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Research article

Green tourism intentions among Vietnamese Youths: The case of a digitalized tourism market

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ABSTRACT

Amid climate change pressures and rapid digital transformation, green tourism has become an important pathway for promoting sustainable tourism development. This study investigates the factors influencing young people's green tourism intentions in the Mekong Delta, with particular attention to the role of digital communication. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study extends the traditional framework by incorporating digital communication as an additional explanatory factor. Survey data were collected from 250 young respondents and analyzed using reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis, and regression analysis. The findings show that subjective norms, digital communication, environmental concern, perceived behavioral control, and attitude toward green tourism all positively influence green tourism intention. Among these factors, subjective norms and digital communication emerge as particularly important drivers, highlighting the role of social influence and online communication in shaping young travelers' sustainable tourism choices. The study contributes to the green tourism literature by extending TPB in a digitalized tourism context and provides practical implications for tourism businesses and policymakers seeking to promote green tourism among young people in the Mekong Delta.

KEYWORDS

Green tourism intention; youth tourists; digital transformation; Mekong Delta

Introduction

Environmental pollution has intensified alongside rapid economic growth, particularly in developing countries, leading to resource depletion and higher CO_2 emissions. Many countries have therefore advanced environmental protection strategies in which encouraging the use of environmentally friendly products is a central measure (Nguyen, 2023), while also promoting green consumption, the circular economy, and carbon neutrality goals to reduce pressures on ecosystems (Tran et al., 2022). Tourism is expanding rapidly but carries a high emissions risk, so sustainable tourism has become a policy priority (Ibnou-Laaroussi et al., 2020), accompanied by efforts to promote green tourism in order to curb emissions arising from visitors and destination management. Recent international tourism studies have also emphasized that green tourism intention is shaped by a combination of environmental attitudes, social influence, perceived behavioral control, and destination-related sustainability values (Wang et al., 2020; Nowacki et al., 2023; Ribeiro et al., 2025). In parallel, digital platforms, social media, and electronic word of mouth increasingly influence how tourists search for information, evaluate green destinations, and form travel intentions (Hysa et al., 2021; El Archi et al., 2023; Kumar & Pandey, 2023). A survey compiled by Booking.com indicates that Vietnamese travelers value sustainable tourism and wish their spending to support local communities, reflecting a shift toward an impact-oriented mindset (MOCST, 2025). In Vietnam, Mekong Delta is highly vulnerable to climate change and has strong tourism potential, yet its tourism development remains modest (Le, 2024). At the same time, digital transformation generates new solutions but also poses adaptation challenges for firms

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(Mutmainah et al., 2025). Accordingly, it is necessary to identify the factors shaping pro environmental behavior across generations, particularly among young people (Nowacki et al., 2023).

Tech savvy young travelers frequently travel, making the use of online tourism services an inevitable trend (Khoa et al., 2021). However, several gaps remain in the existing literature. First, prior studies in Vietnam have mainly examined sustainable tourism intentions or green hotel choice in broader consumer groups, while young tourists' green tourism intentions have received less attention (Nguyen et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024; Le et al., 2025). Second, although the Mekong Delta is highly vulnerable to climate change and has strong potential for ecotourism, empirical evidence on green tourism intention in this region remains limited. Third, while digital transformation has changed how young travelers access tourism information and interact with destinations, the role of digital communication has not been sufficiently integrated into behavioral intention models in green tourism research. According to TPB, intention is central to behavior, yet it translates into actual behavior only when individuals have autonomy and sufficient resources and opportunities; external constraints weaken actual behavioral control (Zheng et al., 2019). Accordingly, this study positions digital communication as an extension of the TPB framework, reflecting the growing influence of social media, online reviews, and electronic word of mouth on young tourists' green travel decision-making. Therefore, investigating young travelers' green tourism intentions in the digital context is necessary. Building on these research gaps, this study aims to identify and evaluate the factors influencing young travelers' green tourism intentions in the Mekong Delta in the digital era. Specifically, it examines the effects of attitude toward green tourism, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, environmental concern, and digital communication on green tourism intention. The study contributes to tourism knowledge by extending the TPB framework to a digitalized green tourism context and by providing empirical evidence from the Mekong Delta, a climate-sensitive but underexamined tourism region. Practically, the findings offer implications for tourism firms and policymakers in designing digital communication strategies, green tourism products, and sustainability-oriented destination policies for young travelers. The study is conducted in the Mekong Delta with young travelers as the target respondents. It adopts a mixed qualitative and quantitative design to ensure theoretical rigor and the reliability of empirical evidence, with linear regression analysis employed to test the research hypotheses. The remainder of the article is organized as follows: theoretical background, the current state of green tourism, research methodology, results and discussion, conclusions, and managerial implications.

Theoretical basis

The concept of green tourism

Green tourism is also referred to as sustainable tourism or ecotourism, emphasizing responsible travel in natural areas to protect the environment, support the welfare of local communities, and incorporate interpretation and educational activities for visitors (Tafsirun et al., 2024). In tourism discourse, green and environmentally friendly are often used in a near equivalent manner, yet their conceptual boundaries frequently overlap. Accordingly, many scholars treat green tourism as a multidimensional concept with two perspectives: first, an environmentally responsible trend or set of behaviors among tourists; second, an initiative by service providers and attractions to deliver tourism services that are environmentally sustainable (Tafsirun et al., 2024). The core of green tourism lies in developing products that use environmentally friendly materials, ensure health safety, reduce impacts during use, and create safe and supportive settings; therefore, tours, hotels, and restaurants seeking green recognition must satisfy these criteria (Tho & Phuong, 2023). Interest in green tourism has grown due to its environmental benefits, which require coordination among tourists, local communities, public authorities, and tourism businesses when implementing sustainability strategies (Ibnou-Laaroussi et al., 2020).

The concept of young tourists

The tourism sector increasingly prioritizes young tourists because they represent future demand. Within this segment, Gen Z is often described as a sustainability minded generation due to heightened environmental awareness (Djafarova & Foots, 2022). Gen Z follows Millennials and precedes Alpha and is commonly defined as those born from the mid 1990s to the mid 2000s (Seemiller & Grace, 2024). Compared with Millennials and Gen X, Gen Z is characterized by stronger digital connectivity, greater mobility, and value-based consumption tendencies, which align with sustainable tourism orientations (Salinero et al., 2022). Young tourists are also the most intensive Internet users for information search, service booking, and participation in the sharing economy (Sharmin et al., 2020), and they can exert substantial influence on environmental sustainability (Rahman et al., 2020). They adopt tourism technologies quickly for trip planning and are strongly shaped by social media in decision making (Chai-Arayalert, 2020). In the face of global environmental challenges, their role in advancing sustainable tourism has attracted greater attention,

although empirical findings on their values and attitudes toward green tourism remain inconsistent (Nowacki et al., 2023).

The concept of digital transformation in tourism

Digital transformation and Industry 4.0 are reshaping the tourism sector and have become key drivers of sustainable development. Widespread Internet use for information search, service booking, and participation in tourism activities has fostered innovation and expanded service models, while also enabling more integrated experiences and higher visitor satisfaction (Kindzule-Millere & Zeverte-Rivza, 2022). This influence is especially evident among Gen Z and Millennials, who access information rapidly and continuously; technology also strengthens connectivity and encourages engagement with social issues, including sustainability (Nowacki et al., 2023). Therefore, firms need to align products, communication, and services with the expectations and digital capabilities of these segments (Hysa et al., 2021). Digital technologies can also reduce travel related stress and enhance experience quality, while supporting data analytics to personalize travel packages based on preferences and behaviors (Lin et al., 2024). Tourism stakeholders increasingly prioritize online channels to build competitive advantage, leveraging Internet advertising and social media to reach customers and manage destination feedback (Yaman & Başeğmez, 2022). Nevertheless, the application of technology for sustainable tourism remains constrained by limited managerial capacity, resistance to change, and imbalanced local collaboration (El Archi et al., 2023).

Factors influencing green tourism intention

Attitude toward green tourism

Attitude toward a behavior refers to the extent to which an individual evaluates that behavior favorably or unfavorably (Ajzen, 1991), and it is formed from beliefs about the outcomes that may result from performing the action. Attitude therefore serves as an important predictor that motivates behavioral intention (Wang et al., 2019), while also being shaped by direct or indirect learning experiences such as observation, information acquisition, and reasoning processes (Al Fahmawee & Jawabreh, 2023). In sustainable tourism, a distinction can be made between general attitudes toward environmental issues and specific attitudes toward a green product such as green tourism (Al Fahmawee & Jawabreh, 2023). Sustainable tourism is often associated with tourists who have high awareness, show limited support for mass tourism, and prioritize destinations that help protect resources while respecting economic, social, and environmental values (Santos-Roldán et al., 2020). To behave responsibly, tourists need a positive attitude toward sustainability (Abdullah et al., 2019). Attitudes toward a behavior, product, or destination reflect positive or negative evaluations based on expected benefits and anticipated experiences (Han, 2020), thereby influencing the intention to perform the behavior (Shang et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Attitude toward green tourism has a positive effect on green tourism intention

Subjective norms

According to Ajzen (1991), subjective norms refer to the social pressure an individual perceives when deciding whether to perform a behavior. This concept is formed from how individuals interpret the expectations of referent others and the extent to which they are willing to adjust their behavior to align with those expectations (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Referent groups may include family, friends, colleagues, or other social groups relevant to the decision context (Harjadi & Gunardi, 2022). Accordingly, subjective norms can be understood as community level pressure that encourages individuals to act in ways that gain social approval (Shang et al., 2021). In tourism, destination choice is strongly influenced by the views of close others, especially the extent to which they support or oppose a trip (Abbasi et al., 2021). When social pressure increases, intentions to engage in environmentally friendly behavior also rise (Khan et al., 2019), which is consistent with studies on environmentally responsible tourism intentions and assessments of the motivating role of social pressure (Wang et al., 2019). Similarly, encouragement from significant others and positive surrounding beliefs about green consumption increase the likelihood of green purchasing (Salimi, 2019). Hence, destination related environmental subjective norms are viewed as a positive driver of behavioral intention and a key predictor of green purchasing (Wang & Zhang, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: Subjective norms have a positive effect on green tourism intention

Perceived behavioral control

Perceived Behavioral Control (Perceived Behavioral Control – PBC) reflects the extent to which an individual perceives performing a specific behavior as easy or difficult (Ajzen, 1991). Within the TPB, the formation of behavioral intention plays a foundational role in the development of perceived behavioral control. Consumers' subjective evaluations of available conditions when purchasing reflect their perception

of behavioral control (Harjadi & Gunardi, 2022). Demonstrated differently, willingness to perform a given behavior can be explained by the extent to which individuals believe they can control their actions when behaving in a specific manner (Fenitra et al., 2021). When individuals possess sufficient actual control over their actions, they are expected to behave in line with their intentions when opportunities arise (Bosnjak et al., 2020). In the tourism context, Wang & Zhang (2020) argue that tourists perceived behavioral control regarding the destination environment positively influences their environmental behavior. Green purchasing intention increases when individuals believe they can buy green products, have adequate resources, time, and favorable conditions, when green products are accessible at points of sale, and when they perceive control over their purchasing behavior (Salimi, 2019). When tourists face shortages of resources or opportunities, their intention to engage in responsible tourism behavior tends to decline. In contrast, if they believe the necessary resources and opportunities are available and perceive that they can manage barriers, their intention to perform responsible tourism behaviors increases (Liu et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived behavioral control positively affects green tourism intention

Environmental concern

Consumers' environmental concern is reflected in a tendency to restrict environmentally harmful consumption, support socio political changes and anti pollution regulations, thereby fostering a positive attitude toward green purchasing (Salimi, 2019). Such concern often intensifies emotional responses to environmental issues and strengthens commitment to environmental protection, which in turn promotes pro environmental behavior (Ibnou-Laaroussi et al., 2020; Tafsirun et al., 2024). From a tourism perspective, environmental concern reflects the degree of attention to ecosystems and environmental risks, is shaped by product attributes, information, and perceived benefits, and expresses the responses and commitment of individuals or groups through responsible behaviors (Sultan et al., 2020). In this context, green tourism focuses on tourism products that avoid or reduce negative environmental impacts. Because tourism involves many interconnected activities and sustained environmental degradation can be viewed as a form of market failure, green tourism has the potential to advance sustainable development and serve as a reference model for other sectors. An open approach also enables new strategies and innovative practices (Gutierrez et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Environmental concern has a positive effect on green tourism intention

Digital communication

Information and communication technologies, particularly social media, have changed how tourists gather information, disseminate content, and share experiences, thereby influencing others' decisions (Shang et al., 2021). Tourists often post after a trip, and user generated tourism information is frequently perceived as more credible than many other sources (Joo et al., 2020). Beyond information provision, Social Networking Sites also facilitate value co creation, turning tourists from passive consumers into active co producers of experiences through online reviews, comments, and recommendations (Shen et al., 2020). However, social media use can generate both positive and negative effects on individual intentions and behaviors (Bergan et al., 2022). As communication practices evolve, the influence of traditional mass media declines, while consumers continue to prioritize word of mouth due to its personal nature and perceived credibility. eWOM therefore exerts strong influence on behavior, enabling consumers to connect with other users and obtain rapid feedback about products and services (Kumar & Pandey, 2023). In addition, frequent social media users tend to engage more with user generated content, which shapes destination images and expectations (Narangajavana et al., 2019). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Digital communication has a positive effect on green tourism intention

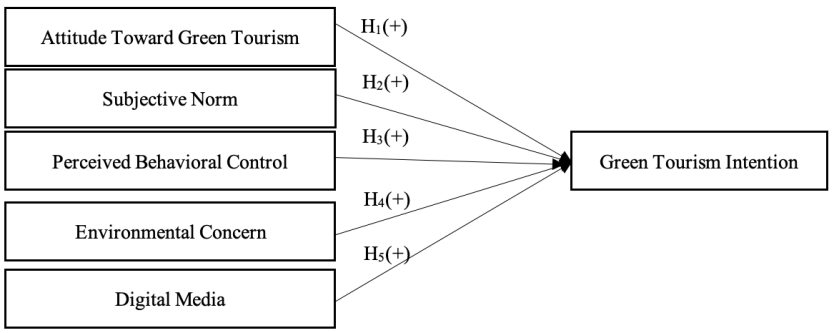

Figure 1. Proposed research model

Research methodology

This study employed a sequential mixed-method design. In the qualitative stage, the research model and measurement items were developed from prior studies and refined through expert consultation and focus group discussions to ensure contextual suitability for green tourism and young travelers in the Mekong Delta. In the quantitative stage, a structured questionnaire survey was conducted to collect empirical data for testing the proposed hypotheses. This design was appropriate because it allowed the study to first contextualize the measurement scales and then statistically examine the relationships among the research constructs. The target population comprises young people living, studying, and working in the Mekong Delta, aged under 35, who have participated in tourism activities or are likely to do so. This group has high exposure to digital technologies, social media, and online tourism platforms, and plays an important role in shaping and diffusing sustainable consumption trends, including green tourism. Selecting young people as the study population aligns with the current digital transformation context, where their tourism intentions and behaviors are strongly influenced by digital communication, eWOM, and social media platforms. Respondents were included if they were under 35 years old, lived, studied, or worked in the Mekong Delta, and had participated in tourism activities or shown interest in future travel. These criteria ensured that the selected respondents were relevant to the study's focus on young travelers' green tourism intentions in a digitalized tourism market. Following the recommendation of Hair et al. (1998), the minimum sample size for quantitative studies employing factor analysis and linear structural modeling should be at least five times the total number of observed variables in the research model. In this study on young people's green tourism behavioral intention in the digital transformation period, the model includes 33 observed variables measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree. Accordingly, the minimum required sample size was determined as $33 \times 5 = 165$ valid observations. Because questionnaire surveys may contain incomplete or inconsistent responses, the study collected more observations than the minimum requirement. A total of 265 questionnaires were obtained. After data screening, 15 responses were removed due to missing information, inconsistent answers, or failure to meet the respondent criteria. Therefore, 250 valid responses were retained for the final analysis. The study applied convenience sampling, which was suitable for accessing young respondents in the Mekong Delta who frequently use digital technologies and online tourism platforms. Although this method is efficient and appropriate for exploratory behavioral research, its limitations in terms of generalizability are acknowledged.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed based on the research constructs and measurement items. The questionnaire consisted of screening questions, demographic information, and scale items measuring attitude toward green tourism, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, environmental concern, digital communication, and green tourism intention. Respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study, and participation was voluntary. Before analysis, the collected questionnaires were checked to remove incomplete, inconsistent, or ineligible responses. The constructs in the research model were measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree. The measurement scales were adapted from prior studies to ensure reliability and contextual suitability for green tourism and digital transformation in the Mekong Delta. The variables were developed as follows: AT was measured using 5 observed variables based on Liu et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Panwanitdumrong & Chen, 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2025. SN includes 5 observed variables derived from Wang et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Fenitra et al., 2021. PB was measured using 5 observed variables grounded in Wang et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Fenitra et al., 2021. EC was measured with 6 observed variables informed by Demir et al., 2021; Huy et al., 2024. DM comprises 6 observed variables proposed by the author, reflecting the influence of social media, digital content, online reviews, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on young people's perceptions and intentions regarding green tourism. GI was measured using 6 observed variables based on Wang et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Panwanitdumrong & Chen, 2021; Fenitra et al., 2021; Septiarini & Adialita, 2025. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics. Second, Cronbach's Alpha was employed to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales, and items that did not meet reliability criteria were removed. Third, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine the factor structure, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the scales. Finally, Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses were used to test the relationships between the independent variables and green tourism intention. This analytical procedure was selected to ensure the reliability of the scales, the validity of the constructs, and the robustness of hypothesis testing.

Results and discussion

Sample description

Out of the 265 questionnaires initially collected, after screening, data cleaning, and removing responses that were incomplete, inconsistent, or did not meet the analytical criteria, the study retained 250 valid samples for subsequent statistical analyses. Table 1 indicates that the survey sample is distributed in a relatively balanced manner and aligns well with the research objectives. Most respondents fall within the 18–27 age range and have at least a university degree, which reflects the characteristics of young people as a segment with strong access to digital technologies and online tourism platforms. The sample mainly consists of students and young workers across multiple sectors, with a common monthly income level of 5–10 million VND, suggesting moderate purchasing power. In terms of behavior, most respondents travel at least 2–3 times per year and typically travel with friends or family, highlighting the pronounced social nature of travel behavior. Overall, the sample profile provides adequate representativeness for analyzing young people's green tourism behavioral intentions in Mekong Delta in the context of digital transformation.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Gender			**5. Average monthly income**		
Male	118	47.2	Below 5 million VND	96	38.4
Female	132	52.8	5 to 10 million VND	104	41.6
2. Age			10 to 15 million VND	34	13.6
Under 18 years old	10	4.0	Above 15 million VND	16	6.4
From 18 to 22	112	44.8	**6. Travel frequency in the past year**		
From 23 to 27	86	34.4	Once	62	24.8
From 28 to 35	42	16.8	2 to 3 times	116	46.4
3. Educational attainment			More than 3 times	72	28.8
High school or below	38	15.2	**7. Occupation**		
Vocational/College	52	20.8	Pupil	16	6.4
University	132	52.8	University student	94	37.6
Postgraduate	28	11.2	Office employee	40	16.0
4. Travel companions			Self employed	30	12.0
Alone	28	11.2	Sales and business staff	26	10.4
Family/Relatives	76	30.4	Teacher, lecturer	14	5.6
Friends	118	47.2	Restaurant and hotel staff	20	8.0
Colleagues group	28	11.2	IT staff	10	4.0

Assess the reliability of the Cronbach's Alpha scale

The scale reliability assessment indicates that all measurement scales in the study meet the required standards. CA coefficients for the constructs range from 0.758 to 0.858, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7 and demonstrating strong internal consistency. Only one observed item (AT1) in the AT scale was removed, whereas all other scales retained their original items. These results suggest that the measurement scales are appropriately developed, reliable, and suitable for subsequent analyses.

Table 2. Summary of reliability assessment results of the scale

No.	Factors	Initial observed variable	Remaining observed variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Variable type
1	Attitude Toward Green Tourism	5	4	0.764	Independent
2	Subjective Norm	5	5	0.858	Independent
3	Perceived Behavioral Control	5	5	0.824	Independent
4	Environmental Concern	6	6	0.758	Independent
5	Digital Media	6	6	0.830	Independent
6	Green Tourism Intention	6	6	0.803	Dependent
Total		**33**	**32**		

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis with independent variables

After the measurement scales demonstrated reliability through CA testing, the study proceeded with EFA to assess the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the scales. The KMO and Bartlett test results indicate that the data are suitable for conducting EFA. Specifically, the KMO value reaches 0.914, well above the recommended threshold of 0.5, demonstrating a very high level of sampling adequacy. In addition, Bartlett's test is statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000), confirming that the observed variables are linearly correlated and meet the conditions for factor extraction (Table 3).

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's test of independent variables

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.914
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2461.932
	df	300
	Sig.	0.000

The EFA results show that the model extracts 5 factors with Eigenvalue > 1, in which item EC4 was removed because it did not meet the required criteria. These five factors explain 57.665% of the variance in the data, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 50% and indicating strong explanatory power. The rotated factor matrix indicates that all observed variables have factor loadings greater than 0.5 and converge on their

corresponding factors, with no evidence of cross loadings (Table 4). These findings confirm that the scales achieve convergent validity and discriminant validity, meeting the requirements for subsequent quantitative analyses.

Table 4. Rotated factor pattern matrix of independent variables

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
DM6	0.719				
DM1	0.708				
DM4	0.706				
DM5	0.689				
DM2	0.653				
DM3	0.595				
SN1		0.754			
SN4		0.751			
SN3		0.727			
SN2		0.681			
SN5		0.625			
PB1			0.752		
PB5			0.743		
PB4			0.695		
PB3			0.694		
PB2			0.618		
EC5				0.710	
EC6				0.710	
EC1				0.615	
EC3				0.614	
EC2				0.549	
AT5					0.715
AT3					0.695
AT2					0.686
AT4					0.649

Exploratory factor analysis with dependent variables

The analysis results show that KMO = 0.835 > 0.5 and that Bartlett's test is statistically significant (Sig.= 0.000 < 0.05), indicating that the data are suitable and meet the requirements for analysis.

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett's test of the dependent variable

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.835
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	397.095
	df	15
	Sig.	0.000

Table 6 indicates that all 6 observed variables converge on a single factor, with factor loadings greater than 0.5, ranging from 0.658 to 0.752. Notably, the Eigenvalue of 3.022 and the total variance extracted of 50.374% confirm the unidimensionality and strong explanatory capacity of the scale. Overall, the dependent variable demonstrates adequate reliability and convergent validity, and is ready for subsequent regression testing.

Table 6. Rotated factor pattern matrix of dependent variables

	Component
	1
GI1	0.752
GI6	0.740
GI3	0.728
GI4	0.698
GI5	0.676
GI2	0.658

Correlation analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis results (Table 7) show that GI is significantly associated with all independent variables in the research model. Specifically, the strongest correlation is observed between GI and SN (r = 0.403), whereas the weakest correlation is between GI and AT (r = 0.302). All correlation coefficients are highly statistically significant (p < 0.001), confirming the presence of meaningful linear relationships between the dependent variable and the independent variables.

Table 7. Results of correlation analysis between research variables

		GI	DM	SN	PB	EC	AT
GI	Pearson Correlation	1	0.366	0.403	0.342	0.361	0.302
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
DM	Pearson Correlation	0.366	1	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
SN	Pearson Correlation	0.403	0.000	1	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	1.000		1.000	1.000	1.000
PB	Pearson Correlation	0.342	0.000	0.000	1	0.000	0.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	1.000	1.000		1.000	1.000
EC	Pearson Correlation	0.361	0.000	0.000	0.000	1	0.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.000		1.000
AT	Pearson Correlation	0.302	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	

Regarding the relationships among the independent variables (DM, SN, PB, EC, AT), the results indicate that the correlation coefficients are very low and not statistically significant. This suggests that the research model does not suffer from multicollinearity, thereby facilitating accurate estimation of regression coefficients in subsequent analyses. In addition, these findings imply that the independent variables capture distinct and relatively separate dimensions of the studied behavior, which is consistent with the initial scale development approach and theoretical framework.

Regression analysis

The regression results (Table 8) show that the adjusted R^2 reaches 0.627, indicating that the independent variables in the model explain 62.7% of the variance in the dependent variable, which reflects a relatively high model fit. In addition, the Durbin–Watson coefficient equals 2.000, suggesting the absence of autocorrelation and satisfying an important assumption of linear regression. These results confirm that the estimates are reliable, the model is stable, and it is appropriate for interpreting causal relationships.

Table 8. Model summary of regression analysis

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.796	0.634	0.627	0.61087834	2.000

The ANOVA results (Table 9) report F = 84.650 with Sig = 0.000, confirming that the regression model is statistically significant with a very high level of confidence. This indicates that the set of independent variables in the model exerts an effect on the dependent variable and rejects the null hypothesis that the regression coefficients are equal to zero. Therefore, the proposed model fits the empirical data and provides a sufficient basis for further analysis and interpretation of the role of each independent variable in explaining the dependent variable.

Table 9. Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	157.946	5	31.589	84.650	0.000
	Residual	91.054	244	0.373		
	Total	249.000	249			

The regression analysis results (Table 10) show that all independent variables are statistically significant with Sig = 0.000, confirming that all research hypotheses are accepted. All VIF values equal 1.000, indicating the absence of multicollinearity and demonstrating that the independent variables capture distinct, nonoverlapping dimensions within the model. The findings indicate that all five predictors, namely attitude toward green tourism, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, environmental concern, and digital communication, positively influence green tourism intention. This supports the relevance of the extended TPB framework in explaining young travelers' green tourism decision-making. Consistent with previous studies on environmentally responsible tourism behavior (Wang et al., 2020; Fenitra et al., 2021; Panwanitdumrong & Chen, 2021), the results confirm that green tourism intention is not formed by a single psychological factor but by the combined effects of personal evaluation, social influence, perceived capability, environmental awareness, and information exposure. More importantly, subjective norms exert the strongest influence, suggesting that young travelers' green tourism intentions are highly sensitive to social expectations from family, friends, peers, and online communities. This finding extends prior TPB-based tourism research by showing that social influence may be particularly salient among young tourists in digitally connected environments. Digital communication is also a strong predictor, indicating that social media, online reviews, digital content, and eWOM do not merely provide tourism information but actively shape green destination perceptions and behavioral intentions. By contrast, attitude toward green tourism has the weakest effect, implying that favorable evaluations alone may be insufficient to stimulate green tourism intention unless they are supported by social encouragement, credible digital information, and perceived ease of participation.

Table 10. Regression coefficients analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.309E-017	0.039		0.000	1.000		
DM	0.366	0.039	0.366	9.455	0.000	1.000	1.000
SN	0.403	0.039	0.403	10.404	0.000	1.000	1.000
PB	0.342	0.039	0.342	8.826	0.000	1.000	1.000
EC	0.361	0.039	0.361	9.313	0.000	1.000	1.000
AT	0.302	0.039	0.302	7.808	0.000	1.000	1.000

Overall, these findings advance existing green tourism knowledge in three ways. First, they reinforce the explanatory power of TPB in a young tourist segment but show that the model becomes more contextually

relevant when digital communication is incorporated. Second, the strong role of subjective norms suggests that green tourism among young people should be understood as both an individual decision and a socially embedded behavior. Third, the importance of digital communication highlights the need to view online platforms as behavioral-shaping environments rather than only promotional tools. This is particularly relevant for emerging destinations where green tourism markets are still developing and where tourists rely heavily on digital information to evaluate destination credibility and sustainability claims.

Conclusion and managerial implications

This study examined the determinants of young people's green tourism intention in the Mekong Delta by extending the TPB framework with digital communication. The findings confirm that subjective norms, digital communication, environmental concern, perceived behavioral control, and attitude toward green tourism positively influence green tourism intention, with subjective norms and digital communication emerging as especially important drivers. Theoretically, the study shows that TPB remains useful for explaining green tourism intention, but its explanatory relevance can be strengthened by incorporating digital communication in contexts where young tourists rely heavily on social media, online reviews, and eWOM. Beyond the Mekong Delta, the study offers broader implications for tourism scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in emerging and climate-sensitive destinations. For scholars, the findings suggest that future green tourism models should better integrate social influence and digital communication mechanisms when examining younger tourist segments. For practitioners, the results imply that green tourism promotion should move beyond environmental messaging alone and combine peer influence, credible digital content, and convenient green tourism options. For policymakers, the study highlights the need to support destination-level green standards, digital communication capacity, and youth-oriented sustainability campaigns that can be adapted to other regions pursuing sustainable tourism transitions.

The findings suggest that to foster young people's green tourism intentions and behaviors in the Mekong Delta during digital transformation, public authorities and tourism businesses should prioritize interventions that leverage the influence of subjective norms. The key focus is to design community-oriented communication campaigns that mobilize the influence of family, friends, and referent groups, while collaborating with KOLs, travel bloggers, and green oriented influencers to create and reinforce positive social norms. Positioning green tourism as a trend among young people can convert social pressure into a motivating force for adopting and sustaining sustainable travel choices, thereby enhancing diffusion within the community. In parallel, digital communication should be treated as a strategic instrument to increase appeal while reducing barriers to action. Tourism firms in the Mekong Delta should invest coherently in websites, social media, smart tourism applications, and creative digital content that clearly communicates the environmental value, local cultural elements, and social responsibility embedded in green tourism products. They should also encourage tourists to generate eWOM to strengthen credibility and expand reach. To enhance perceived behavioral control, it is necessary to standardize transparent information, improve convenience across information search, service booking, and travel experience, and diversify product packages and pricing options that match young people's affordability. Over the longer term, the government should promptly establish a unified set of green tourism criteria and a certification label for the Mekong Delta, accompanied by financial support and digital transformation policies for tourism businesses, in order to standardize the market and incentivize a sustainable tourism ecosystem oriented toward green growth and carbon neutrality. These implications are not limited to the Mekong Delta but may also be relevant to other emerging tourism destinations seeking to promote green tourism among digitally connected young travelers. In such contexts, combining social influence, credible digital communication, and accessible green tourism products can help narrow the gap between environmental awareness and actual sustainable travel choices.

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