JOURNAL OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change,
2025, 10(2), 782-792
ISSN: 2589-1316

Extending the Norm Activation Model: The Moderating Role of Subjective Norms in Tourists' Responsible Behavior Toward Cultural Heritage of Tourists

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Citation: Ngoc, D. M. and My, D. V. (2025). Extending the Norm Activation Model: The Moderating Role of Subjective Norms in Tourists' Responsible Behavior Toward Cultural Heritage of Tourists, *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 10(2), 782-792. https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i2.1681

Published: November 12, 2025

ABSTRACT

This study aims to extend the Norm Activation Model (NAM) by incorporating Subjective Norms (SN) as a moderating variable to examine Vietnamese tourists' responsible behavior toward cultural heritage at heritage destinations. A quantitative approach was employed using survey data from 381 Vietnamese tourists who visited heritage sites in Hanoi and Hue. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the relationships among constructs. The findings reveal that awareness of consequences, ascription of responsibility, and personal norms significantly influence responsible heritage behavior. Subjective norms play a crucial moderating role, especially in the relationships between ascription of responsibility and personal norms, and between personal norms and behavior, reflecting the strong influence of collectivist cultural values. This study offers both theoretical and practical insights for promoting responsible heritage tourism in collectivist societies like Vietnam. Emphasizing social influence and personal moral obligation can enhance sustainable tourism practices.

Keywords: Norm Activation Model (NAM), Subjective Norms, responsible behavior toward cultural heritage, Heritage Destination

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development, especially in heritage destinations, has brought significant economic and cultural benefits to many countries, including Vietnam. However, the increasing number of tourists visiting these sites poses tremendous challenges to heritage sustainability. Therefore, understanding and promoting environmentally friendly behavior among tourists has become an important focus for both scholars and policymakers in the field of sustainable tourism (Nguyen, Lobo & Greenland, 2017). The Norm Activation Model (NAM), proposed by Schwartz (1977), is a theoretical framework widely used to explain pro-social behavior, including responsible actions toward the natural and cultural environment. According to this model, when individuals are aware of the negative consequences of not performing a behavior (Awareness of Consequences - AC) and feel responsible for the negative consequences of these behaviors (Ascription of Responsibility - AR), it activates their Personal Norms (PN), which in turn motivates them to engage in socially and environmentally responsible behavior (Harland, Staats, & Wilke, 1999; Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017). Although the NAM has demonstrated good explanatory power in various contexts, including tourism, it has limitations in accounting for the influence of social pressure on individuals, especially in collectivist cultures such as Vietnam (Triandis, 2001; Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017). In these

contexts, individuals are often guided not only by internal personal norms but also by external social expectations from family, friends, and the broader community. To fill this gap, the current study extends the NAM by incorporating subjective norms (SN) as a moderating variable in the relationships between constructs in the research model. Subjective norms reflect perceived social pressure to perform or refrain from specific behaviors (Ajzen, 1991) and are known to play a significant role in shaping behaviors in collectivist societies (Triandis, 2001; Thogersen, 2006). By integrating subjective norms into the NAM framework, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological and social mechanisms that influence environmentally friendly behavior among Vietnamese tourists. Focusing on two culturally significant heritage cities - Hanoi and Hue - this study investigates how Vietnamese tourists' awareness of environmental consequences, sense of personal responsibility, and personal norms affect their environmentally friendly behaviors. Furthermore, it explores how subjective norms moderate the relationships between AR and PN, and between PN and behavior. Using data collected from 381 domestic tourists and applying Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), this study contributes theoretical insights to the literature on responsible tourism and offers practical implications for sustainable heritage destination management in Vietnam.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing pressure on heritage destinations due to mass tourism has led to growing academic interest in understanding tourists' behavior toward cultural heritage, particularly in the context of sustainability and responsibility.

The concept of responsible behavior toward cultural heritage has its roots in broader discussions of sustainable and ethical tourism that emerged prominently in the late 1990s and early 2000s (McKercher & DuCros, 2002). It refers to tourists' conscious efforts to minimize negative impacts on cultural sites while actively supporting preservation and respectful engagement with local traditions (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Cheng et., al, 2015; Woo, 2025). This behavior encompasses actions such as obeying site regulations, avoiding damage to heritage artifacts, respecting cultural norms, and supporting local conservation efforts. The academic exploration of this concept has evolved through several phases. In early studies, responsible heritage behavior was often subsumed under the umbrella of sustainable tourism and measured through broad indicators of environmentally and culturally sensitive actions (Resinger & Turner, 2003). Over time, scholars began to treat it as a distinct construct, developing specific measurement items reflecting tourists' moral obligations and behavioral intentions at heritage sites. This behavior is considered a key component of sustainable tourism and has been widely explored through various behavioral theories.

One of the most influential frameworks in this domain is the NAM proposed by Schwartz, (1977). The model suggests that individuals are motivated to perform prosocial behaviors when they are aware of the negative consequences of inaction Awareness of Consequences and feel a personal responsibility for those consequences (Ascription of Responsibility), leading to the activation of Personal Norms. This framework has been successfully applied in environmental and tourism contexts (Harland, Staats, & Wilke, 1999; Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017).

In addition to NAM, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) has also been widely employed to explain tourists' behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). TPB highlights the roles of Attitude, Perceived Behavioral Control, and particularly Subjective Norms - the perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in a behavior - as key predictors of behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). While TPB explicitly considers social influence, NAM traditionally emphasizes internalized moral obligations rather than external social expectations.

To address the limitations of each model, recent studies have sought to integrate or extend these frameworks. For instance, Rao et al., (2022) extended TPB by incorporating Self-Congruity Theory to better predict tourists' pro-environmental behavior in heritage settings. Similarly, Han, Hsu, & Sheu (2010) found that TPB effectively explained environmentally responsible behavior in the hospitality sector. The Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, which builds upon NAM, has also gained traction for integrating personal values, environmental beliefs, and moral norms to explain sustainable consumer behavior (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017; Nguyen, Lobo, & Greenland, 2017).

Despite these advances, subjective norms have rarely been examined as a moderating variable in the relationship between NAM constructs, particularly in the heritage tourism context. This represents a significant gap, especially in collectivist cultures such as Vietnam, where individuals are not only guided by internal norms but also by external social expectations from family, peers, and community (Triandis, 2001; Thogersen, 2006). While TPB incorporates SN as a direct predictor, there is limited empirical research that examines SN as a moderator within extended NAM frameworks to account for cross-cultural variations in normative influence.

Addressing this gap, the present study extends NAM by incorporating Subjective Norms as a moderating variable. This approach aims to capture both internal moral obligation and external social influence, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological and cultural mechanisms underlying responsible heritage behavior in collectivist societies like Vietnam.

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the theoretical foundations of the NAM and supported by literature in environmental and heritage tourism behavior, this study proposes a research model that examines the relationships among three core NAM constructs - awareness of consequences, ascription of responsibility, and personal norms - in predicting responsible behavior toward cultural heritage (RBH). Furthermore, the model incorporates subjective norms as a moderating variable, addressing the lack of research on social pressure's interaction with personal norms in collectivist societies.

Awareness of Consequences and Ascription of Responsibility

According to NAM, awareness of the adverse consequences of inaction is a critical precursor to the development of moral obligations. When tourists perceive that neglecting respectful behavior could harm cultural heritage, they are more likely to feel responsible for such consequences (Schwartz, 1977; Harland, Staats, & Wilke, 1999). In the heritage context, this awareness relates to understanding how personal actions may contribute to the degradation or preservation of culturally significant sites. This serves as the foundation for hypothesis H1
H1: Awareness of consequences positively influences ascription of responsibility.

Ascription of Responsibility and Personal Norms

Once individuals accept responsibility for the potential negative outcomes of their actions, this acknowledgment activates personal moral obligations to behave accordingly (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017). In tourism, when travelers feel personally accountable for protecting heritage, they are more likely to develop personal norms that support responsible conduct. This constitutes the basis for hypothesis H2.
H2: Ascription of responsibility positively influences personal norms

Personal Norms and Responsible Behavior toward cultural heritage

Personal norms represent the internalized beliefs about the moral obligation to perform or avoid specific actions. In many studies, PN has been a strong predictor of pro-environmental and prosocial behaviors (Han, Hsu, & Sheu, 2010). When applied to the heritage tourism context, stronger personal norms are expected to lead to more responsible behaviors such as respecting site rules, avoiding vandalism, or promoting heritage appreciation.
H3: Personal norms positively influence responsible behavior toward cultural heritage

Moderating Role of Subjective Norms

While NAM focuses primarily on internalized moral drivers, it does not account for social influences that are particularly important in collectivist cultures such as Vietnam. Subjective norms, defined as the perceived social pressure to perform or abstain from a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991), may enhance or weaken the effect of personal norms depending on the level of alignment with societal expectations (Saracevic, Schlegelmilch, & Wu, 2022). In this study, SN is hypothesized to moderate two key relationships:

The link between AR and PN, where higher social pressure may strengthen the translation of responsibility into personal moral obligation.

The link between PN and RBH, that individuals with stronger subjective norms are more likely to act on their personal norms.

Based on these premises, hypotheses H3 and H4 were proposed:
H4: Subjective Norms positively moderate the relationship between Ascription of Responsibility and Personal Norms, such that the relationship is stronger when Subjective Norms is high.
H5: Subjective Norms positively moderate the relationship between Personal Norms and Responsible Behavior Toward Cultural Heritage, such that the relationship is stronger when Subjective Norms are high.

Proposed Research Model

Below is the conceptual model illustrating the hypothesized relationships:

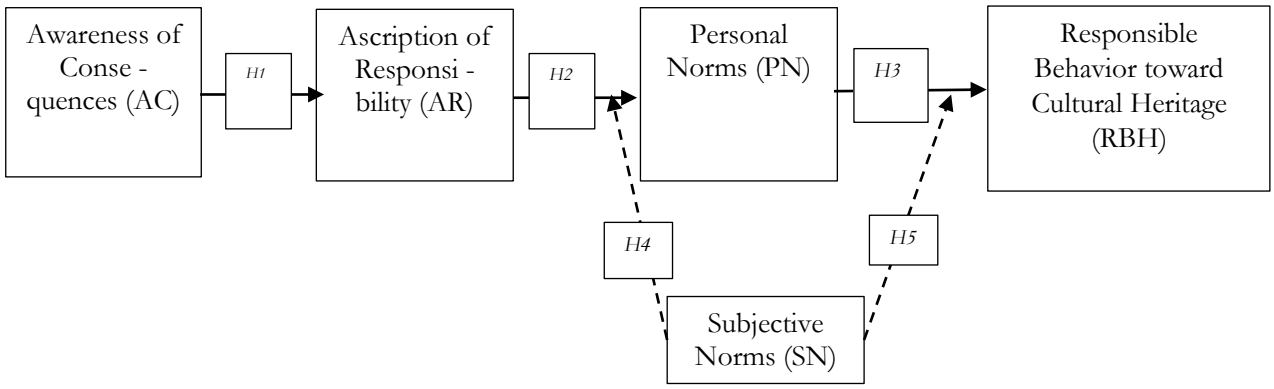

Figure 1. *Research Model*
Source: Authors

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sampling

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to enhance the robustness of the findings.

To ensure that the measurement model and constructs were culturally appropriate and context-specific, a preliminary qualitative study was conducted before the main survey. This phase adopted a semi-structured interview approach, allowing for flexibility in exploring participants' Awareness of Consequences and Ascription of Responsibility toward responsible behavior in heritage settings. Three domestic tourists and two tourism behavior experts were interviewed. Despite the limited number of participants, this exploratory phase provided valuable initial insights for refining the conceptual model and survey items, particularly regarding subjective norms and moral obligations in collectivist contexts such as Vietnam. Given the exploratory nature of this study, the qualitative phase was not intended to provide generalizable findings. Instead, it served to contextualize the research framework and ensure that the constructs reflected local cultural nuances. In addition, it supported the refinement of survey language and the development of new observational items that better captured culturally grounded perceptions of responsibility and social influence. Based on qualitative results, new observational items were also developed to enrich the measurement of key constructs in the research model. Specifically, four new items were added: *AR4. Every tourist has a responsibility to help protect cultural heritage at destinations; AR5. Everyone has a responsibility to preserve cultural heritage.* These were used to strengthen the Ascription of Responsibility (AR) construct. Additionally, to better reflect social influences identified in the interviews, two items were included under the Subjective Norms (SN) construct: *SN4. Tourism staff (e.g., guides, interpreters) influence my responsible behavior toward cultural heritage; SN5. Community monitoring influences my responsible behavior toward cultural heritage.*

The limited number of interviews is acknowledged as a limitation, and future studies should consider expanding qualitative sampling to reach theoretical saturation and explore potential variations across different types of tourists and regions.The development of the initial measurement items was grounded in a comprehensive review of relevant literature, focusing on constructs such as AC, AR, PN, SN, and RBH. The theoretical framework was informed by seminal and contemporary studies, including those by Schwartz, 1977; Harland, Staats, & Wilke, 1999; Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017; Nguyen, Lobo, & Greenland, 2017; Kim & Koo, 2020; Rao et al., 2022; Wang, 2025; Lee et al., 2024; Kim & Koo, 2020. Following the qualitative exploration, the initial pool of measurement items was refined through further expert feedback and used to construct a draft questionnaire. A pilot test involving 50 domestic tourists was subsequently carried out to assess the clarity, reliability, and appropriateness of the scales. Based on the pilot findings, necessary adjustments were made to enhance scale validity and measurement consistency.

The finalized questionnaire was then administered in the main quantitative phase. Data were collected from domestic tourists who had previously visited at least one cultural heritage destination in either Hanoi or Hue - two cities in Vietnam renowned for their cultural heritage significance and tourism appeal. A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to ensure the relevance of participants' experiences to the research context.

Data collection took place from January to February 2025. After thorough screening and data cleaning procedures, 381 valid responses were retained for subsequent statistical analysis.

Measurement Instruments

All constructs in the model were measured using established multi-item scales adapted from previous validated studies. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") was used for all items.

Awareness of Consequences: This construct reflects the extent to which tourists know the potential negative consequences of their actions on cultural heritage sites. Items are adapted from Schwartz (1977), Stern et al. (1999) and modified to fit the tourism context follow Han et al (2017), measuring how much visitors recognize that irresponsible behaviors, such as touching artifacts, littering, or disregarding cultural norms, can lead to damage or degradation of cultural heritage.

Ascription of Responsibility: Adapted from Harland, Staats, & Wilke (1999), this construct measures the degree to which tourists feel personally accountable for protecting and preserving cultural heritage during their visit. It reflects the internalization of responsibility for avoiding harmful behaviors and supporting local conservation efforts.

Personal Norms refer to the individual's moral obligation to act responsibly toward heritage preservation. These are internalized values that motivate tourists to behave in environmentally and culturally respectful ways. Items are adapted from Schwartz (1977), Stern et al. (1999) focusing on moral commitment in the tourism setting.

Subjective Norms: This construct reflects tourists' perceptions of social pressure or expectations from significant others (e.g., family, friends, peers, or society) regarding their behavior toward cultural heritage. It serves as a moderating variable in the extended NAM, influencing how awareness and responsibility translate into personal norms and actions.

Responsible Behavior toward Cultural Heritage: Based on assessing self-reported behaviors such as respecting site rules, avoiding damage, and promoting heritage awareness. This is the dependent variable that reflects the responsible behaviors of tourists at heritage destinations.

All items were translated into Vietnamese using back-translation techniques to ensure both linguistic and conceptual equivalence.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 3.0 software. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its suitability for complex models with moderating effects and its robustness with relatively small to medium sample sizes (Hair et al., 2021). The analysis followed a two-step approach:

Measurement model assessment: To test construct reliability, convergent validity (e.g., factor loadings, AVE), and discriminator validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT). Structural model assessment: To evaluate the significance and strength of the hypothesized relationships using bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples), and to assess the moderating effect of subjective norms through interaction terms. Additionally, multicollinearity diagnostics (VIF) and effect size (f^2) were reported to ensure robustness of the model interpretation.

RESULTS

Sample Profile

Table 2. Profile of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
Gender			***Education***		
Male	142	37,28	Up to high school	56	14,70
Female	239	62,72	Bachelor's degree and higher	325	85,30
Generation			***Visited Heritage Sites in Hanoi/Hue time***		
Gen X	108	28,35	2-3 times	95	24,93
Gen Y	137	35,96	3 times	286	75,07
Gen Z	136	35,69	Total	***381***	

Source: Author

Table 2 presents the sample profile. The study surveyed 381 tourists who had previously visited cultural heritage sites in two major Vietnamese cities: Hue and Hanoi. In terms of demographic distribution, the sample included

respondents from three key generations in Vietnam: Generation X (n = 108; 28.35%), Generation Y (n = 137; 35.96%), and Generation Z (n = 136; 35.69%). Many respondents (n = 286; 75.07%) had visited cultural heritage sites more than three times, while 24.93% had visited two to three times. This suggests that the sample consisted mostly of experienced travelers with frequent exposure to heritage tourism. Regarding educational background, the vast majority held at least a university degree (n = 325; 85.30%), while only 14.70% had completed only high school. This confirms the typical profile of heritage tourists as individuals with a relatively high level of education and awareness of cultural values. Regarding gender, female respondents accounted for 62.72% (n = 239) of the total sample, while male respondents made up 37.28% (n = 142). Overall, the sample is composed of educated, experienced tourists spanning across generations X, Y, and Z, with a predominance of female respondents. These characteristics make the sample suitable for analyzing factors influencing responsible tourism behavior in heritage destinations. The demographic diversity and high level of experience among participants enhance the reliability and generalizability of the study's findings.

Measurement Model

The research applies to the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to estimate the theoretical model by SmartPLS3. According to Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics (2009), PLS-SEM simultaneously evaluates the measurement model testing the contructs' reliability and validity, as well as the structural model testing the hypothesized relationships between the independent factors and dependent factors. There are some interesting research results.

For the latent variable AC, three items were retained: AC1, AC2 and AC3, with outer loading values of 0.909, 0.889, and 0.921, respectively. The Outer VIF Values for these items were all below the threshold of <3, indicating no multicollinearity issues.

For the latent variable AR, five items were retained: AR1, AR2, AR3, AR4, AR5 with outer loading values of 0,821; 0,821; 0,831; 0,789; 0,849 respectively. The Outer VIF Values for these items were all below the threshold of <3, indicating no multicollinearity issues.

For the latent variable PN, 04 items were retained: PN1, PN3, PN4, PN5 with outer loading values > 0,7. The Outer VIF Values for these items were all below the threshold of < 3, indicating no multicollinearity issues. Item PN2 was eliminated because it had an outer loading index < 0.7.

For the latent variable SN, 04 items were retained: SN2, SN3, SN4, SN5, with outer loading values > 0,7. The Outer VIF Values for these items were all below the threshold of <3, indicating no multicollinearity issues. Item SN1 was eliminated because it had a VIF > 3.5.

One dependent latent variable, RBH (intermediate variable) yielded noteworthy findings. For the latent variable RBH, 09 items were retained to measure tourists' responsible behavior toward cultural heritage, including RBH1, RBH2, RBH3, RBH4, RBH5, RBH6, RBH7, RBH8 and RBH9 (Refer to Table 3 for further details).

Table 3 shows that all values of Cronbach's Alpha (CA) > 0.7, Composite Reliability (CR) > 0.7, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5, Outer Loading (OL) > 0,7; Variance Inflation Factor **(**VIF) meet the established standards. These results confirm the reliability and validity of the latent variables included in the model.

Table 3. Measurement model Results

		Resources	**CA > 0,7**	**CR > 0,7**	**AVE > 0,5**	**OL > 0,7**	**VIF < 3**
AC1	Tourists' harmful actions can seriously threaten the sustainability of heritage sites.	Schwartz (1977); Stern et al. (1999); Han, Hwang, & Lee (2017); Lee et al., 2024	**0,892**	**0,933**	**0,822**	0,909	2,727
AC2	Failure to act responsibly in heritage destinations may harm the local community and heritage conservation.					0,889	2,369
AC3	Ignoring rules or guidelines at heritage places can cause significant damage to cultural assets.					0,921	2,999
AR1	I feel personally responsible for protecting the heritage environment when I visit such places.	Schwartz (1977); Han, Hwang, & Lee (2017); Lee et al., 2024	**0,881**	**0,913**	**0,677**	0,821	2,065
AR2	It is my responsibility to minimize my negative impact on heritage sites.					0,821	2,174
AR3	I would feel guilty if my behavior caused harm to a cultural or heritage site					0,831	2,190

AR4	Every tourist has a responsibility to help protect cultural heritage at destinations.	From the interview results				0,789	1,931
AR5	Everyone has a responsibility to preserve cultural heritage.					0,849	2,387
PN1	Acting responsibly at heritage sites reflects my personal moral standards when traveling.	Schwartz (1977); Stern et al. (1999)	**0,881**	**0,918**		0,808	1,935
PN3	I would feel guilty if my actions negatively affected cultural heritage during my travels.				**0,738**	0,897	2,776
PN4	I feel proud when I behave responsibly at cultural heritage sites.					0,860	2,275
PN5	I believe that respecting heritage is an essential moral quality of a responsible person.					0,869	2,413
SN2	Most people I value would support me behaving responsibly toward cultural heritage during my travels.	Ajzen (1991); Bamberg & Moser (2007)	**0,831**	**0,887**		0,817	1,824
SN3	I feel social pressure to act responsibly toward cultural heritage at tourist destinations.				**0,664**	0,764	1,570
SN4	Tourism staff (e.g., guides, interpreters) influence my responsible behavior toward cultural heritage.	From the interview results				0,832	1,891
SN5	Community monitoring influences my responsible behavior toward cultural heritage.					0,843	1,978
RBH1	I comply with rules and regulations when visiting heritage sites.	Kim & Koo, (2020); Bamberg & Moser (2007); Lee et al. (2024)	**0,924**	**0,937**		0,725	2,332
RBH2	I avoid touching or damaging artifacts and structures at heritage sites.					0,738	2,392
RBH3	I actively encourage others to respect and protect cultural heritage.					0,808	2,336
RBH4	I am willing to participate in or support activities that help preserve cultural heritage.					0,783	2,329
RBH5	I am willing to remind others if they behave in a way that harms heritage.				**0,624**	0,800	2,353
RBH6	I have refused to take part in tourism activities that may negatively impact heritage.					0,776	2,197
RBH7	I am willing to pay fees to support the maintenance and preservation of heritage sites.					0,820	2,791
RBH8	I have shared the cultural value of heritage sites I visited on social media.					0,837	2,943
RBH9	I prioritize using tourism services that are heritage- and community-friendly.					0,813	2,484

Source: Author

Structural Model

To evaluate the structural model, we employed the R^2 index and the significance of path coefficients (Hair et al., 2014). We also utilized bootstrapping analysis to assess direct effects, indirect effects, and moderating effects. The estimation results, presented in Figure 2 and Table 4, Table 5 indicate that the path coefficients are statistically significant, demonstrating the relationships among factors within the research model.

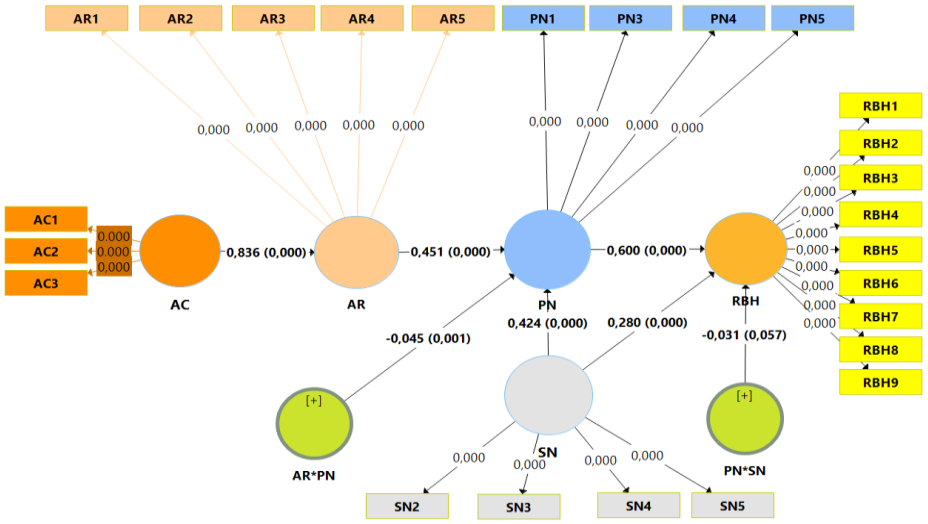

Figure 2. Relationships among Factors within the research model
Source: Author

The structural model assessment reveals several statistically significant relationships among the constructs, supporting the hypotheses of the extended Norm Activation Model in the context of responsible behavior toward cultural heritage.

Table 4: Total effects of factors within the research model

	P-Value	T-Statitics	Beta
AC -> AR	0,000	36,990	0,836
AR -> PN	0,000	8,763	0,451
PN -> RBH	0,000	11,101	0,600
SN -> PN	0,000	8,377	0,424
SN -> RBH	0,000	4,881	0,280
AR*PN -> PN	0,001	3,330	-0,045
PN*SN -> RBH	***0,065***	***1,849***	***-0,031***

Source: Authors

Table 5: Total Indirect effects of factors within the research model

	P-Value	T-Statitics	Beta
AC -> AR -> PN	0,000	8,256	0,377
AR -> PN -> RBH	0,000	5,480	0,271
AC -> AR -> PN -> RBH	0,000	5,250	0,226
AR*PN -> PN -> RBH	0,002	3,072	-0,027
SN -> PN -> RBH	0,000	7,949	0,254

Source: Authors

The measurement results reveal statistically significant relationships among the constructs within the proposed research model, thereby supporting the hypotheses developed based on the extended Norm Activation Model, which incorporates Subjective Norms to explain tourists' responsible behavior toward cultural heritage.

The analysis demonstrates that AC exerts a strong and significant positive effect on AR (β = 0,836, T = 36,990, p < 0,001), highlighting the crucial role of cognitive awareness in fostering a sense of personal accountability. Additionally, AR significantly influences PN (β = 0,450, T = 8,952, p < 0,001), suggesting that a stronger sense of moral responsibility contributes to the internalization of ethical standards. Notably, PN emerges as a robust predictor of RBH (β = 0,584, T = 10,113, p < 0,001), underscoring the pivotal role of personal norms in guiding ethical behavior among tourists in heritage contexts. Collectively, these results validate the conceptual framework by providing empirical support for Hypotheses H1, H2, and H3.

Moreover, the findings show that SN have a significant direct impact on both PN (β = 0,424, T = 8,377, p < 0,001) and RBH (β = 0,280, T = 8,881, p < 0,001), indicating that social pressure and perceived expectations from others meaningfully contribute to the development of personal moral norms and actual behavioral intentions.

The examination of indirect effects provides further insights into the mediating mechanisms within the model. Specifically, AR mediates the relationship between AC and PN (β = 0,377, T = 8,256, p < 0,001), while the indirect effect of AR on RBH via PN is also significant (β = 0,271, T = 5,480, p < 0,001). In addition, a sequential mediation

pathway from AC → AR → PN → RBH is confirmed (β = 0,226, T = 5,250, p < 0,001), reinforcing the theoretical assumption that normative processes serve as a bridge between cognitive awareness and behavioral outcomes.

Regarding moderating effects, SN significantly and negatively moderates the relationship between AR and PN (β = -0,045, T = 3,302, p = 0,001), suggesting that the positive influence of AR on PN diminishes under conditions of high social pressure. This finding supports Hypothesis H4. However, the moderating effect of SN on the relationship between PN and RBH is not statistically significant (p = 0,065>0,05), indicating that social norms do not meaningfully alter the influence of internalized personal norms on responsible behavior. As such, Hypothesis H5 is not supported.

DISCUSSION

This study employed an extended Norm Activation Model to examine the psychological and social determinants of responsible behavior toward cultural heritage among domestic tourists in Vietnam. By incorporating Subjective Norms into the model, the research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how cognitive awareness, moral responsibility, and perceived social expectations jointly influence Responsible Behavior toward Heritage in tourism contexts.

The empirical results demonstrate that Awareness of Consequences significantly predicts Ascription of Responsibility, which in turn influences Personal Norms - a strong and consistent predictor of Responsible Behavior toward Heritage. Furthermore, SN plays a dual role within the extended NAM framework: it directly influences both PN and RBH, and moderates the relationship between AR and PN, attenuating the strength of this association under conditions of high social pressure. These findings offer strong empirical support for most of the proposed hypotheses and underscore the critical influence of both internalized moral norms and external social cues in shaping pro-social tourism behavior (Schwartz, 1977; Harland, Staats, & Wilke, 1999), (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017).

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the growing literature on responsible tourism behavior in several important ways:

Extension of the NAM Framework: By integrating Subjective Norms, the study addresses longstanding critiques of NAM's emphasis on individual-level moral reasoning (Thogersen, 2006). The findings reaffirm the relevance of social influence in collectivist cultures such as Vietnam, where behavior is often shaped by group values and social conformity (Rao, Qiu, Morrison, & Wei, 2022). Validation of Normative Pathways: The sequential mechanism from AC → AR → PN → RBH reinforces the theoretical proposition that personal moral norms act as a key mediator between cognitive awareness and responsible behavior, in line with previous findings in tourism and environmental behavior literature Lee et al., 2024).

Moderating Role of SN: The observed negative moderation of SN on the AR–PN relationship reveals a nuanced dynamic in which strong social expectations may substitute for individual moral reasoning - an insight supported by the norm substitution effect described.

Contextual Relevance: Situated within the Vietnamese tourism context, this study contributes valuable empirical evidence from Southeast Asia, demonstrating that models of ethical behavior must be adapted to align with local sociocultural norms and collective moral orientations (Nguyen, Lobo, & Greenland, 2017), (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017).

Scale Development Contributions

A key contribution to this research lies in the development and validation of four new context-specific (collectivist culture, such as Vietnam) measurement items, informed by qualitative interviews with tourists and experts. These are: AR4: "*Every tourist has a responsibility to help protect cultural heritage at destinations*."; AR5: "*Everyone has a responsibility to preserve cultural heritage*."; SN4: "*Tourism staff (e.g., guides, interpreters) influence my responsible behavior toward cultural heritage*."; SN5: "*Community monitoring influences my responsible behavior toward cultural heritage*."

These new items enrich the measurement of AR and SN by introducing a more collectivist and context-sensitive conceptualization of responsibility and social influence. Items AR4 and AR5 shift the emphasis from individual moral agency to shared communal duty, highly consistent with Vietnam's collectivist cultural structure. Similarly, SN4 and SN5 broaden the scope of social influence to include tourism service providers and local communities as key reference groups, thereby enhancing the predictive power of SN within the model.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study generate several actionable recommendations for tourism authorities, heritage site managers, and policymakers:

Educational Interventions: Increasing tourists' awareness of the negative consequences of irresponsible behavior through campaigns, signage, and guided interpretation can help trigger moral reflection and activate responsible conduct (Han, Hwang & Lee, 2017).

Leveraging Social Influence: Since SN directly affects both PN and RBH, tourism initiatives should strategically involve social actors - such as influencers, community leaders, and peer networks - to disseminate pro-social norms and expectations.

Fostering Moral Commitment: Programs that facilitate personal moral engagement - such as ethical pledges, volunteer tourism, or community-based conservation activities - can strengthen PN and increase commitment to RBH.

Segmented Communication: Given the moderating role of SN, communication efforts should be tailored based on tourists' demographic and psychological characteristics to ensure greater relevance and behavioral impact (Lee et al., 2024).

Institutionalization of Ethical Standards: Tourism institutions should co-develop and enforce codes of conduct in partnership with local stakeholders to promote shared responsibility and accountability for cultural heritage preservation.

Funded by Project "Research to develop creative tourism in Vietnam", Code B2024-KHA-12
The statement "This research is partly funded by University of Finance – Marketing"

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all participants who contributed to the survey. Special thanks are extended to the management teams of heritage sites in Hanoi and Hue for their support in facilitating data collection. This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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