CLIMATE FRIENDLY TOURIST BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism has been defined as a type of tourism that incorporates the principles of sustainable development, i.e. considering not only the economic but also the social and environmental bottom line. Recently, the idea of the triple bottom line has been expanded to a quadruple bottom line including climatic considerations. Climate change is a global phenomenon that will shape the future of tourism in largely unknown ways. As a contributor to climate change, tourism can actively lower the extent of climate change through mitigation. Next to supply-side mitigation measures to design less energy-intensive and more energy-efficient tourism offers, demand-side perspectives play a critical role as tourists directly and indirectly contribute to the extent of mitigation through their consumption and behavioral practices.

The paper is part of a PhD project contributing to the discussion on demand focused climate change mitigation in the vacation context. It explores whether there are tourists that behave more climate friendly or whether climate friendly behavior has to be encouraged explicitly in the vacation context. The former case raises the question how climate friendly tourists can be identified and targeted. In the latter case, tourism providers like to know how to encourage climate friendly behavior of tourists. The discussion focuses primarily on the first part of these questions. The author refers to the literature on the topic and to findings of a scoping study undertaken with tourists to the Slovenian coast. The aim of this paper is to stimulate discussion and further research in order to improve strategies for sustainable tourism.

Keywords Climate change, Mitigation, Tourist behavior, Tourist consumption