



Effective communication strategies in tourists' pro-environmental behavioral intention: A moderated mediation model

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Effective communication strategies in tourists' pro-environmental behavioral intention: A moderated mediation model

Message framing is an effective way in encouraging consumer behavior (Kim et al., 2017). It has been studied extensively in communication, health, and environment fields. In the tourism and hospitality field, existing literature has explored the role of message framing in environmental behavior in hotels (Grazzini et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2017), carbon offsetting behaviors (Chi et al., 2021), food waste (Huang et al., 2021), destination image formation (Zhang et al., 2018), little research pays attention to message framing strategies in tourists' pro-environmental behavioral intention. Furthermore, there are asymmetrical effects in different message frames (gain vs. loss) and message appeals (rational vs. emotional) (Albers-Miller & Royne, 1999; Lee & Oh, 2014). The results of the role of message framing in sustainable tourism is mixed depending on the target actions (Chang & Wu, 2015) the research context (Dolnicar et al., 2017). Drawing on the construal level theory, the social distance of the message influence the perception of the same message (Trope & Liberman, 2010). However, these message components have been examined separately. The existing literatures about message were within a certain framework (e.g., loss frames vs. gain frames; moderate fear appeals vs. low fear appeals) rather than explored interactions across different message components (Keller & Lehmann, 2008). Thus, this research focus on the interaction between social distance and message frame as well as the interaction between social distance and message appeal. Another research gap is method related. Previous studies examined the absolute level of behavior intention, which is hard to examine the effectiveness of message framing and indicates the casual relationship between message framing and behavior intention because the time order of the cause and effect is blurred (Shadish et al., 2002).

This research examines the change of tourists' pro-environmental behavioral intention to provide strong evidence to effectiveness of message framing and the casual relationship between the message framing and the change of behavior intention. Additionally, we examine the mediating mechanism and boundary conditions of the main effect by looking into the role of perceived effort worthiness and green involvement. Therefore, this study conducted two experiments to test the casual relationship between the message framing strategies and changes in pro-environmental behavioral intention and proposed a moderated mediation model to examine the underlying mechanism and boundary condition behind the main effect. More specifically, this research investigated the interactive effects of message frame and social distance as well as the interactive effects of message appeal and social distance, and how they lead to varied changes in pro-environmental behavioral intentions. This study advanced the knowledge of message framing strategies in pro-environmental behavior in tourism.

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