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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TO PROFILE THE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE: A LATENT SEGMENTATION APPROACH

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Abstract

During the last three decades, the international debate on environmental issues as sustainability in tourism sector has increased due to the fast growth that this kind of tourism has experienced internationally. From a demand-side perspective recent literature highlighted that consumer fundamental beliefs (e.g., value orientations) are shifting toward a higher degree of post materialism which in turn positively affect consumers' pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. Despite this, it could be argued that there is still a need for deeper investigation of the consumer's attitude towards sustainable tourism especially in regard to specific countries, such as Italy, where very poor research has been published internationally around the topic. Adopting a demand-side perspective, this study was therefore carried out to profile Italian consumers based on their attitude toward environmental and sustainable tourism also considering their socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, civil status, level of education, occupation and income). To achieve this aim, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were used to identify the underpinning dimensions of what is meant by sustainable tourism, and these factors were used to profile the respondent using a latent segmentation approach. Findings reveal that four clusters can be identified (namely: "the absolutes", "the motivated", "the intentionals" and "the skepticals") and that significant differences between these do exist based on socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Findings provide insights from an under-investigated country (Italy), which is one of the most important sources of the tourism market for European and non-European tourism destinations, thus offering practical recommendations for tourism businesses, policy environmental makers, and destination marketers interested in targeting the Italian tourism demand and/or in promoting further growth of environmental and sustainable tourism.

Key words: attitudes, environment issues, factor analysis, Italian latent segmentation, sustainable tourism

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1. Introduction

Currently, it is remarkable the fact that consumers have a high level of environmental awareness and tend to prefer companies that consider environmental issues in their marketing objectives (Gázquez-Abad et al., 2011a). This is causing companies' marketing strategies to put more attention in everything could be done to reduce as much as they can their impacts on the environment and/or to run green activities that can compensate them. In fact, increasingly markets prefer companies that consider environmental issues

in their marketing objectives (Gázquez-Abad et al., 2011a). In an attempt to cope with this new consumers' interest, companies are doing as much as they can to reduce as much as they can their impacts on the environment and/or to run green activities that can compensate them. According with eco-efficiency theory, this allows enterprises to maximize their economic benefits and to minimize the impact on the environment at the same time (Pérez-Calderón et al., 2011). Within this context, Matei and Ungureanu (2014) established an integrated model of economic and environmental issues focused on the analysis of

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difficulties of a large sustainable and better economy to contribute to the development of new decision-making objectives. The growing of environmental awareness by consumers and the gap in the literature on this topic aims to academics to research about the ways in which companies integrate environmental concerns into their marketing strategies in multiple sectors, such as tourism (García-Pozo et al., 2013; Rodríguez-Oromendía et al., 2013). On the other hand, within agrofood sector, Gázquez-Abad et al. (2011a) carried out an empirical investigation to 75 companies and find that long-term marketing instruments should be given priority when companies included environmental issues into their marketing decisions.

In this line, Pérez-Calderón et al. (2011) tested 122 firms from different sectors which belong to the European Responsibility Index and empirically demonstrated that firms with the best environmental performances also obtained the largest economic and financial benefits. Within this line, Mondéjar-Jiménez et al. (2013a) posit that firms' actions are explained as training, information and divulgation behaviors. Companies establish their goals in order to improve business competitiveness and, in turn, agents and firms management implications explain the environmental proactivity of them. Moreover, Achim and Borlea (2014) analyzed the relationship between environmental and financial performance using a Romanian companies survey, obtaining that environmental investment ensures long-term sustainability of the companies.

The environmental issues are especially relevant within tourism sector in which the consumer's environmental awareness is focused toward a sustainable tourism during their stays in different destinations (Lu et al., 2014). As argued by Del Chiappa et al. (2014), sustainable tourism is concerned with the impacts on the environment that tourism produces, and is related more to managing tasks (the supply-side perspective); on the other hand, responsible tourism stresses more the environmental and socio-cultural bias of tourist flows and activities, asking for the fostering of the relationship between tourists and the host community, and is related more to the tourists' behaviour (the demand-side perspective) (Lee, 2011; Lee et al., 2013). Specifically, responsible tourism describes a set of tourist practices that people embrace in order to discover the authenticity of the places they visit (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2013; Kim and Jamal, 2007), preserving their scenic, natural, socio-cultural, economic, water (Gázquez-Abad, 2011b) and environmental inheritance (Budeanu, 2007; Chafe, 2005; Clifton and Benson, 2006; Kerstetter et al., 2004; Reichel et al., 2008), becoming wealth promoters for the local hosting community (Honey, 1999). The practices related to responsible tourism are diverse. For example, within tourism sector is very relevant the water saving behavior. This natural resource is basic for sustaining life. In fact, it is vital for the economical

development of countries and, moreover, it is considered a recreational resource. In sum, companies must manage efficiently this basic natural resource in order to guarantee and protect the long-term sustainability and growing of the general economy (Gázquez-Abad, 2011b).

Environmental protection is not at odds with the proper use of all the offered possibilities. Destination image, natural spaces, and service quality are considered as the most important variables for determining tourists' global satisfaction and loyalty towards the destination. Hernández-Mogollón et al. (2013) demonstrated that cognitive and affective image influence the perceived authenticity, while this in turn has an impact on the global satisfaction and loyalty.

The touristic products available to the consumer has increased exponentially over the last few years which has made it possible to convert territorial and patrimonial resources into significant elements of recreational use put into value at service of the consumer (Mondéjar-Jiménez et al., 2013b).

Within this research line, international literature carefully analyzes the characteristics of responsible tourists with reference to their demographic profile (Ballantine and Eagles, 1994; Sambri and Pegan, 2008), values (Blamey and Braithwaite, 1997), motivations (Dinan and Sargeant, 2000; Dolnicar et al., 2008; Kerstetter et al., 2004; Zogratos and Allcroft, 2007), attitudes and behaviors (Chafe, 2005; Dolnicar et al., 2008).

In Italy, the practice of responsible tourism remains largely unexamined, with very few researchers paying attention to this topic (Franch et al., 2008; Sambri and Pegan, 2008). Apart from the aforementioned research, responsible tourism is still a somewhat neglected and under investigated area of tourism research in Italy where the existing research suffers the limitation of being focusing on profiling consumers who can be considered as being somewhat responsible (Del Chiappa et al., 2014) and/or of being relatively dated (Sambri and Pegan, 2008).

In similar line, in order to evaluate the the natural resources currently available for tourists, Mondéjar-Jiménez et al. (2013b) examined a proposal for studying the values of the recreational use of the "Serranía de Cuenca" national park. For that, considering large number of varied tourist segments, protected natural landscapes -like the analyzed case- have become truly differentiating elements in a quality touristic offer that strictly meets the most demanding sustainability criteria.

With a cross-cultural vision, Mondéjar-Jiménez et al. (2012) analyzed the importance of individual behaviours, attitudes and values on the environmental actions, applying the information offerd by the World Values Survey Association on several countries.

Adopting a demand-side perspective, the aim of this study was therefore carried out to bridge this gap, profiling a convenience sample of 1,252 Italian consumers based on their self-reported attitude

towards a list of 20 practices associated with responsible tourism and based on their socio-demographic characteristics, thus providing fresh knowledge about a relevant type of tourism from an under-investigated country (Italy), which is one of the most important sources of the tourism market for European and non-European tourism destinations.

2. Material and methods

The present study, which was exploratory in nature, exclusively targeted adults residing in Italy and at least 18 years old. Based on an extensive literature review (Budeanu, 2007; Chafe, 2005; Choi et al., 2009; Del Chiappa et al., 2014; Dolnicar et al., 2008; Fairweather et al., 2005; Kelly et al., 2007; Kerstetter et al., 2004; Miller, 2003; Pomeanu et al., 2013; Yeoman et al., 2007), a questionnaire was designed to be used in the quantitative phase of the study.

The questionnaire was divided in two parts. First, some general demographic questions were asked to help define the sample profile (age, gender, civil status, level of education, occupation, income). Second, a list of 20 different practices of responsible tourism was provided and respondents were asked to assess the importance of each by using a 9-point Likert scale (1 = not at all important, 9 = very important) (Del Chiappa et al., 2014).

The data collection was realized through an online questionnaire and a snowball sampling technique was used (Wrenn et al., 2007). Obviously this means that the study suffers somewhat from coverage error (Hwang and Fesenmaier, 2004). Another limitation is that such a type of data collection, as in all the e-surveys, biased the population towards those who were more interested in the topic of our study.

However, after all, the approached we used seemed the most appropriate for our study, given the fact that it allowed us to obtain a large sample of consumers who reside in different areas of Italy in a cheaper, faster and more efficient way than using paper-and-pencil approaches (Goldenberg et al., 2009; Lazar and Preece, 1999), thus allowing us also to cope with the financial constraints we faced in managing the research project.

Initial subjects were generated from 3,000 contacts of an Italian Tourism Association which pools together consumers/tourists with a general interest in everything that is related to any type of tourism and travelling. These individuals, residing in different regions of Italy, received an e-mail inviting them to fill out the online questionnaire with a link provided in the e-mail. Further, they were asked to forward this online survey to their parents, relatives, friends and contacts. Allowing for a three-week survey period and after a general recall at the end of this period, a total of 1,252 completed questionnaires were obtained. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (SPSS® 19.0) were used to identify the underpinning dimensions of what is meant by

responsible tourism, and these factors were used to profile the respondent using a latent gold segmentation approach. Specifically, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was run via a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and then a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), via EQS® statistical software, was developed in order to contrast reliability and validity of obtained dimensions.

Then, standard factor scores created during the CFA process were used as variables to develop the latent segmentation with the final aim of segmenting and profiling tourists based on their attitude towards responsible tourism and their respective socio-demographic characteristics. We decided to adopt latent segmentation analysis (via Latent Gold® 4.5 statistical software) due to this procedure allows distributing individuals to different clusters based on their probability of belonging. So, this procedure breaks the restrictions of deterministic assignment inherent to the non-hierarchical segmentation analysis (Vermunt and Magidson, 2005). Moreover, latent class models allow the incorporation of variables with different measurement scales (continual, ordinal or nominal) (Vermunt and Magidson, 2005).

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Principal component factor analysis (PCA)

When running the EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was greater than 0.93 and the Bartlett's test was highly significant (0.0000). This statistic level indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis (i.e. correlation matrix is an identity matrix). On the other hand, we obtained a higher than 0.7 level in each analyzed factor, indicating the reliability of the extracted factors (Cronbach, 1951). An orthogonal varimax rotation was performed on extracted factors, obtaining eigenvalues ≥1.0. It allowed minimizing the number of variables having high loadings on a particular factor. Finally, three factors resulted from the analysis, accounting for 55.05% of the symptomatic variance (Table 1). All less one variable (i.e. "Buying from local and typical merchants") obtained a factor loading >0.5 (Hair et al., 1999). For that, we eliminated the variable with the factor loading <0.5 to run the CFA.

Factor 1 (*responsibility towards the local economy and community*) explains 39.78% of the total variance thus representing the main underpinning dimension of what is meant by responsible tourism. Specifically, it includes items describing a general interest of tourists to contribute to support the local community economically (e.g. buying authentic and locally produced goods, favoring restaurants offering typical menus with local food, etc.) and helping it to preserve its own identity and authenticity (e.g. being in contact with traditions and culture of the local community, express respect toward the local people and their tradition and life

style, protecting the historical and archeological sites of the destination etc.).

Factor 2 (*demand for responsibility of businesses used*) summarizes a general interest in the extent to which tourism businesses are run responsibly and provide guarantees in terms of sustainability (e.g. favoring environmentally friendly accommodations, to use environmentally friendly transport services etc.). Factor 3 (*responsibility towards the environment*) emphasizes practices that express the desire of responsible tourists to protect and preserve the cultural and natural local environment (e.g. respecting the natural resources, limiting the production of garbage, etc.).

3.2. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

A CFA was carried out with EQS 6.1 in order to contrast if our three constructs proposed as indicators for the latent segmentation post-analysis would provide a good fit to the data. In order to use previous factorial constructs in the cluster segmentation, the content, convergent and discriminant validity and reliability of the constructs, were assessed within the CFA containing all the multi-item constructs in our framework using the robust maximum likelihood method. This led us to delete some items based on non-significant or loading estimates lower than 0.6. It supposed eliminating 4 items (I1, I3, I5, and I6) of our model. Results of the final CFA suggest that our re-specified measurement model provides a good fit to the data on the basis of a number of fit statistics.

Firstly, content validity can be assured by the fact that all the items we use in the questionnaire have been already used and tested in prior literature, as we explained in the methodology section. Secondly, reliability of the scales demonstrates high-internal consistency of the constructs seen that Cronbach's alpha exceeded 0.70. Thirdly, convergent validity is verified, as t scores obtained for factor loadings were significant ($p<0.01$). Further, the size of all the standardized loadings are higher than 0.60 (Table 2) and the average of the item-to-factor loadings are higher than 0.70. AVE is higher than 0.5 and CR higher than 0.7 for each construct. Finally, discriminant validity of the measures was also provided seen that: a) none of the 95 per cent confidence intervals of the individual elements of the latent factor correlation matrix contained a value of 1.0; b) the shared variance between pairs of constructs was always less than the corresponding AVE (Table 3).

3.3. Segmenting the environmental market in tourism sector: A latent segmentation approach

Based on the pondered average of each three factors (calculated through the division between weighting of each item with its standardized load and the sums of the full loadings per factorial construct), the indicators variables to be used in latent segmentation were obtained (Dillon and Kumar, 1994). Further, with the aim of refining the obtained segments, some descriptive variables were used as covariates (gender, civil status, age, level of education, occupation, and monthly household income) to analyze their influence on respondents' attitude towards responsible tourism.

The first step of the analysis consisted in selecting the optimum number of segments. The model used estimated from one (no heterogeneity existed) up to six (i.e. six segments or heterogeneity existed). Table 4 shows the estimation process summary and the fit indexes for each of the six models. The model fit was evaluated according to the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) that allows the identification of the model with the least number of classes that best fits to the data.

The lowest BIC value was considered as the best model indicator. In this case, four different user groups represented the best alternative, as the BIC is minimized in this case. The statistic values included in Table 4 indicate that the model has a good fit (E_s and R^2 near 1). The Wald statistic was analyzed in order to evaluate the statistical significance within a group of estimated parameters (Table 5). For all the indicators a significant p-value associated with the Wald statistics was obtained, confirming that each indicator discriminates between the clusters in a significant way (Vermunt and Magidson, 2005). Table 5 contains the profiles of the obtained clusters. The biggest segment is the "absolute responsible tourists" (64.28%) followed by the "intentional responsible tourists" cluster 19.06%, the "motivated responsible tourists" (11.97%) and the "skeptical responsible tourists" (4.69%).

Further, Table 5 shows the average score that each segment obtained in each indicator (this value in included in the range 0-9, since items that composed each scale were measured with 9-point Likert Scale). Then, clusters were placed in order based on their overall attitude towards (expressed in mean) the three underpinning dimensions of responsible tourism. Independence tests associated with the Wald statistic conclude that significant differences exist between the segments ($\geq$90% confidence level) based on all but one (civil status: p-value > .1) socio-demographic characteristics, namely: gender, age, education, occupation, and income.

Based on statistics reported in Tables 5 and 6, a description of each cluster can be provided. The "absolute responsible tourist" is the biggest cluster in the sample (64.28%) and it shows the highest means in all the three underpinning dimensions of responsible tourism, particularly for the dimension of "*responsibility toward the environment*". The cluster includes mostly female (73.84%), people aged between 16-35 (46.24%), with an average monthly income of 1,000-4,000 euros (66.57%), employed (31.00%) and with the highest percentage of university degree students (45.52%). The "motivated responsible tourist" segment presents a lower mean than first group in all the underpinning dimensions of

responsible tourism, although quite similar in the case of "*responsibility towards the local economy and community*". Similarly to the previous cluster, this segment is composed mainly by females (74.65%), aged between 26-35 years old (44.71%), having a university degree (56.6%), being employed (32.45%) and with an average monthly income of 2,001-4,000 euro. However it should be noticed that among the four clusters, "the motivated responsible tourist" also has the highest percentage of people aged 36-45 (24.25%), with a high school diploma (3.72%), being self-employ (25.77%) or unemployed (14.33%) with a monthly salary lower than 1,000 euros.

The "intentional responsible tourist" segment shows a quite positive attitude towards sustainable tourism, even if obviously lower than the previous ones. It includes mostly male (50.12%) and people in the 36-45 age bracket (36.91%). With respect to the other three clusters, this is the segment with the highest percentage of people in the age bracket between 46 and 60 years old, with secondary School (33.19%), being employees (38.65%), and with an average monthly income between 1,000 and 2,000 euros (38.92%).

Finally, the "skeptical responsible tourist" shows the lowest positive attitude towards the three dimensions of responsible tourism. The cluster is mainly composed by males (71.31%) and in the age bracket 18-25 (31.77%), with an university degree (40.07%), being mostly students (25.695), and showing the highest monthly income when compared to all the other clusters. Nevertheless, this group has the highest monthly family income (2,001-4,000 euros; 38.61% - more than 4,000 euros: 28.27%). Overall, our findings seem to suggest that the attitude towards responsible tourism is higher when females, and middle-aged people, with a high level of education are considered, thus confirming prior research.

Table 1. Responsible practices: EFA

Practices	Factor 1. Responsibility towards the local economy and community	Factor 2. Demand for responsibility to the business used	Factor 3. Responsibility towards the environment
I1 - Buying from local and typical merchants	.447		
I2 - Buying authentic and locally produced goods	.595		
I4 - Favoring restaurants offering typical menu with local food	.608		
I11 - Being in touch with the real life of the destination	.655		
I12 - Being interested towards the several aspects and characteristics of the local community	.753		
I13 - To express respect toward the local people and their tradition and life style	.585		
I14- To look for products that represents the authenticity of the place	.732		
I15 - Protecting the historical and archeological sites of the destination	.576		
I16 - Being in contact with traditions and culture of the local community	.750		
I18 - Collecting information about the history and culture of the destination	.663		
I3 – Favoring environmentally friendly accommodations		.646	
I5 – Favoring accommodation and restaurant where local people are employed		.529	
I6 – Favoring local, small size typical accommodation without sophisticated facilities		.579	
I7 – To use environmentally friendly transport services in order to minimize the negative impacts of travelling		.629	
I17 – Denouncing improper and damaging behaviors to competent authorities		.592	
I19 – Asking the tour operator for written codes of conduct to guarantee good working conditions, protection of the environment and support to the local community in the destination		.771	
I20 – Preserving the authenticity of the destination		.521	
I8 – Respecting the natural resources of the destination			.733
I9 – Limiting the usage of natural resources			.734
I10 - Limiting the production of garbage			.741
% Variance explained	39.785	8.702	6.57
Cumulative variance	39.785	48.487	55.058
Cronbach's alpha	.893	.782	.830

Table 2. Internal consistency and convergent validity

	Indicator	*Loading*	*Robust t-value*	*Crobach's alpha*	*Composite Reliability (CR)*	*Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*
Factor 1. Responsibility towards the local economy and community	I2	.653	11.657	.891	.825	.505
	I4	.658	13.684			
	I11	.649	15.890			
	I12	.722	19.863			
	I13	.735	11.214			
	I14	.724	15.379			
	I15	.661	14.028			
	I16	.880	17.914			
	I18	.704	16.915			
Factor 2. Demand for responsibility to the business used	I7	.644	16.211	.758	.734	.554
	I17	.875	18.052			
	I19	.665	18.289			
	I20	.772	14.574			
Factor 3. Responsibility towards the environment	I8	.754	8.078	.830	.758	.625
	I9	.806	14.907			
	I10	.812	12.900			

Robust goodness of fit index: S-Bχ^2 (101 df) = 368.1819 (p=0.000); NFI= .834; NNFI= .849; CFI=.873; RMSEA=.057.
All statistics have been extracted through robust method due to the Mardia's coefficient normalized estimation >5.00. The normalized estimate = 337.0795 suggests clearly a non-normal sample.
S-Bχ^2: Satorra-Bentler sacle Chi-Square - df: Degree of freedom - NFI: Normed Fit Index - NNFI: Non-Normed Fit Index - CFI: Comparative Fit Index - RMSEA: Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation

Table 3. Discriminant validity of the theoretical construct measures

	F1	*F2*	*F3*
F1	**.505**	[.134; .594]	[.579; .715]
F2	.438	**.554**	[.637; .765]
F3	.418	.491	**.625**

The diagonal represents the AVE, while above the diagonal de 95% confidence interval for the estimated factors correlations is provided, below the diagonal, the shared variance (squared correlations) is represented

Table 4. Estimates and fix indexes

Number of conglomerates	*LL*	*BIC(LL)*	*Npar*	*Class.Err.*	*E_s*	*R^2*
1-Cluster	-4071.3980	8540.3414	57	.0000	1	1
2-Cluster	-1697.4088	3973.6994	83	.0518	.8464	.8605
3-Cluster	-1321.0722	3402.3627	109	.0369	.8979	.9046
4-Cluster	**-1131.0202**	**3203.5951**	**135**	**.0358**	**.9028**	**.9095**
5-Cluster	-877.8869	3213.6649	161	.0368	.9170	.9082
6-Cluster	-762.9521	3330.1318	187	.0381	.9204	.9092

LL=log-likelihood; BIC=Bayesian information criterion; Npar=number of parameters; Class.Err.=classification error; E_s= entropy statistic (entropy R-squared); R^2=Standard R-squared

Table 5. Profile of sustainable tourists (indicators): Attitude about responsible tourism and environment

	Absolute Responsible Tourists	*Motivated Responsible Tourists*	*Intentional Responsible Tourists*	*Skeptical Responsible Tourists*	*Wald*	*p-value*	*R^2*
Cluster Size	64.28%	11.97%	19.06%	4.69%			
Indicators	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean			
F1-Contribution to the community and local economy	8.5520	8.3046	7.5056	5.6092	240.6227	7.0e-52	.5046
F2- Demand for responsability to the business offered	8.2860	7.9474	6.4330	5.5014	341.9536	8.2e-74	.4505
F3- Responsability toward the environment	9.0000	8.5787	8.0723	5.7462	946.3537	7.8e-205	.7113

Table 6. Profile of Italian responsible tourists (covariates): Descriptive criteria

Descriptive Criteria	*Categories*	*Absolute Responsible Tourists*	*Motivated Responsible Tourists*	*Intentional Responsible Tourists*	*Skeptical Responsible Tourists*	*Wald*	*p-value*
Gender	Male	26.10%	25.35%	**50.12%**	**71.31%**	64.413	6.7e-14
	Female	73.84%	**74.65%**	49.88%	28.69%		
Age	18-25 years old	17.63%	16.17%	25.67%	**31.77%**	33.281	.03
	26-35	**46.24%**	44.71%	36.91%	35.53%		
	36-45	22.79%	**24.25%**	20.74%	14.13%		
	46-60	11.17%	13.35%	**15.18%**	14.43%		
	More than 60	2.17%	1.52%	1.50%	**4.14%**		
Education	High school	.58%	**3.72%**	.68%	3.73%	14.459	.10
	Secondary school	31.62%	23.45%	**33.19%**	32.14%		
	University degree	45.52%	**56.60%**	43.05%	40.07%		
	Master/PhD	22.28%	16.23%	23.08%	**24.06%**		
Occupation	Executive/Manager	**4.78%**	4.31%	4.45%	3.13%	42.566	.00
	Employee	31.00%	32.45%	**38.65%**	13.34%		
	Self-employed	17.52%	**25.77%**	11.42%	18.72%		
	Teacher/Professor	4.07%	3.26%	4.30%	**16.24%**		
	Student	18.94%	15.79%	22.48%	**25.69%**		
	Retired	8.69%	2.57%	6.28%	**12.33%**		
	Unemployed	14.13%	**14.33%**	9.08%	8.01%		
	Other	.87%	1.52%	3.34%	2.55%		
Family Income (monthly)	Less than 1,000 euros	14.22%	**15.83%**	11.31%	5.94%	5.352	.11
	1,000-2,000	37.88%	27.16%	**38.92%**	27.18%		
	2,001-4,000	28.69%	37.65%	36.50%	**38.61%**		
	More than 4,000	19.21%	19.36%	13.27%	**28.27%**		
Civil Status	Single	53.31%	49.47%	49.21%	60.13%	3.689	.93
	Married/in couple	42.92%	44.97%	46.52%	37.38%		
	Divorced	3.77%	4.09%	2.25%	2.48%		
	Widow	.00%	1.47%	2.02%	.00%		

The significant percentages of obtained results (≥90% confidence level) have been marked in bold, per each cluster, based on a comparison between four clusters

3.4. Discussion

The aim of the study was to contribute to a deeper understanding of the responsible tourism phenomenon, also including its environmental dimension, using a demand-side approach and carrying out an empirical investigation using a sample of 1,252 Italian tourists. Specifically, the study first identified three underlying dimensions of sustainable tourism, namely: "responsibility towards the local economy and community", "responsibility toward the environment", "demand for responsibility to the businesses used", and "contribution to the local economy", thus partially confirming recent research carried out on a sample of responsible tourists in Italy (Del Chiappa et al., 2014).

Second, the latent segmentation applied to the aforementioned dimensions, considering also socio-demographic characteristics as covariates, showed that four clusters can be identified (namely: "the absolutes", "the intentionals", "the motivated" and the "the skepticals"), and also reported that significant differences do exist between them based on all but one (civil status) socio-demographic characteristics. In sum, the "absolute responsible tourist" is the cluster with the highest positive attitude toward all the three underpinning dimensions

of responsible tourism especially in the case of the environment. Based on the sample composition, findings seems to suggest that a relevant number of Italian tourists show a positive attitude towards all the three underpinning dimensions of responsible tourism (the size of the absolute responsible tourists cluster is 64.28%). Specifically, this is true when female, middle-aged people, with a high level of education and an average monthly family income are considered, thus partially confirming prior research (e.g. Ballantine and Eagles, 1994; Sambri and Pegan, 2008). Further, the study seems to suggest that the perfect tourist does not exist; In other words, Italian tourists show different degrees of responsibility in the way they travel (e.g. Dolnicar et al., 2008; Stanford, 2008).

4. Conclusions

Environmental issues are a constantly growing phenomenon. Most people, goverments and businesses, project a growing of awareness respect to this topic. Currently, this view point is contrary to increase of economy, leading to a situation where a more environmental stance by users has fully not been supported by environmental protection laws. Specifically in tourism sector, the importance of

environmental issues is very relevant for different involved agents. For that, scientific literature should put more attention in the study of environmental concerns as elements of added value in the marketing strategies focused to the tourists.

The results of this study could be significant for both researchers and practitioners. On the one hand, they provide further insights into the scientific debate on responsible tourism, clustering a large sample of tourists from an under-investigated country which is also pivotal in terms of outgoing tourism for many European and non-European tourism destinations.

On the other hand, these findings provide useful information to policy makers, destination marketers and hospitality managers who are interested in fostering the development of responsible tourism. Consumers react positively toward activities and measures that companies could run to improve their pro-environmental behavior. As consequence, it could be argued that an interst in compnies should exist in invesgting in running such a type of activities. According with the eco-efficiency theory, this would allow them to obtain a double economic environmental benefit: razionalization of consumption and the right treatment of generated outputs. Broadly, the activities that could be adopted to foster the development of sustainable tourism reach this aim are certainly numerous.

The present study, aside from the theoretical and managerial contributions, is not free from limitations. The main limitation of the study lies in the fact that it focuses on a convenience sample, and from data collected from just one country (Italy). This means that findings cannot be generalized. Further, the scale we used was a self-report measurement of tourists' attitude towards responsible tourism; this means that social desirability might have affected the responses. Further, our study focused just on consumers' attitude and did not analyze at all their actual behavior and whether, and the extent to which, inconsistencies between attitude and behavior do exist, as hugely reported in prior research. At the same time, these limitations suggest some interesting future research paths. Specifically, it highlights the necessity/opportunity to repeat the study internationally in order to make some cross-cultural comparison, also investigating the extent to which tourists do actually behave responsibly when travelling, at least based on their self-perceptions, and which are the main reasons for inconsistencies between attitude and behavior. Indeed, prior researches have often drawn attention on a "general" problem of discrepancies between attitude and behavior but they didn't deeply study the underpin reasons. Moreover, future research could be interesting to analyze the interactions between stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism which could allow a better understanding of the economic and global vision of environmental results

Seen that attitude and behavioral changes tend to depend more on a shift from extrinsic to intrinsic social values and beliefs, in the long term it should be useful to invest in social, environmental and marketing communication operations in order to spread the values of responsibility and sobriety in the tourist demand and, broadly, to sensitize people to perceive and fully understand the effects that their behavior generates on the visited destination.

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