2022; Khandelwal & Bajpai, 2011). Also, researchers found that tourism firms can utilize green marketing techniques to promote ecologically responsible tourism products and services and can also positively influence the purchasing behavior of tourists towards eco-friendly products. The study found that consumers who were exposed to green marketing messages were more likely to have positive attitudes toward green products and were more likely to purchase them (Mercade Mele et al., 2019; Nik Mahmud et al., 2022). Tourism firms present themselves as pioneers in sustainable tourism by incorporating sustainability into their branding and advertising. It aids in raising awareness and motivates buyers to make wiser choices. Moreover, eco-labels and green certifications let tourists know that a company or location is dedicated to environmental sustainability. A Global Sustainable Tourism Council study found that "most travelers would choose a green-certified hotel over a non-certified one, even if the price were higher" (GSTC, 2019). In another study by (Wei et al., 2018) it has been concluded that advertising increases consumers' willingness to pay a premium for eco-friendly products. The study found that consumers who were exposed to environmental advertising were willing to pay more for eco-friendly products than consumers who were not exposed to such advertising. Thus, past evidence suggests that green marketing tools such as eco-labels (Horne, 2009; Testa et al., 2015), eco-brands (Rahbar et al., 2011), and advertisements (Hussain et al., 2020) significantly contribute to consumers' green purchasing behavior.

In the available literature, it has been established that the green marketing tool positively influences the green purchasing behavior of tourists. However such studies have been majorly conducted in Western countries. The empirical part of such studies has been missed in the Indian context and only a few studies have been found in rural settings. Himachal Pradesh is a rural state, situated in the North Western Himalayan region. Apart from agriculture, the tourism industry contributes significantly to the GSDP of the state. However, excessive dependency on tourism results in the deterioration of the environment. Therefore, stakeholders of tourism industries are now focusing on sustainable tourism practices and are following various green marketing tools to make people aware of sustainable tourism products and services and influence the purchasing behavior of tourists. By doing so, they can not only attract more environmentally conscious tourists but also contribute to the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the region for future generations. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to conduct research in Himachal Pradesh to understand whether green marketing tools influence the purchasing behavior of tourists visiting Himachal Pradesh or not.

Green Marketing Tools

In the 1970s and 1980s, as environmental issues and sustainability consciousness grew, the idea of "green marketing" first emerged which is a part of the broader concept of sustainability(Peattie & Crane, 2005). It includes putting a focus on using environmentally friendly products, cutting carbon emissions, utilizing renewable energy sources, or encouraging eco-friendly manufacturing techniques. Green marketing aims to draw in customers who are interested in environmentally friendly products and to persuade more companies to adopt environmentally friendly methods and techniques. Mukonza & Swarts (2020) defined green marketing as "the development and promotion of products and services that are environmentally friendly or sustainable, or that have a positive impact on the natural environment". In 1975, The American Marketing Association (AMA) defined green marketing as "the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe" (Chaudhary et al., 2011).

In the available literature, it has been found that green marketing tools such as eco-branding, eco-labeling, and eco-advertising significantly influence the green purchasing behavior of tourists and positively impact the

consumers' willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly products (Chen, 2005; Di Martino et al., 2019; Vazifehdoust et al., 2013; Hayat et al., 2022). According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), a brand is defined as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers"(AMA, 2021). Moreover, eco-branding is associated with sustainable practices and products with a lower environmental impact than conventional products(Ch et al., 2021). Hence, eco-branding is a green marketing tool highlighting a brand's environmental attributes and sustainability practices, which can help consumers make more informed purchasing decisions(Chkanikova & Lehner, 2015; Sewwandi & Dinesha, 2022).

Different entities have used eco-labeling to protect the environment, such as the European Union's Eco-Label program, launched in 1992, a voluntary labeling program that identifies products and services with a reduced environmental impact. A study by Sweeney and Soutar (2001) found that eco-labeling effectively increased consumers' perceived environmental benefits and willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products. In India, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has launched an eco-labeling program called the "Indian Eco-label" or "Eco Mark" to promote environmentally sustainable products. The program was introduced in 1991 and covers a range of products, including textiles, paper, food items, and household appliances(BIS, 2023). In short, eco-labeling is a green marketing tool used to identify environmentally sustainable products through voluntary certification programs that assess a product's environmental impact based on specific criteria(Acharya, 2020; Zaman et al., 2010). Hence, eco-labels are intended to provide consumers with information about a product's environmental impact so that they make more green purchasing decisions.Eco-friendly advertising is a green marketing tool that promotes products or services by highlighting their environmental benefits or sustainability practices. Eco-friendly advertisements can include messages about a product's energy efficiency, recyclability, use of renewable resources, or reduction of environmental impact. According to a study by Nielsen, more than half of consumers worldwide (53%) are willing to pay more for products and services from companies committed to making a positive social and environmental impact (Nielsen, 2015). Eco-friendly advertisements can help companies tap into this growing demand for sustainable products and services.Eco-friendly advertisements can help companies tap into this growing demand for sustainable products and services. Another recent survey on eco-friendly advertising conducted by the Global Web Index found that 61% of consumers are likely to buy a product from a company with an eco-friendly reputation(GWI, 2019). A study by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) found that advertisements that promote eco-friendly behavior are more effective when they focus on the benefits to the individual, such as cost savings or health benefits, rather than just the environmental impact (Delmas & Lessem, 2017). Further study by the University of Michigan found that consumers with a strong environmental identity are more likely to engage in eco-friendly behavior, such as green purchasing (Schultz et al., 2004). On the basis of discussion, the following hypothesis has been developed.

Hypothesis

H1: Eco-Branding significantly positively influences the Green Purchasing Behavior of tourists.

H2: Eco-Labeling significantly positively influences the green purchasing behavior of tourists.

Eco-Friendly Advertisement and Purchasing Behavior of Tourists

H3: Eco-Friendly advertisements significantly positively influence green purchasing behavior of tourists.

On the basis of above discussion and hypothesis a research framework given in figure 1 has been suggested for

the present study. The framework conceptualized green marketing tools as three-dimensional constructs, including eco-branding, eco-labelling, and eco-friendly advertising, as independent variables.

The dependent variable for the study is green purchasing behavior of tourists.

Figure 1

Research Framework for the present study
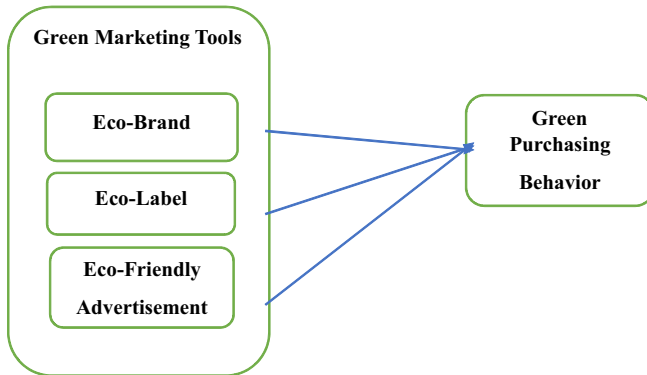
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of the study is to assess the role played by green marketing tools (eco-brand, eco-label, and eco-friendly advertisement) in the green purchasing behavior of tourists visiting various destinations in Himachal Pradesh. The study is very important because it has been conducted in the geographical area of Himachal Pradesh which is a rural and Sub Himalayan State. The study was conducted on the three famous tourist destinations of Himachal Pradesh which were Shimla, Kullu, and Kangra. These destinations have been chosen for the present study because, in these destinations, maximum tourist flow occurs.

For the present study, a cross-sectional and descriptive research design has been adopted. To collect the data for the present study quantitative approach has been used. A standardized questionnaire from the study of Chin et al., (2017)has been adopted in the present study. The questions in the instrument considered mainly three marketing tools which are eco-brand, eco-label, and eco-friendly advertisement, which act as independent variables, and green purchasing behavior of tourists, which is the dependent variable for the present study. The questionnaire was carefully modified and designed in simple structures with unbiased wording. This is to ease the respondents' understanding of them, providing perceptive answers.

The sample size was calculated by using G-Power version 3.1. Based on the power of 0.95 with an effect size of 0.05, the required sample size is 146 to test the model with three predictor variables. Furthermore, Reinartz et al. (2009) proposed a minimum threshold of 100 samples for structural equation modeling via partial least squares (PLS-SEM). To avoid any possible complications arising from a small sample size, this study randomly collected data from 280 tourists of Himachal Pradesh. Out of that, only a sample of 242 was used for the present study.

Data Analysis and Results

To analyze the results of the study, appropriate statistical tools and techniques have been used, explained in subsequent sections.

Demographic Characteristics

To Analyze the demographic profile of the respondents of the study, descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) have been used. The total respondents for the study were 242 tourists. Most of the respondents are female (53.7%). With respect to educational background, most respondents, 107(44.21%), achieved Postgraduate education, while 84 (34.77%) completed their graduation. In terms of the level of income, 69 (28.5%) respondents have income between 1L-25L, and 49 (20.2%) respondents' income is between 25L-50L. In terms of the profession of tourists,the majority of the respondents,131 (54.1%), were students, 66 (27.3%) were in the government service industry,and only 30 (12.4%) tourists were in professional fields. Table 1 depicts the demographic composition of the sample of the study.

Table 1

Demographic Composition of the Sample

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	112	46.3
	Female	130	53.7
Education Qualification	High School	37	15.3
	Diploma	1	0.4
	Graduation	84	34.7
	Post-Graduation	107	44.21
	Other	13	5.37
	1L-25L	69	28.5
	25L-50L	49	20.2
Level of Income	50L-75L	42	17.4
	75L-1cr	39	16.1
	Above 1 crore	43	17.8
	Student	131	54.1
Nature of Profession	Government Service	66	27.3
	Business	3	1.2
	Professional	30	12.4
	Others	12	5.0

Source: SPSS Outcome

To examine the various green marketing tools such as eco-brand, eco-label and eco-advertisement.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics related to Eco-Branding

	Descriptive Statistics			
	Statements	**Sum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
EB.1	I prefer to use eco-brand products in tourism sites.	1001	4.14	.903
EB.2	I can easily differentiate between green and non-green products.	954	3.94	.918
EB.3	I find that eco-branded products are good for environmental sustainability.	1089	4.50	.689
EB.4	I believe eco-brand is more truthful than ordinary brands.	975	4.03	.922
EB.5	I believe that the product with eco-brand are less detrimental impact to the the environment in the tourism sites.	1005	4.15	.803
EB.6	Eco-branded products are more appealing to me.	963	3.98	.862
EB.7	Eco branded products are more reliable than ordinary products	944	3.90	.878

Source: SPSS Outcome

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics related to Eco-Labeling

	Descriptive Statistics			
	Statements	**Sum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
EL.1	I am aware of the "Eco-mark" (certification mark issued by the Bureau of Indian standards to products conforming to a set of standards aimed at the least impact on the ecosystem).	958	3.96	.963
EL.2	I frequently purchase and use Eco-labelled products in tourist sites.	881	3.64	.968
EL.3	The Indian eco-label logo is easily recognizable to me.	911	3.76	1.038
EL.4	I frequently purchase products that are labeled as "environment friendly"	915	3.78	.958
EL.5	Whenever I buy products, I always read the labels.	936	3.87	1.018
EL.6	I believe products with eco-label should be sold in tourist sites.	1038	4.29	.819

Source: SPSS Outcome

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics related to Eco-friendly Advertisement

	Descriptive Statistics			
	Statements	**Sum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
EFA.1	In general, I like environment-friendly advertisements on social media, hoardings and television.	1028	4.25	.749
EFA.2	I consider eco-friendly advertisements on social media, hoardings and television in tourist destinations to be misleading.	787	3.25	1.238
EFA.3	As per my opinion, eco-friendly advertising is essential in tourist sites.	1023	4.23	.821
EFA.4	I believe that print media (newspaper and magazine) advertising to be very essential in tourist sites	946	3.91	.920
EFA.5	I consider print advertising in tourist sites misleading.	757	3.13	.920
EFA.6	I would be influenced to buy the products that are advertised in the environmental friendly advertisements.	952	3.93	1.11
EFA.7	I like those advertisements that contain information about environmentally friendly products.	999	4.13	.732

Reliability and Validity

To measure the variables of the study, there are a total of 26 items in the questionnaire. The first step in the PLS-SEM analysis process is to assess the factor loadings of various items of the instrument. When the factor loading has been applied to the various Items of the instrument, it has been found that there are a few items whose loading values have been less than 0.708, which is the threshold value for the factor loading measure. This demonstrates that the construct explains less than 50% of the variance in the indicator, resulting in inadequate item reliability (Heir et al., 2017). Hence such items have been deleted from the instrument. Finally, 14 items have been left for further analysis purposes. The factor loading values of all the items of the instrument have been presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Factor Loadings of various items of major Variables

Item Code	Factor Loading	Item Code	Factor Loading
EB.1	0.704	EFA.1	0.615
EB.2	0.682	EFA.6	0.753
EB.3	0.747	EFA.7	0.788
EL.2	0.754	GPB.1	0.795
EL.3	0.660	GPB.2	0.746
EL.4	0.773	GPB.3	0.636
EL.5	0.727	GPB.6	0.662

Note: Eco-Brand (EB), Eco-Label (EL), Eco-Friendly Advertisement (EFA), Green Purchasing Behavior (GPB)

After factor loading, the reliability and validity of all items of the scale have been assessed with the help of various measures, and the results have been presented in Table 3. Firstly All Cronbach's alpha values exceed 0.7 thresholds (Nunnally, 1978), indicating that all the items are reliable. Without exception, all composite reliability values exceed 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017), showing a high internal consistency of indicators measuring each item and thus confirming the construct reliability. Moreover, the Dillon–Goldstein rho was used to evaluate the construct reliability. The Dillon-Goldstein rho values for all indicators were more than 0.70, confirming the item's reliability.

As for convergent validity, we examined the average variance extracted (AVE), and its values should be more than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2011). Table 6 shows that HAVE values for all constructs are higher than 0.5, which indicates acceptable convergent validity.

Table 6

Reliability and Validity of the Various Constructs

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	AVE
EB	0.754	0.756	0.755	0.506
EFA	0.758	0.774	0.765	0.523
EL	0.819	0.822	0.819	0.532
GPB	0.801	0.810	0.804	0.508

Note: Eco-Brand (EB), Eco-Label (EL), Eco-Friendly Advertisement (EFA), Green Purchasing Behavior (GPB)

To understand the impact of eco-branding on the green purchasing behavior of tourist

In this objective there are majorly two major variables, one is eco-branding which is an independent variable and the dependent variable is the green purchasing behavior of tourists which is an independent variable. As both the variables are latent constructs they have been measured on a five-point Likert scale. To understand the impact of eco-branding on the green purchasing behavior of tourists, linear regression with the help of SPSS software has been applied.

Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant impact of eco-branding on the green purchasing behavior of tourists.

The hypothesis tests if eco-branding significantly impacts the green purchasing behavior of tourists. The dependent variable purchasing behavior was regressed on predicting variable eco-branding to test hypothesis H1. Eco-branding significantly predicted green purchasing behavior, $F(1, 240) = 176.170$, $p<.001$, which indicates that eco-branding plays a significant role in the green purchasing behavior of tourists ($b=.712$, $p<.001$). These results clearly direct the positive effect of eco-branding on the green purchase behavior of tourists. Moreover, the $R^2 = .423$ depicts that eco-branding explains 42.3 % of the variance in the green purchasing behavior of tourists. Table 10 presents the summary of the findings.

Table7: Summary of Regression Analysis

Hypotheses	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R^2	F	p-value	Result of hypothesis
H1	EB =>CPB	.712	.423	176.170	<.001	Accepted

Source: SPSS Regression results

To study the effect of eco-labelling on the green purchasing behavior of tourist

In this objective there are majorly two major variables, one is eco-labeling which is an independent variable and another variable is the green purchasing behavior of tourists which is an independent variable. As both the variables are latent constructs they have been measured on a five-point Likert scale. To understand the effect of eco-labeling on the green purchasing behavior of tourists, linear regression with the help of SPSS software has been applied.

Hypothesis (H2): There is a significant impact of eco-labeling on the green purchasing behavior of tourists.

The hypothesis tests if eco-labelling significantly impacts the green purchasing behavior of tourists. The dependent variable purchasing behavior was regressed on predicting variable eco-labelling to test hypothesis H2. Eco-labelling significantly predicted green purchasing behavior, $F(1, 240) = 215.514$, $p<.001$, which indicates that eco-labelling plays a significant role in the green purchasing behavior of tourists ($b=.657$, $p<.001$). These results clearly direct the positive effect of eco-labelling on the green purchase behavior of tourists. Moreover, the $R^2 = .473$ depicts that eco-branding explains 47.3 % of the variance in the green purchasing behavior of tourists. Table 11 given below presents the summary of the findings.

Table8: Summary of Regression Analysis

Hypotheses	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R^2	F	p-value	Result of hypothesis
H2	EL=>CPB	.657	.473	215.514	<.001	Accepted

Source: SPSS Regression results

To study the relationship between eco-friendly advertisements and the green purchasing behavior of tourist

In this objective there are majorly two variables, one is eco-friendly advertisement which is an independent variable and another variable is green purchasing behavior of tourists which is an independent variable. As both the variables are latent constructs so they have been measured on a five-point Likert scale. To understand the effect of eco-friendly advertisement on the green purchasing behavior of the tourists, linear regression with the help of SPSS software has been applied.

Hypothesis (H3): There is a significant impact of eco-friendly advertisements on the green purchasing behavior of tourists.

The hypothesis tests if eco-friendly advertisements significantly impact the green purchasing behavior of tourists. The dependent variable purchasing behavior was regressed on predicting variable eco-friendly advertisements to test hypothesis H3. Eco-labelling significantly predicted green purchasing behavior, F (1, 240) = 216.270, p<.001, which indicates that eco-friendly advertisement plays a significant role in the green purchasing behavior of tourists (b=.808, p<.001). These results clearly direct the positive effect of eco-friendly advertisement on the green purchase behavior of tourists. Moreover, the R^2 = .474 depicts that eco-friendly advertisement explains 47.4 % of the variance in the green purchasing behavior of tourists. Table 9 presents the summary of the findings.

Table9: Summary of Regression Analysis

Hypotheses	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R^2	F	p-value	Result of hypothesis
H3	EFA=>CPB	.808	.474	216.270	<.001	Accepted

Source: SPSS Regression results

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the present era, people are more conscious about their environment and hence emphasize more on the usage of green products. These dynamics provide opportunities for marketers that they should now move from traditional marketing styles to green marketing tactics. It has been observed that green marketing strategies have the potential to change customer purchasing behavior towards sustainable products and services (Burhan

et al., 2021). An eco-friendly marketing strategy seeks to satisfy eco-conscious consumers and draw their eco-friendly behavior. Additionally, green marketing is employed to create powerful marketing plans dedicated to eco-friendly consumer behavior (Sharma et al., 2021). Environmental sustainability is one of the topics of constant discussion among different stakeholders of the tourism industry (Grimstad & Burgess, 2014). Economic sustainability is predicted to be primarily influenced by the environmental sustainability of resources. The purpose of the current study was to examine how visitors perceived the effects of the three-dimensional elements of green marketing tools (such as eco-brand, eco-label, and environmental advertisement) on the green purchasing behavior of rural tourism destinations. This study aims to shed light on the reasons behind and mechanisms underlying how green marketing strategies influence green consumer behavior from the perspectives of travelers who have traveled to rural tourist areas. Interestingly, the results of this study revealed that all of the three-dimensional elements of green marketing tools had considerable beneficial effects on green purchasing behavior in rural tourism.

The current study also showed that, in the context of rural tourism, eco-brand is strongly and favorably associated with green purchasing behavior. The results of this study agreed with those of investigations by Rahbar and Wahid (2011), Delafrooz et al. (2014), and Ahmadi, Javadi, and Pakravan (2015). Despite the fact that the idea of rural tourism is linked to natural and environmental resources, some of the items utilized by homestays or other industry participants for tourism activities are not ecologically friendly. It is significant to highlight that the current pattern demonstrates that travelers to rural tourist sites, notably in the instance of Sarawak, were willing to accept eco-branded goods. To put it another way, eco-branded products are affecting how visitors feel about consuming green goods. According to the findings, the majority of visitors who travel to rural tourism areas for vacations are concerned about the environment; thus, industry stakeholders are urged to start reorienting their tourism products and services toward eco-branding. Eco-branded goods are strongly connected with green consumer behavior, which therefore promotes brand loyalty and sustainability (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004).

When using green marketing, green products must inform customers that they are being utilized as ecologically beneficial items. It is done by adding an eco-label label to the goods. The results of this study show that eco-labels and green consumer behavior in rural tourism have a favorable and substantial association. Therefore, having an internationally recognized eco-label authorized is probably going to be a key approach to improving a hotel's reputation for being environmentally friendly and increasing consumers' trust in environmentally friendly goods and services. Additionally, the results of this study confirmed information from other studies (Chekima, 2019; Dekhili&Achabou, 2014), which also showed a favorable correlation between eco-labels and customers' green purchasing behavior. This is because the product information is already on the label (Chekima et al., 2015). Therefore, eco-labels give travelers essential information to distinguish between the types of items and whether they fit into the category of ecologically beneficial or destructive to the environment. In the same vein, Grankvist et al. (2004) discovered that those who have a serious concern for the environment, such as women, graduates, and children, are likely to be influenced by eco-labels in their purchase decisions. Despite the increased cost, eco-labels were viewed by rural visitors as one of the key factors influencing their attitudes toward green shopping practices in rural areas (Loureiro Lotad, 2005). Therefore, it makes sense that travelers are more inclined to buy environmentally friendly goods that have eco-labels.

However, the results also showed a strong link between environmental advertising and rural tourists' propensity for eco-friendly purchases. According to researchers Grillo et al. (2008) and Delafrooz et al. (2014), environmental advertising is crucial in raising consumer awareness of environmental issues and influencing their green purchasing behavior. Visitors to rural tourism sites held the view that environmental advertising contributed to the development of favorable consumer values and attitudes, which in turn influenced

purchasing behavior. One of the first promotional materials to reach visitors before or during their stay is advertising. This can be done via printed advertising methods or any other sort of media. Due to restrictions on the availability of energy, television commercials may not be suitable for some remote tourist areas. However, because of several government programs, some rural tourist locations in Kuching are highly developed and have electrical supplies. According to the research, travelers believe that environmental advertising influences their views toward green purchasing behavior, either before or during their vacation to rural regions.

The study summarized that the three-dimensional elements of green marketing tools viz., eco-brand, eco-label, and environmental advertisement, are significantly and favorably correlated with the green purchasing behavior of tourists visiting rural destinations. Additionally, the current study has validated and shown that there are connections between consumer green purchasing behavior and eco-brand, eco-label, and environmental advertising.

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