



Green tourism: A study of young consumers in Indian Himalayan settings

Dr. Rohit Bhagat¹, Vinay Chauhan²

¹ Assistant Professor, The Business School, Bhaderwah Campus, University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, India

² Professor, The Business School, University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, India

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26648792.2022.v4.i2a.58>

Abstract

The greater importance towards environment across the globe has influenced the business world particularly tourism sector from both demand and supply perspective. The focus is to improve and contribute towards green solutions through offerings. The role of tourist awareness which affects tourist's behaviour has been a major change in recent past towards building a society more favourable towards green tourism. In today's scenario every individual is concerned about the clean and green aspect of the environment, due to which the tourists are also going for destinations favouring sustainable environment. The current study shows that environmental concern backed by green intention strongly influences on moulding the actual tourist behaviour of consumers towards the tourist destination. The widespread and influence of the phenomenon can be seen in almost all tourist activities including business activities wherein one of the biggest challenges is to protect and preserve the earth's resources and the environment for the future generations without comprising on the ability of the present generations to meet their own needs. Clean and green image of the destination along with perceived values favouring environment protection helps in developing a behaviour which focuses on solving the problem of preserving environment for betterment of future. Tourist having knowledge about environment and its deteriorating condition is more concerned in protecting the tourist destination. The degree of present environment crisis becomes more sensitive especially in current ecological settings. The paper tries to examine the factors i.e green image, perceived value and tourist satisfaction affecting revisiting intention of tourists with emphasis on Indian Himalayan region. The Indian subcontinent draws our attention to the fact that it is going to be the third largest consumer economy by 2030, with young consumers constituting the major share in terms of consumption as well as purchasing power parity. The study thus has considered young consumers while formulating framework of green tourism in Indian Himalayan settings.

Keywords: green image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, revisiting intention and green tourism

Introduction

Concern towards environment is an important factor when it comes to provide explanation regarding behaviour of tourists towards eco friendly destinations (Moisander, 2007) ^[18]. Tourists having environmentally favourable behaviour are concerned towards environment. Tourists with environmental friendly behaviour keep aside their personal benefits and are more concerned about the future. Sustainable tourism always tries to benefit society as a whole. Green tourism pattern has made consumers more sensitive in their tourist destination selection behaviour in order to conserve environment. According to Smith & Brower (2012) ^[25] tourist is aware about environmental issues and committed in making environment more sustainable for living. Tourists with stronger concern towards environment are more committed to choose destinations with high environmental favouring claims. Sustainable tourist behaviour is a complex and evolving subject, and simply leads towards providing substantive progress in creating a more sustainable society. As per Sharma & Joshi (2017) ^[24], person's willingness to display a specific behaviour may undertake the cost benefit analysis as consequences of actions undertaken and favourable green image is linked with positive evaluations of actions. Whereas, Sanchez *et al.*, (2006) ^[26] has emphasised that green image strengthens those intentions to perform the behaviour. According to Wang *et al.*, (2016) ^[31] consumer's perceived value towards environmental innovations by the businesses helps the consumer in making a favourable destination selection decisions. Tourists having green image towards environment have risen and more tourists are now willing to choose green tourist destinations. Further it has been found that the number of tourists who never visited eco- friendly tourist destination has decreased drastically and today more consumers are found showing behaviour which favours green tourism. Tourists are found most willing to visit tourist destinations with green attributes and green perceived values (Wang *et al.*, 2018) ^[30]. Positive perceived value towards green tourism acts as a thrust in moulding tourist behaviour towards green tourism. Tourists possessing high satisfaction towards green tourist destinations are found to be a good step in stimulating consciousness towards environment which ultimately leads the tourists to act in an environmental friendly behaviour (Hasan *et al.*, 2020) ^[10]. Tourist's destination selection decision is influenced by many motivational factors when it comes to choosing an eco friendly destination but green image towards environment has been considered to play an important role in understanding the revisiting intention of tourists

regarding green tourist destination (Lee *et al.*, 2010) ^[14]. Consumer's perceived value is very dynamic and difficult to understand, different consumers will tend to possess different perceived value when studied in isolation but when studied towards specific functions it more or less comes to either have positive relations or negative relation. Tourists mostly show positive perceived value when studied in relation to environment and its issues (Gautam, 2020) ^[9]. Wymer & Polonsky (2015) ^[33] has argued that consumer's environmental knowledge acts a trust building ingredient towards green consumption. Satisfaction has been used as an interchangeable term with pro environmental behaviour. Researchers have proved that tourists with more satisfaction have greater tendency to go for green tourism. Environmental issues have linkage to ethical issues of consumers. Tourists often associate pro environmental behaviour as their moral responsibility in making earth a greener and healthier place to live. The tourists with green image not only favour green tourism but also considers actions including saving and maintaining the tourist place in consistence with pro environmental activities (Wang & Zhang, 2020) ^[32]. Ethical consumer in many respects is more similar to green consumers. Ethical consumers like green consumers are characterised by responsible behaviour towards society in which the decision making behaviour is governed by environmental concern (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Zou & Chan, 2019) ^[29, 5]. Tourists possessing values to make environment a better place to live are considered as a significant indicator of tourist's willingness to choose green tourist destinations. Study by Holbrook & Kuwahara (1998) ^[11] shows that satisfaction of the consumer in the society play a very vital role while considering a decision related to selecting a tourism spot. Satisfaction and perceived value are considered as factors which help in arriving at a justification regarding approving or disapproving a revisiting intention related to the destination. Satisfaction of tourists is also considered as the perceived social force in motivating an individual to carry out a particular decision. Satisfaction also acts a source of information when it comes to decision making regarding eco friendly products (Rashid *et al.*, 2022) ^[20]. Perceived value is considered to affect revisiting intention independently and possess a direct relationship with behaviour related to destination selection decision. Perceived values are considered as an important factor influencing beliefs of tourists which plays a vital role in studying environmentally favourable behaviour (Lo & Lee, 2011, Ozturk & Qu, 2008) ^[17, 19]. A tourist's destination selection decision is a very dynamic and perceived value is an important factor while understanding behaviour related to green tourism. Perceived value is the ability of individual to take decision regarding a particular situation which is beyond the control and influence of people (Kato, 2018) ^[13]. Tourists are always governed by their individual thoughts and actions. Individuals use their own knowledge and have faith in their own abilities in choosing, exploring and selecting green destinations. Tourists also tend to select green destinations in order to differentiate themselves from others and make others to choose destinations by seeing those. Perceived values are also having linkage with moral norms (Chang *et al.*, 2014) ^[5]. Perceived values possess morality, an individual who is morally responsible is having a lot of concern towards environment and its day by day deteriorating condition. These types of tourists generally have sympathetic view towards the environment due to which they regularly involve in activities which help in protecting environment. Studies have also shown that tourists with high perceived moral and ethical values choose eco friendly destinations on a more regular basis (Song *et al.*, 2019) ^[27]. Tourists with high perceived moral values pay more importance to environmental factors than their own personal benefits. Tourists with high perceived moral values are the ones who are often found taking voluntary initiatives in conserving natural resources and protecting environment. Tourist's destination selection decision takes into consideration the perceived ability of the tourist (Sato *et al.*, 2018) ^[23]. Perceived value along with green image towards environment backed by knowledge related to environment and its degradation plays an important role in tourist's decision making process. Tourists with favourable intention towards green tourism always look for destinations showing consciousness towards conserving environment and promoting clean and green environment. Tourists having positive intention towards green destinations will visit destinations only if the destination has same capability and supports the view of protecting the nature for future (Tang *et al.*, 2022) ^[28]. Tourists having positive image towards green destinations will only visit the place if the place supports the idea of conserving and protecting environment for future. Tourist is not bothered about the extra advantages available in the destination rather would be more interested in selecting the destination which has basic available facilities along with environmental conservation benefits. According to Ruttty & Richardson (2019) ^[21] revisiting intention towards green destinations is mainly a factor of green image towards environmental conservation which develops green behavioural intention among tourists towards green tourist destination leading the tourists to choose green tourism in future. Individual having green tourist behaviour tend to consider environment as natural habitat in which both nature and individuals have to live in harmony to survive and live a healthy life. Green image consumer is committed in preserving the environment and making the environment conducive for a healthy lifestyle. Tourists consider eco friendly nature as an important part of their personal identity, which is clearly depicted in destination selection behaviour while choosing a tourist destination. Green consumer behaviour is mostly related with their green purchasing habits (Font & McCabe 2017) ^[8]. Tourists with environmentally conscious behaviour are worried about the future outcome due to which they always try to behave in a manner which is beneficial for the society (Lee *et al.*, 2021) ^[16]. Young consumer is found to be more concerned towards environment and is more enthusiastic and motivated towards saving the environment for betterment of the society. These consumers have strong faith in their personal abilities and perceived value with which they can contribute hugely in preserving the nature. Young consumer is mostly having a very strong identity and is found to possess a variable effect on the destination selection decision among the members of

family. It is further found that young consumer generally has a favourable liking towards green tourism and is more often attracted by the green attributes of the tourist destination.

Research Gap

The research tries to narrow down the research gaps of earlier researches and studies the relationship among variables while predicting the Green tourism. Green image tourist is always found conscious towards ecological issues and eager in finding solutions of ecological issues. Earlier researches have shown that psychographic factors play a very important role while predicting green purchasing behaviour (Hong *et al.*, 2003)^[12], but have ignored perceived value and tourist satisfaction to some extent. The study has also taken care of linkage of psychographic variables with other variables while predicting green tourist behaviour. Ecologically conscious tourist behaviour is strongly influenced by the way tourist shows responsibility in selecting and visiting the green tourist destination in future. Eco friendly tourists are found to be ethically and morally correct in their behaviour. The word green is often associated with ecologically conscious tourists and many times these kinds of tourists are called as tourist with green image. Further many authors have interchanged the word green image with pro-social or socially responsible tourists. The current study tries to study all the variables while predicting tourist revisiting intention and their overall effect on green tourism. The study is also important as it taps the young consumers of Indian Himalayan region which have not yet been studied.

Objectives

1. To understand the framework of Green tourism among young consumers.
2. To study the causal relationship of Green Image, Perceived value and Tourist satisfaction on Revisiting Intention.
3. To study the causal relationship of Revisiting Intention on Green Tourism of young Consumers.

Hypotheses

H₁: Green Image, Perceived value and Tourist satisfaction affects Revisiting Intention and their strength of relationship varies significantly.

H₂: Revisiting Intention effect positively while predicting Green Tourism of Young consumers.

Figure 1 below shows the modular framework of green tourism.

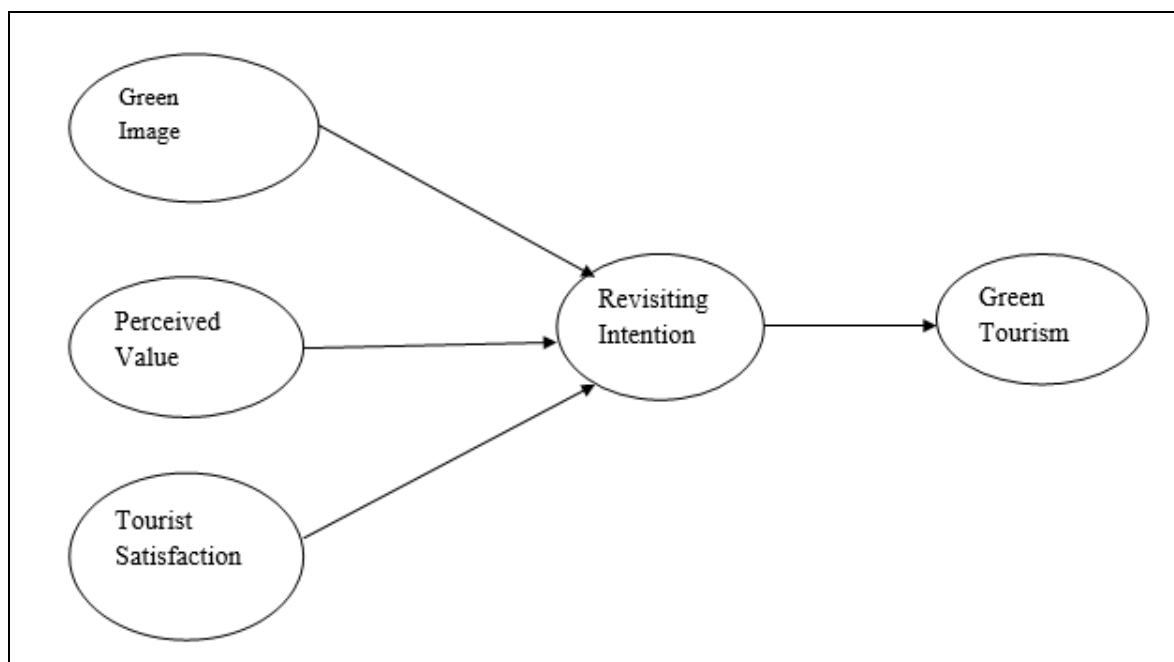


Fig 1: Structural Equation Modeling- Framework of Green Tourism

Methodology

The research study was done by circulation a structured questionnaire among Young Consumers of Himalayan region of India. A total of 1300 questionnaires were circulated among consumers out of which 1036 were found valid. The study employed both primary and secondary data. The questionnaire comprised of both closed and open ended questionnaire. All the closed ended questionnaires were studied by using seven- point likert scale as the measurement tool. The technique administered for collecting samples was simple random sampling. The scales used in the questionnaire were adapted from Lee *et al.*, (2016)^[15], Chen & Peng (2012)^[6], Azam & Sarker (2011)^[3], Anand *et al.*, (2012)^[2] Baker & Ozaki (2008)^[4], Sagnier *et al.*, (2020)^[22], Dunlap & Van Liere (1978)^[7] and Ajzen (1991)^[1] with certain changes that suited the current research.. The data was analysed by using SPSS software.

Data analysis and results

The data collected through questionnaire were first administered to cronbach alpha test to see reliability and validity of scales used in the research. The results from cronbach alpha test calculated were .701 for Green Image, .811 for Perceived Value, .743 for Total Satisfaction, .769 for Revisiting Intention and .802 for Green Tourism, predicting the data used in the research to be reliable and valid.

The study was further administered to study correlation among variables. The correlation value between Green Image and Revisiting Intention came out to be .711, similarly the correlation value between Perceived value and Revisiting Intention came out to be .694, also the correlation between Tourist Satisfaction and Revisiting Intention was calculated to be .632 and the correlation between Revisiting Intention and Green Tourism came out to be .707. The values calculated show that there possess a positive correlation between independent and dependent variables.

Further EFA was applied to data as data reduction and data summarisation technique. The data was reduced to different factors by applying EFA. After applying EFA to data the KMO value comes out is .811 which predicts that the data used in research is appropriate for conducting factor analysis. The results of EFA show that five factors have been extracted from the study which is Green Image, Perceived Value, Tourist satisfaction, Revisiting Intention and Green tourism. The results of variance extracted from EFA comes out to be 64.22% showing 64.22% of variance can be explained from the factors found by applying EFA. After applying EFA the factors were confirmed by applying CFA.

Furthermore the study was administered to regression analysis to study the impact analysis and see the effect of independent variables on dependent variables. The results of regression analysis also show that independent variables (Green Image, Perceived value and Tourist satisfaction) possess a positive and significant effect while predicting the dependent variable (Revisiting Intention). The adjusted R² value calculated through regression analysis came out to be .613 which shows that 61.3% of tourists Revisiting Intention is explained by Green Image, Perceived value and Tourist satisfaction.

Based on the analysis following regression has been formulated to see the effect of Green Image, Perceived value and Tourist satisfaction on Revisiting Intention.

$$RI = 2.917 + .634(GI) + .378 (PV) + .504(TS)$$

Where:

RI = Revisiting Intention

GI = Green Image

PV = Perceived Value

TS = Tourist Satisfaction

The regression analysis was further conducted to see the effect of Revisiting Intention (independent variable) on Green Tourism (dependent variable). The results of regression analysis also show that independent variables (Revisiting intention) possess a positive and significant effect while predicting the dependent variable (Green Tourism). The adjusted R² value calculated through regression analysis came out to be .688 which shows that 68.8% of green tourism is explained by revisiting intention.

Based on the analysis following regression has been formulated to see the effect of Revisiting Intention on Green Tourism.

$$GT = 1.6217 + .702(RI)$$

Where:

RI = Revisiting Intention

GT = Green Tourism

Structural equation modeling

After applying EFA and CFA, the final modular framework has been developed through SEM for Green Tourism. The results of the formulated modular analysis show that the model formulated has been found appropriate and fit with CMIN/DF= 3.172, GFI= .922, AGFI= .954, CFI= .909 and RMSEA= .046. Thus it can be concluded that proposed model of Green Tourism can be used for understanding behaviour of tourists towards selecting green tourist destinations.

Findings of the study

Green tourist behaviour has been described as a vital force for achieving overall sustainable development. The study also gives a methodology of converting positive revisiting intention into favourable tourist behaviour towards green tourism. The study explored different determinants of green tourism, which were later found to be model fit giving a proper mechanism for satisfying customer favouring green tourism. The study shows that tourist with green image tend to choose and revisit the tourist destination with clean and green environment. The study also shown that consumer visiting green tourist destination are found to be more satisfied and shown willingness to again revisit the tourist destination. The study is also helpful in understanding the perceived value

associated with green tourism. The study has been instrumental in filling the gap between different variables of green tourism among young consumers from Himalayan settings of Indian. The research has been useful in understanding behaviour of eco friendly tourists and understanding the methodology to satisfy needs of tourists favouring green image of tourist destination. The study establishes the impact of Green Image, Perceived Value and Tourist satisfaction while forming a Revisiting Intention towards green tourist destinations. Furthermore the study tries to formulate the impact of revisiting intention on young consumers of Himalayan region of India towards green tourist behaviour.

Implication of the study

The research holds a great importance as it tries to narrow down the gap between green tourism and sustainable development. The study also helps in understanding the change in the behaviour related to green tourism. The research also studies the factors *viz.*, Green Image, Perceived value and Tourist satisfaction, playing a crucial role while predicting revisiting intention of tourists towards green tourism. The concern related to environment has increased drastically in the recent times which have made the individuals in particular and society in whole to adopt ways and mechanisms which do not harm or damage the environment. The tourism sector in this regard are finding out ways and mechanism starting from the initial phase which is environment protection to the last phase which is satisfying tourists to support environment conservation. The stakeholders of tourism sector in order to generate awareness among tourists should not only spread the information but also have certain tangibles cues like green labels, star rating's, energy efficient parameters etc. so that tourists generate faith in the tourist destination that it is actually eco- friendly which will further strengthen their destination selection favouring green tourism. Furthermore the study shows that young tourists are more concerned towards environment which is due to their awareness regarding the environment, green image and perceived value of benefits associated with clean and green tourist destinations. So the stakeholders in order to cater to the needs of young tourists should initially focus on informing and making aware the young tourists regarding green tourism, its features especially those features which support protecting environment for future generations.

References

1. Ajzen I. The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*,1991:50(2):179-211.
2. Anand A, Chandan P, Singh RB. Homestays at Korzok: Supplementing rural livelihoods and supporting green tourism in the Indian Himalayas. *Mountain Research and Development*,2012:32(2):126-136.
3. Azam M, Sarker T. Green tourism in the context of climate change towards sustainable economic development in the South Asian Region. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*,2011:2(3):06-15.
4. Baker J, Ozaki R. Pro-environmental products: marketing influence on consumer purchase decision. *Journal of consumer marketing*,2008:25(5):281-293.
5. Chang LL, Backman KF, Huang YC. Creative tourism: a preliminary examination of creative tourists' motivation, experience, perceived value and revisit intention. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*,2014:8(4):401-419.
6. Chen A, Peng N. Green hotel knowledge and tourists' staying behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research*,2012:39(4):2211-2219.
7. Dunlap RE, Van Liere KD. The "new environmental paradigm". *The journal of environmental education*,1978:9(4):10-19.
8. Font X, McCabe S. Sustainability and marketing in tourism: Its contexts, paradoxes, approaches, challenges and potential. *Journal of sustainable tourism*,2017:25(7):869-883.
9. Gautam V. Examining environmental friendly behaviors of tourists towards sustainable development. *Journal of Environmental Management*,2020:276:111-292.
10. Hasan K, Abdullah SK, Islam F, Neela NM. An integrated model for examining tourists' revisit intention to beach tourism destinations. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*,2020:21(6):716-737.
11. Holbrook MB, Kuwahara T. Collective stereographic photo essays: an integrated approach to probing consumption experiences in depth. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*,1998:15(3):201-221.
12. Hong SK, Kim SI, Kim JH. Implications of potential green tourism development. *Annals of Tourism Research*,2003:30(2):323-341.
13. Kato K. Debating sustainability in tourism development: Resilience, traditional knowledge and community: A post-disaster perspective. *Tourism Planning & Development*,2018:15(1):55-67.
14. Lee JS, Hsu LT, Han H, Kim Y. Understanding how consumers view green hotels: how a hotel's green image can influence behavioural intentions. *Journal of sustainable tourism*,2010:18(7):901-914.
15. Lee S, Honda HC, Ren G, Lo Y. The implementation of green tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 2016, 5(4).
16. Lee CK, Olya H, Ahmad MS, Kim KH, Oh MJ. Sustainable intelligence, destination social responsibility, and pro-environmental behaviour of visitors: Evidence from an eco-tourism site. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*,2021:47:365-376.
17. Lo AS, Lee CY. Motivations and perceived value of volunteer tourists from Hong Kong. *Tourism management*,2011:32(2):326-334.

18. Moisander J. Motivational complexity of green consumerism. *International journal of consumer studies*,2007:31(4):404-409.
19. Ozturk AB, Qu H. The impact of destination images on tourists' perceived value, expectations, and loyalty. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*,2008:9(4):275-297.
20. Rashid RM, Askari M, Laila A. Role of Uncertainty as a Moderator on Consumers' Purchase Intentions Towards Organic Food: A Comparative Study. *Journal of Marketing Strategies*,2022:4(1):100-119.
21. Ruttly M, Richardson RB. Tourism research in Cuba: Gaps in knowledge and challenges for sustainable tourism. *Sustainability*,2019:11(12):3340.
22. Sagnier C, Loup-Escande E, Lourdeaux D, Thouvenin I, Valléry G. User acceptance of virtual reality: an extended technology acceptance model. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*,2020:36(11):993-1007.
23. Sato S, Gipson C, Todd S, Harada M. The relationship between sport tourists' perceived value and destination loyalty: an experience-use history segmentation approach. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*,2018:22(2):173-186.
24. Sharma A, Joshi S. Green consumerism: overview and further research directions. *International Journal of Process Management and Benchmarking*,2017:7(2):206-223.
25. Smith KT, Brower TR. Longitudinal study of green marketing strategies that influence Millennials. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*,2012:20(6):535-551.
26. Sanchez J, Callarisa L, Rodriguez RM, Moliner MA. Perceived value of the purchase of a tourism product. *Tourism management*,2006:27(3):394-409.
27. Song Y, Qin Z, Yuan Q. The impact of eco-label on the young Chinese generation: The mediation role of environmental awareness and product attributes in green purchase. *Sustainability*,2019:11(4):973.
28. Tang C, Han Y, Ng P. Green consumption intention and behavior of tourists in urban and rural destinations. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 2022, 1-25.
29. Vermeir I, Verbeke W. Sustainable food consumption: Exploring the consumer "attitude-behavioral intention" gap. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental ethics*,2006:19(2):169-194.
30. Wang J, Wang S, Xue H, Wang Y, Li J. Green image and consumers' word-of-mouth intention in the green hotel industry: The moderating effect of Millennials. *Journal of cleaner production*,2018:181:426-436.
31. Wang SH, Lee MT, Château PA, Chang YC. Performance indicator framework for evaluation of sustainable tourism in the Taiwan coastal zone. *Sustainability*,2016:8(7):652.
32. Wang X, Zhang C. Contingent effects of social norms on tourists' pro-environmental behaviours: The role of Chinese traditionality. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*,2020:28(10):1646-1664.
33. Wymer W, Polonsky MJ. The limitations and potentialities of green marketing. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*,2015:27(3):239-262.
34. Zou LW, Chan RY. Why and when do consumers perform green behaviors? An examination of regulatory focus and ethical ideology. *Journal of Business Research*,2019:94:113-127.