

# Sustainable hospitality and tourism at different ages: Women's and men's attitudes in Italy

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Future tourism experiences will be more oriented towards eco-friendly destinations and dictated by responsible lifestyles, as shown by the Travel Trends Report and UNWTO report. Many studies confirm that the number of travellers looking for accommodation that ensures greater respect for the environment is constantly growing. The implications in terms of sustainable tourism are remarkable since they suppose a growing awareness of the impact of individual choices on global effects. The preferences for sustainable tourism are only partially explained by pro-environmental attitudes and values. To more fully explain sustainable tourism choices a reference is needed for additional motivational factors (Maeran 2009). Some studies show that women harbour higher environmental attitudes than men, in general and in relation to hospitality in particular. Other studies are more cautious. Gender, though, is a significant variable in this field, even if there are few studies on this aspect. This research focuses on Italy and investigates the gender orientation regarding sustainability and its influence on choices for eco-friendly hospitality, attitudes towards the environment (Bjerke and Kaltenborn 1999), the social dominance orientation (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999) and the propensity to act responsibly (Berkowitz and Daniels 1964). The results show that males are less apathetic towards the environment than females and that in Italy the link between being a citizen and environmental awareness has yet to be built.

**Keywords:** environmental attitudes, social dominance orientation, responsibility, young people, adults, gender

## Introduction

Sustainable hospitality and tourism is gaining recognition as a domain of tourism and recent research suggests that sustainable hospitality is one of the most relevant topics of our time (Meek & Sullivan, 2012). The area of tourism is particularly suitable to stress the need for an integrated approach to the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. The tourism industry represents a huge economic force and its environmental and social impacts are relevant and have been well documented (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy, 2013; Ivanov & Webster, 2013; Antonakakis, Dragouni & Filis, 2015). As stressed by many international actors, all beneficiaries of tourism development should responsibly safeguard the environment and natural resources, with the prospect of healthy economic growth, continuous and tenable, so as to meet equitably the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

In addition, integrating gender and age perspectives into the discussion of tourism sustainability is particularly important as the tourism industry is a major employer of women, offers various opportunities for independent income generating activities, and, at the same time, affects women's choices as users of touristic resources (Stevens, 2010; Meek & Sullivan, 2012).

This paper describes the existing gap in research on gender aspects in tourism studies, especially related to hospitality and sustainability. It also points to the main background theories that can be used to improve this kind of research. Then, using data from 374 Italian emerging adults and adults, the study assesses the impact of specific social and individual factors,

including gender orientation, on attitudes toward sustainable hospitality and the environment, on the dominant orientation and on the propensity for responsibility. The survey on which this pilot study is based was conducted between 10 January 2015 and 30 June 2015.

## Literature review

The aim of this introductory review is to show if and how the concepts of sustainable tourism and gender issues are discussed in the framework of hospitality from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Tourism is an economic activity that may be interpreted as a relationship among men and women in their social roles (gendered societies) because "all aspects of tourism-related development and activity embody gender relations" (Kinnaird & Hall, 1994, p. 5). Although it is commonly believed that in our time the differences between the travel patterns of men and women are much less pronounced than in previous centuries, gender differences related to travel and tourism still remain substantial (Collins & Tisdell, 2002). Gender norms are a key for sustainable development: not only do they influence people's worldviews and direct their behaviours, they also shape the organisational structures of societies and contribute to unjustifiable hierarchies and exploitation of resources all over the world (UNWTO/UN Women, 2011; Franz-Balsen, 2014).

Gender is a significant variable also in the field of sustainable tourism and hospitality, even if there are few researches on this aspect. The existing ones show a greater attitude towards sustainable activities by women, both in managing hospitality

and in promoting good practices (Meera, 2014). In Italy, for example, women entrepreneurs who are eco-friendly oriented constitute a growing phenomenon. Women seem to be particularly apt for tourism: they occupy the majority of jobs in institutions for tourism and carry on activities in contact with the public in hotels and farm holidays (Goffi et al., 2014). Shedding light on the importance of their role in this area, however, is far from simple: the data on women who work in tourism around the world are difficult to interpret because they often work on temporary jobs.

As Ferguson and Alarcon (2014) underline, the range and breadth of research on gender and tourism is impressive. However, despite the clear contributions of previous research to debates around sustainable tourism, such work had relatively little impact on the field, both academically and policy-wise. We suggest that there are two key reasons that explain this low impact. First, we argue that the sustainable tourism paradigm is still developing and constantly evolving. This constant evolution of the concept renders it difficult to connect the gender perspective to the sustainable tourism debate. Second, where attempts have been made to address gender inequality from a sustainable tourism perspective – as set out below – such integration has been partial at best.

Kinnaird and Hall (1994) provided one of the first published contributions to the topic of gender in the tourism field, and they defined the subject of gender from a tourism development perspective. They focused on tourism development processes as significant drivers of social change and as embodiments of social practices. Three critical issues are emphasised in their conceptual framework for understanding gender in tourism (Kinnaird & Hall, 1994). First, tourism-related activities and processes were constructed from gendered societies, ordered by gender relations. Second, gender relations were and are informed by economic, social, cultural, political and environmental aspects of societies. Third, in tourism practices, gender relations were discussed and intertwined with power, control and equality issues, as a consequence of the growing importance of equality and gender mainstreaming in most countries. Gendered belonging and experiences shape tourist motivations, perceptions, tourism marketing and destination hosts' actions (Swain, 1995). More recent literature has examined the issue of gender in tourism behaviour from varied perspectives such as life cycle travel patterns and travellers' purpose. The conclusion of this more recent research is that gender aspects are relevant in tourism activities and expectations because they embedded all the practices and orientations of people as men and women.

Although a number of studies discussed gender differences in tourism, many focused on aspects of tourism development, and only a few examined issues related to perceptions and attitudes (Harvey et al., 1995). Only recently have some authors started to explore the issue regarding gender differences and how gender moderates environmental attitudes in general and more in particular from the point of view of sustainable development in tourism (Dietz & Kalof, 2002; Stevens, 2010). Therefore, past research leaves a gap in our understanding of environmental sustainability attitudes and the impact of gender on sustainable tourism choices.

Even scarcer in the literature is research into sustainability and hospitality taking a gender perspective (Meng & Uysal, 2008). In the context of environmental and sustainability

research, the term "eco-feminism" is sometimes falsely used to represent any gender perspective on environmental issues. Such a simplification ignores the very special history and the multitude of streams of eco-feminism, ranging from women's projects in countries of the global South – which were typical of the early years of eco-feminism – to a number of distinct academic and even philosophical debates that took place from the 1990s onwards on various continents (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1993; Mellor, 1997; Warren, 2000).

It may therefore be concluded that research on sustainable hospitality and the gender dimension of sustainability is limited. However, understanding the contribution of gender norms on enhancing or inhibiting sustainable development is crucial also to develop well-targeted ways to communicate visions of sustainable ways of life (Franz-Balsen, 2014).

A similar consideration may be done for research on socio-psychological motives to travel. Although extensive studies have examined socio-psychological motives, researchers are just beginning to explore the differences in tourism motivations between genders (Norris & Wall, 1994). Moreover, when looking at the impact of gender on motivations, scholars have left almost unexplored the impact of gender on the perceived importance of destination attributes, on the motivations to travel and on the values of travel from the point of view of sustainable tourism and sustainable hospitality. In an effort to close the gap, the present paper addresses these particular issues and further investigates the influence of the interaction of gender with demographic, personal and social variables on sustainable attitude and pro-environment behaviour.

### **Responsibility, social dominance and environmental attitudes**

The relationship between social responsibility, values, environmental attitudes, authoritarianism and social dominance has been the focus of several studies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Thompson & Barton, 1994; Bjerke & Kaltenborn, 1999). Since these classical studies on obedience and destructive authoritarianism, recent analyses detect the centrality of accountability in the relationship between the individual and society (Passini & Morselli, 2006).

The study done by Passini and Morselli shows that when people feel responsible only for a generic concept of justice, unconnected to everyday life situations, they tend to have a more authoritarian attitude and to attach greater importance to materialistic values. Participants who feel responsible for everyday interpersonal interactions, however, are not only less authoritarian, but also give more importance to egalitarian values. On the other hand, in literature, a people-oriented approach encourages environmentally responsible behaviour (Kaplan, 2000). This type of responsibility does not only correlate positively to the respect toward others, but also correlates negatively to the materialistic, authoritarian and dominance orientation as it is described by the social dominance theory.

Social dominance theory argues that societies with a stable economic surplus show a common attitudinal orientation toward intergroup relations and choices, reflecting whether one generally prefers such relations to be equal or hierarchical, that is, ordered along a superior-inferior line (Pratto, Sidanius &

Levin, 2006). Social dominance theory understands individuals within their larger socio-structural, cultural, and institutional contexts, allowing that within a given context, individuals can systematically differ from one another and have agency, meaning the ability to act, in affecting hierarchical outcomes (among social groups).

*Social dominance theory argues that societies producing stable economic surplus contain three qualitatively distinct systems of group-based hierarchy: (1) an age system, in which adults have disproportionate social power over children; (2) a gender system, in which men have disproportionate social, political, and military power compared to women; and (3) an arbitrary-set system, in which groups constructed on arbitrary bases, that is, on bases not linked to the human life-cycle, have differential access to things of positive and negative social value. Arbitrary-set groups may be defined by social distinctions meaningfully related to power, such as (in various contexts) nationality, race, ethnicity, class, estate, descent, religion, or clan (Pratto et al., 2006, p. 273).*

Social dominance theory helps us to draw attention to the need for a balance between economic and cultural choices related to sustainable tourism. Its actual penetration into strategies and policies has resulted in many good practices and improvements that seem to reduce the desire to dominate other groups while enhancing empathy, altruism, and communality with others so to mitigate social dominance attitudes. In particular, in the tourism field, social dominance theory is important for understanding the sex-tourist motivation. Considering the three hierarchies described above, the power disparity between adult and child, preconceptions about race and gender roles influence the sex-tourist's opinions and motivation. Economically underdeveloped tourist-receiving countries are considered culturally different so that (in the Western sex-tourist's understanding) prostitution and traditional male domination of women have less stigma than similar practices might have in their home countries. However, despite a great deal of interest in sexual tourism amongst theorists, methodologically thorough and detailed studies remain rare.

Finally, as Milfont et al. (2013) showed, if individuals adopt a social dominance orientation, they are more willing to exploit the environment and dismiss the importance of sustainability. A social dominance orientation encourages people to espouse ideologies that justify the existing hierarchies. Consequently, when people adopt this orientation, they may espouse beliefs that substantiate the dominance of humans over nature. That is, they approve the notion that humans are granted the right to utilise nature and other species to achieve their objectives.

In one study, with a sample from New Zealand, the social dominance orientation was negatively associated with the values attached to the preservation of nature. A second study (Fischer, Hanke & Sibley, 2012) examined whether countries in which social dominance orientation is high are less likely to support policies that preserve the environment. Five key indices were constructed, each of which assesses the degree to which various nations support policies that preserve the environment. One index, for example, was constructed by experts and gauges policies that relate to the environment, such as water,

pollution, biodiversity, fisheries, forestry, and climate change. Another index represents the average response to questions that assess attitudes to the environment, such as "Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs". As predicted, social dominance orientation was negatively associated with the degree to which the nation supports policies that preserve the environment. So, the personality oriented to social dominance, as in our research, would be less respectful of nature and less oriented to sustainable tourism choices.

In synthesis, anyway, there is a gap in research on gender aspects in tourism studies, especially related to hospitality and sustainability.

### **Aim of the present study**

The main purpose of the present study is to examine the influence of the gender identity on expectation, motivation and choice for eco-friendly (sustainable) hospitality. Therefore it compares gender and age differences with factors such as attitudes toward the environment, dominance orientation and responsibility propensity. Then, using a regression model, the study tests whether gender and age influence environmental attitudes, social dominance orientation and social responsibility and the propensity to spend more for sustainable hospitality.

### **Method**

This section consists of two subsections:

1. "Participants", where there is a brief description of the sample of the study
2. "Measures"; this section describes the tests or instruments used to collect data.

#### **Participants**

The sample consisted of 374 Italian emerging adults and adults (48% men and 52% women), aged between 18 and 74 years (mean age = 36.3 years; SD = 15.4). Comfrey and Lee (1992) considered 300 cases a good sample size, so for an explorative study, we consider our sample appropriate. The participants' educational levels were: 1% primary school, 9% lower secondary school, 48% upper secondary school, 41% university, 1% postgraduate. The current job situation was: 40% university students, 49% employed, 11% unemployed/retired. The marital status was: 51% never married, 32% married, 8% living together with partner, 7% divorced or separated (36% with children, 64% without children. Relative to the total: 3% of those born between 1941 and 1950 have children, 2.4% no children; 17.6% of those born between 1951 and 1970 have children, 6.5% no children; 7.6% of those born between 1971 and 1980 have children, 3.5% no children; 7.3% of those born between 1981 and 1997 have children, 53% no children).

Participants were informed about the study and asked if they wished to participate. Approximately 99% of the sample approached chose to participate. Researchers contacted the sample at home and in university classrooms and asked participants to fill out the anonymous questionnaire packet.

### Measures

All participants completed a first section constituted by socio-demographic items (gender, age, educational level, job situation, marital status, yes/no children) and 13 items about motivations/expectations and sustainable hospitality (e.g. "The temporary accommodation or lodging is managed by a family"; "The accommodation promotes local products"; "Would you be willing to spend more to be in an eco-friendly accommodation?"). To develop these items we considered those topics that were present in surveys and reports of two major national Italian institutes of research: ISTAT and IPR Marketing (from 2012 to 2014). In a second section we employed the following validated scales.

#### *Attitudes toward the environment*

We employed the short version with 25 items developed by Bjerke and Klatenborn (1999) from the Thompson and Barton (1994) scale. The Bjerke and Kaltenborn scale include ten ecocentric items (interest in the ecological values of the nature and its relationship to the environment), ten anthropocentric items (interest in the utilisation of the environment or subordination of the habitat for the practical benefit of humans) and five environmental apathy items (indifference toward other species and the environment). The response options were from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale was translated from English to Italian by a bilingual psychologist. Sample items include: "One of the worst things about overpopulation is that natural areas are getting destroyed for development" (ecocentric); "One of the most important reasons to keep rivers and lakes clean is so that people can have a place to enjoy water sports" (anthropocentric); "It seems to me that most conservationists are pessimistic and somewhat paranoid" (apathy). The reliability of the subscale, in terms of Cronbach's alphas, was found to be adequate with values of 0.74 (ecocentric), 0.65 (anthropocentric) and 0.62 (apathy).

#### *Social dominance orientation*

As social dominance theory has focused mainly on intergroup relations within stable societies, it has yet to address power relations between societies, between groups belonging to different societies, or the dynamics of newly emerging power hierarchies in transitional societies. Social dominance orientation is usually measured by the 16-item SDO version 6 Scale (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Pratto et al., 2006). This scale consists of items such as: "Superior groups should dominate inferior groups" or "Inferior groups should stay in their place" with a response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree/disapprove) to 7 (strongly agree/favour). The original explorations of the psychometric properties of the SDO scales have shown them to have high levels of internal and cross-time reliability, construct validity and discriminant validity. The unidimensionality of the scale, the Italian version of which was validated from Di Stefano and Roccato (2005), was good, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89.

#### *Responsibility*

This construct was measured using the Italian short version of the Social Responsibility Scale (Harris, 1957; Berkowitz & Daniels, 1964) validated by Passini and Morselli (2006). The SRS consists of 8 items scored on a seven-point scale, ranging

from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Specifically, 4 items measure "civic responsibility" and 4 items measure "interpersonal responsibility". The first factor identifies the responsibility of an individual towards the community with particular reference to the institutions; specifically, it identifies the responsibilities of a good citizen, who feels responsible for the community. This type of liability, mediated by an ideal of justice and directed primarily towards the institutions, has been called civic responsibility. The second factor highlights accountability in situations of direct relationship with other people (friends, work group, etc.). Responsibility exhibited in concrete actions in a predictable manner has been called interpersonal responsibility. The two components therefore reproduce the division, we find in the original scale of Harris (1957). Passini and Morselli (2006) included items with an impersonal reference and items with a personal reference. Items related to interpersonal responsibility directly involve the subject, while those of civic responsibility are for a generic person, detached from everyday reality. Sample items include: "Why bother to vote because your vote counts so little?" (civic responsibility); "I am a person on whom others can rely" (interpersonal responsibility). Respectively Cronbach's alphas were 0.62 and 0.60.

### Results

This section presents the results of the data analyses in details. Data have been analysed using analysis of variance and logistic regression. Results will therefore be presented in this order.

#### *Analysis of variance*

The first aim of this study was to analyse the impact of gender and age on respondents' motivations and expectations about sustainable hospitality. In our analyses we examined sex differences within age cohorts (i.e., young males versus young females – 19% of the whole sample were males born after 1986 and 30% were females – versus adult males versus adult females – 29% of the whole sample were males born before 1985 and 22% were females). Differences about motivations and expectations in these four sub-groups were analysed with a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The results of these analyses appear in Table 1.

Table 1 suggests that young people (males and females) are more motivated than their adult counterparts to choose sustainable accommodation if the location is easily accessible with public transportation and if the location has few tourists. On the other hand, adult males and females are more motivated than young people if the temporary accommodation or lodging is managed by a family, if the natural environment of the chosen location is intact and protected or if the programme allows one to visit the place even during low season.

In general, the means show that the factors that influence the most the motivation to choose sustainable hospitality are if one can easily move about on foot or with a bicycle at the chosen location, if the accommodation is concerned with reducing energy consumption and pollution, if the accommodation promotes local products, if the accommodation promotes direct contact with nature and, finally, if the accommodation promotes direct contact with the local people and their culture. The results show that it is of little importance whether the accommodation is certified as

environmentally friendly. In these last six items (“in the chosen location, one can easily move about on foot or with a bicycle”; “the accommodation is concerned about reducing energy consumption and pollution”; “the accommodation promotes local products”; “the accommodation promotes direct contact with the local people and their culture”; “the accommodation promotes direct contact with nature”; “the temporary accommodation or lodging is certified as environmentally friendly”) we did not find a significant difference between age and gender in all four subgroups.

Relating to the item “Would you be willing to spend more to be in a eco-friendly accommodation?” the results suggest that adult females and males were more motivated to spend more for sustainable hospitality compared to young males and females. Descriptive statistics for these mean-level comparisons are displayed in Table 2.

We then looked at gender and age differences across attitudes toward the environment (see Table 3).

Participants showed good levels of eco-centrism and low levels of environmental apathy. Adult males and females emerged, in a statistically significant manner, as more eco-centric compared to young people.

As a final mean-level analysis, we compared the magnitude of gender and age differences across attitudes toward the social dominance orientation and toward social responsibility (see Table 4).

In general participants scored low on the social dominance orientation. Young and adult males were more dominant than females. Levels of civic and interpersonal responsibility were high. Adult males and females showed more civic and interpersonal responsibility compared to their younger counterparts.

**Table 1:** Mean levels (std. deviation) of motivations/expectations in the four subgroups

	Subgroups				F (4.374)	η <sup>2</sup>
	Young males	Young females	Adult males	Adult females		
The location is easily accessible with public transportation.	3.69 <sup>ab</sup> (1.06)	3.76 <sup>b</sup> (1.16)	3.19 <sup>a</sup> (1.44)	3.49 <sup>ab</sup> (1.14)	3.88**	0.03
In the chosen location, one can easily move about on foot or with a bicycle.	4.00 (0.93)	3.99 (0.91)	3.70 (1.37)	4.07 (1.06)	2.01	0.02
The temporary accommodation or lodging is certified as environmentally friendly.	2.61 (1.17)	2.73 (1.20)	2.53 (1.43)	2.63 (1.18)	2.41	0.02
The temporary accommodation or lodging is managed by a family.	2.30 <sup>a</sup> (1.10)	2.44 <sup>ab</sup> (1.14)	2.85 <sup>bc</sup> (1.21)	3.12 <sup>c</sup> (1.30)	7.39***	0.06
The natural environment of the chosen location is intact and protected.	3.30 <sup>ab</sup> (1.13)	3.14 <sup>a</sup> (1.09)	3.70 <sup>b</sup> (1.27)	3.61 <sup>ab</sup> (1.14)	4.38**	0.04
The accommodation is concerned about reducing energy consumption and pollution.	4.15 (0.87)	4.02 (1.03)	4.26 (0.72)	4.03 (0.91)	1.51	0.01
The accommodation promotes local products.	4.00 (0.93)	4.13 (0.91)	4.10 (0.87)	4.27 (0.71)	1.16	0.01
The accommodation promotes direct contact with the local people and their culture.	3.69 (1.01)	3.77 (0.99)	3.65 (1.07)	4.01 (1.13)	1.90	0.02
The accommodation promotes direct contact with nature	4.11 (0.91)	4.14 (0.89)	4.25 (0.96)	4.34 (0.73)	1.00	0.01
The accommodation seeks to minimise any inconvenience to its patrons.	2.74 (1.11)	2.64 (1.08)	2.95 (1.14)	2.69 (1.20)	1.38	0.01
The location has few tourists.	2.34 <sup>a</sup> (1.15)	2.31 <sup>a</sup> (1.09)	3.06 <sup>b</sup> (1.39)	2.57 <sup>ab</sup> (1.25)	7.16***	0.06
The programme allows one to visit the place even during low season.	2.21 <sup>a</sup> (1.05)	2.41 <sup>ab</sup> (1.11)	2.95 <sup>c</sup> (1.23)	2.84 <sup>bc</sup> (1.37)	6.54***	0.06

Note: abc (as referred to in the text) Tukey test \**p* < 0.05; \*\**p* < 0.01; \*\*\**p* < 0.001; Likert scale 1–5

**Table 2:** Mean levels (std. deviation) of motivation to spend more in the four subgroups

	Subgroups				F (4.374)	η <sup>2</sup>
	Young males	Young females	Adult males	Adult females		
Would you be willing to spend more to be in a eco-friendly accommodation?	4.26 <sup>a</sup> (1.54)	3.99 <sup>a</sup> (1.61)	4.82 <sup>b</sup> (1.53)	4.82 <sup>b</sup> (1.69)	5.89***	0.05

Note: abc (as referred to in the text) Tukey test \**p* < 0.05; \*\**p* < 0.01; \*\*\**p* < 0.001; Likert scale 1–7

**Table 3:** Mean levels (std. deviation) of environment attitudes in the four subgroups

	Subgroups				F (4.374)	$\eta^2$
	Young males	Young females	Adult males	Adult females		
Ecocentrism	3.55 <sup>a</sup> (0.56)	3.59 <sup>a</sup> (0.68)	3.93 <sup>b</sup> (0.51)	3.77 <sup>b</sup> (0.63)	7.83***	0.06
Anthropocentrism	2.78 (0.47)	2.87 (0.54)	2.91 (0.64)	2.82 (0.67)	0.79	0.01
Environmental apathy	2.18 (0.59)	2.1 (0.71)	2.00 (0.63)	2.13 (0.75)	1.21	0.01

Note: abc (as referred to in the text) Tukey test \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; Likert scale 1–5

**Table 4:** Mean levels (std. deviation) of environment attitudes in the four subgroups

	Subgroups				F (4.374)	$\eta^2$
	Young males	Young females	Adult males	Adult females		
Social dominance orientation	2.64 <sup>b</sup> (1.03)	2.10 <sup>a</sup> (0.83)	2.19 <sup>b</sup> (0.68)	2.06 <sup>a</sup> (1.18)	6.26***	0.05
Civic responsibility	4.40 <sup>a</sup> (1.59)	4.00 <sup>a</sup> (1.53)	5.25 <sup>b</sup> (1.08)	5.38 <sup>b</sup> (1.10)	24.21***	0.17
Interpersonal responsibility	5.08 <sup>a</sup> (1.13)	4.86 <sup>a</sup> (1.12)	5.71 <sup>b</sup> (0.91)	5.72 <sup>b</sup> (1.04)	17.16***	0.13

Note: abc (as referred to in the text) Tukey test \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; Likert scale 1–7

### Logistic regression

A further aim of the present study was to examine through logistic regression the relationship between gender (females vs males) and age (young, born after 1986 vs adults, born before 1985) on one side and environment attitudes, dominance

**Table 5:** Results of the logistic regression model on demographic characteristics and propensity to pay more

	Would you be willing to spend more to be in eco-friendly accommodation?		
	Coeff B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (ref females)			
Males	0.619	0.019*	1.857
Class age (ref adults)			
Young people	−0.776	0.003**	0.460
Constant	1.175	0.000***	3.239
Case numbers	374		

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

**Table 6:** Results of the logistic regression model on demographic characteristics and environmental orientation

	Ecocentrism			Anthropocentrism			Environmental apathy		
	Coeff B	Sig.	Exp(B)	Coeff B	Sig.	Exp(B)	Coeff B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (ref females)									
Males	0.314	0.149	1.369	0.274	0.202	1.315	−0.440	0.036*	1.553
Class age (ref adults)									
Young people	−0.748	0.001***	0.473	−0.007	0.974	0.993	0.520	0.054*	1.682
Constant	0.369	0.056	1.447	−0.017	0.930	0.983	−0.081	0.766	0.922
Case numbers	374			374			374		

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

orientation, social responsibility and propensity to spend more for an eco-friendly accommodation on the other.

Significant results were obtained with respect to willingness to pay for sustainable hospitality (see Table 5).

Males and adults were associated positively with willingness to pay more for sustainable hospitality.

Considering the environmental attitude, gender and age group presented a significant relation only with ecocentrism and environmental apathy (see Table 6).

Being more specific, males were less apathetic toward the environment than females. On the other hand, adults scored higher than young people on ecocentrism while young people scored lower than older people on environmental apathy.

Finally, the analysis shows some significant results also concerning the social dominance orientation and the civic and interpersonal responsibility (see Table 7).

The scores show that males were more oriented toward social dominance than females. Males also scored higher than females on interpersonal responsibility. Young people scored lower than older respondents on both civic and interpersonal responsibility.

**Table 7:** Results of the logistic regression model on demographic characteristics and social dominance orientation and responsibility

	Social Dominance orientation			Civic responsibility			Interpersonal responsibility		
	Coeff B	Sig.	Exp(B)	Coeff B	Sig.	Exp(B)	Coeff B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (ref females)									
Males	0.545	0.011**	1.724	0.136	0.542	1.145	0.478	0.031*	1.613
Class age (ref adults)									
Young people	0.195	0.364	1.215	-1.192	0.000***	0.304	-1.072	0.000***	0.342
Constant	-0.332	0.084	0.717	0.633	0.001***	1.883	0.496	0.012**	1.642
Case numbers	374			374			374		

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

## Discussion

This study contributes to the literature by examining important and unexplored relationships related to gender’s environmental sustainability orientations. Gender is an important variable to consider in this type of research (Meek and Sullivan, 2012).

In this context, the main purpose of the present study was to examine the differences between man and women in different age groups when it comes to their motivation/expectation about sustainable hospitality, their attitudes toward the environment, their dominance orientation and their propensity to be socially responsible. Several studies on the relationship between gender and sustainability concluded that men tended to hold weaker pro-environmental attitudes than women (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003). An interesting pilot research by Cavagnaro and Staffieri (2014, 2015) indirectly confirms this theory: the results show that men scored higher than women on the egoistic value orientation. This value orientation is considered antagonistic to sustainable attitudes and behaviour (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007).

In general, gender studies (Ferruzza et al., 2014) show that women engage more in ecological behaviour privately and at home (more attention to the physical and social environmental, greater inclination to pro-environmental behaviour) while men engage more in ecological behaviour that concerns the public sphere (increased knowledge of environmental issues, and how to participate more actively).

On the other hand, in the psychological literature (Passini and Morselli, 2006; Bonnes, Carrus & Passafaro, 2006) social responsibility and social dominance are closely related and central to the relationship between individuals and society/environment. Donohe and Needham (2006) consider “responsibility” one of the common and specific principles associated with the concept of sustainable tourism. In any case, literature shows that women are more socially responsible and less oriented to social dominance than men.

For this reason, when defining the research hypothesis, we thought that women were more oriented than men towards sustainability, more oriented toward social responsibility and less oriented toward social dominance. Actually, these assumptions were only partially confirmed. In fact, the results of our study show that women are less dominant – this is in line with Pratto and collaborators (2006) – but less eco-oriented than men. The latter differs from the previous studies. To explain this phenomenon at this stage we can only assume that male dominance in the social domain is a cultural

feature which has deep roots in human history and gender roles, while eco-friendliness is an attitude that is of recent origin and needs to be nurtured and cultivated.

Considering the choice for sustainable hospitality, the statistically significant results show that the differences are determined by age more than by gender. Young people (males and females) were more motivated to choose a sustainable accommodation if the location is easily accessible with public transportation and if the location has few tourists than their adult counterparts. Young males and females exhibited lower mean-levels than adult people: if the temporary accommodation or lodging is managed by a family; if the natural environment of the chosen location is intact and protected; if the programme allows one to visit the place even during low season. As we shall see later, in the choice of travelling young people are less sensitive and give priority to the economic and psychological advantages (e.g. young people follow current fashion trends and travel mode choice).

It is interesting to consider that, at a time when Italy, at the political level, attaches great importance to and invests in hotel certification (<http://www.isprambiente.gov.it/it>), the participants thought it is not important if the accommodation is certified as environmentally friendly. Italy is a case of world-class excellence in this field, being the second in the world after China for the number of certifications for management systems: there are more than 150 000 certified organisations in our country (Prati, 2015). An important incentive to sustainable and responsible travel comes from the ecolabels, i.e. private and public certification provided by international bodies or public administrative institutions; awards and other forms of recognition that promote a sustainable culture and “certify” the reality of green tourism in Italy and abroad. For example, in Italy, some of the most tested and used certifications are: ‘Eco Bio Turismo’ (the ecolabel provided by ICEA - Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification); EARTH (The European Alliance for Responsible Tourism and Hospitality); ECOLABEL (provided by UE); and TRAVELIFE (certification of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council). Based on our results, it would be necessary to ask how to create awareness in the public of the importance of certifications, as Cialdella (2015) supports.

In our research, adult females and males were more motivated to spend more for sustainable hospitality compared to young males and females. In the regression, males and adults are associated positively with a willingness to pay more for sustainable hospitality. It has to be noted that these results

should be interpreted very cautiously, because we did not establish scalar measurement equivalence. However, recent research from IPR Marketing (2012, 2013, 2014) confirms this result. For example, in 2012, young Italian participants claimed to be less willingly to pay more for a sustainable accommodation because they consider sustainability as an obligation for the development of tourism. In contrast, for adults sustainable hospitality represents an opportunity. Few respondents would be willing to spend more to give priority to the environment and only if costs were equal would participants prefer sustainable hospitality. In the choice of travelling young people give priority to the economic advantage. Adults prefer sustainable accommodation even if it costs more than a non-sustainable one. The IPR 2012 survey did not find significant statistical differences concerning gender. This result is supported by our research, where the score for a relationship between gender and willingness to pay is significant but low.

Participants showed good levels of ecocentrism and low level of environmental apathy; adult males and females proved to be more ecocentric as compared to young people. In the logistic regression, males were less apathetic towards the environment than females. On the other hand, adults scored higher than young people on ecocentrism and young people scored lower than their counterparts on environmental apathy. According to Ferruzza et al. (2014), the poor dynamism of the population's behaviours and attitudes towards the environment, the stability of perceptions and opinions, and the limited gender gaps observed, exhibit a low level of environmental awareness in our country. As a matter of theory all people agree that environmental and social resources should be managed in a more sustainable way, but not everyone is willing to give up the satisfaction of their personal needs to achieve this goal.

Participants showed a low level of social dominance orientation. Scores associate males with a higher social dominance orientation (SDO) and confirm the hypothesis. According to social dominance theory (Pratto et al., 2006), members of dominant arbitrary-set groups are expected to have higher levels of SDO than members of subordinate groups (e.g. men and women) because they want to sustain the privileged access to social and economic resources that their dominant position permits. Pratto et al. (2006) discuss the central role of gender in the construction and maintenance of group-based inequality and review some of the new research inspired by the social dominance perspective. As said before, social dominance orientation was negatively associated with behaviour that preserves the environment.

Social psychology studies (Schwartz, 1992) have shown that authoritarian individuals give greater importance to values relating to compliance and security, while non-authoritarian persons give greater importance to egalitarian values (such as respect for others, the well-being of all people, etc.). From the fact that women appear within the present study to have a less dominant role than men in the social domain, we infer that women are perhaps more sensitive to environmental issues and are thus potentially a support and resource for sustainable tourism. Even if they are not so at present, they have full potential to be, if a conducive environment is provided.

Furthermore, in our study, levels of civic and interpersonal responsibility were quite high, but males' scores were higher than females on interpersonal responsibility. Young people

scored lower both on civic and interpersonal responsibility. Civic responsibility correlates positively with a materialist and authoritarian vision (and negatively with respect for others), while the interpersonal responsibility identifies a universe of values closer and open to the other, antithetical to social dominance and (partly) to authoritarianism (Passini & Morselli, 2006). Passini and Morselli (2006) think that interpersonal responsibility may therefore constitute an antidote to the degeneration of the relationship of authority in absolutist and totalitarian organisations. So, according to the authors, more responsibility in everyday relations would be fundamental to the realisation of truly constructive relations between people and greater respect for out-groups and the environment.

Our data shows that women, in particular young women, are less eco-responsible compared to men of the same age group. Though a part of the existing literature (Ferruzza et al., 2014) shows that women are more eco-oriented, our results demonstrate the contrary and are in line with other recent studies (IPREA). The outcoming results may be due to the long process of women's emancipation and changing attitudes towards themselves and others and also towards society (and environment). On the contrary, men are experiencing a redefinition of roles and expectations. In this sense the reflexivity process and agency activities are stronger among men, especially young men.

## Conclusion and recommendation

As stated above, the literature shows that in Italy the environmental awareness of citizens is far from satisfactory. Therefore, much needs to be done in this regard. To stimulate social participation, scientific and technical knowledge must be accompanied by relevant information on the relationship between population and environment. People must activate information strategies, orientation, and communication aimed at the involvement of citizens, to ensure the protection of environmental health and the building a sustainable future.

Looking at future research, it would be interesting to investigate, through an analysis of regression, the associations between environmental attitudes, dominance orientation and social responsibility. As Pratto et al. (2006) state, we need to know more about the relationships among age, gender, and arbitrary-set inequality to understand how changes to one system may affect other systems. Does increasing women's political representation or economic independence change the degree of arbitrary-set inequality? Do programmes to alleviate arbitrary-set inequality affect men and women differently, or do they work equally well for both? For example, it is important to understand how increasing interpersonal responsibility and decreasing social dominance orientation are required to encourage pro-environmental behaviour and increase the demand and the offer of sustainable hospitality. In synthesis, the environmental development of people only partially explains individual preferences regarding tourism and sustainable tourism (Passafaro et al., 2012).

Though some explanation has been attempted of these results, it is clear that further analysis on a stronger sample using a causal model approach is needed to better understand

these relationships among gender, other social demographic variables and sustainable behaviour/attitudes.

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