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# Ethical consumption and climate change in hospitality and tourism: challenges, solutions, and prospects: Guest editorial

Guest editorial

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## Introduction

After the Glasgow COP26 climate change summit, nations committed themselves to further speeding up their decarbonization strategies and providing a new, improved framework for a global carbon market (The Economist, 2021). Some destinations have already accelerated their commitment to working with the hospitality and tourism industry and communities to develop long-lasting sustainable destinations. Meanwhile, the field of sustainable consumption within the climate change domain has been developing intensively in recent years in the hospitality and tourism industry (Sheedy *et al.*, 2020; Sharma *et al.*, 2023; Taheri and Rahimi, 2019; Wells *et al.*, 2015). Here, the climate crisis is changing our world in various ways, resulting in seasonality issues, increases in event disruptions, forced migrations, food and beverage insecurity, diseases and deaths (Olya, 2019; Odou and Schill, 2020).

The hospitality and tourism industry is among the main contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. However, it is not clear how different scenarios of climate change would affect the industry. As hospitality and tourism is one of the most vulnerable industries to crises, there is an absolute need to understand how key actor groups and stakeholders (e.g. consumers and suppliers) can prepare for, respond to, mitigate and adapt strategies against climate change. For example, the UNWTO and Japan International Cooperation Agency developed a report to highlight the importance of sustainable tourism and responsible actions required from all tourism stakeholders. Their report also provided a simplified demonstration of the tourism value chain and its relationships with different sustainable development goals (SDGs) under three main layers of the tourism journey (i.e. consumption activities by tourists), primary and support activities (i.e. partnerships in human societies and political governance) and tourism assets (i.e. climate or natural and cultural resources) (UNWTO, 2023). Another example based on an integrative review of over 700 articles on tourism and climate change areas. Sharma *et al.* (2023) identified three main aggregate dimensions: tourism experiences, tourism branches and climate conditions. They also concluded that tourism experiences (SDG 12) and climate action (SDG 13) together contribute to the development of a tourism ecosystem that encompasses humans and the rest of nature. Here, cost-effective and innovative nature-based solutions can also be another aid for the management of societal and ecological issues by codesigning and implementing actionable, equitable solutions in the tourism and hospitality (Olya and Taheri, 2021).

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*Corrigendum:* It has come to the attention of the publisher of the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* that the following guest editorial by Taheri, B., Olya, H. and Batat, W. (2024), "Ethical consumption and climate change in hospitality and tourism: challenges, solutions, and prospects: Guest editorial", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 1457-1466. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2024-169>, incorrectly listed Wided Batat's affiliation as EM Normandie Business School, Metis Lab and University Lyon 2, Paris, France. The correct affiliation is University of Lyon 2, Lyon, France. This oversight has now been corrected.



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Due to the steadily evolving concept of global climate change and its influence on consumption and lifestyles, sustainable consumer behavior has not been fully operationalized in practice, particularly in the hospitality and tourism industry. Ethically minded and ecologically conscious consumers in the hospitality and tourism industry are changing and adapting their consumption patterns with a keen interest in sustainable practices. Some of the recommended practices and strategies include promotion of environmentally friendly packaging, building and supporting self-sustaining communities, generating socially responsible events, concerns about the cycle of wine-making, changing their food consumption pattern (e.g. veganism), food waste issues, conscious travel and hospitality patterns and avoiding travel with an airplane to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save the world from global climate crises (Batat, 2021a, 2021b; Okumus *et al.*, 2020; Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher, 2016; Olya and Taheri, 2021; Taheri and Thompson, 2020).

Furthermore, several authors have proposed definitions of ethical consumer behaviors as a conscious and deliberate decision to make consumption choices based on personal beliefs, values and purchasing behavior that considers environmental issues (e.g. climate crisis) related to the production and distribution of goods and services within the hospitality and tourism industry (e.g. Olya *et al.*, 2019a). To this end, further theoretical and practical developments are needed to direct ethical consumption toward addressing climate change. We acknowledge that the process of stimulating the awareness, attitude and behavioral intentions of consumers about adaptive/mitigative initiatives in the hospitality industry against climate crisis is a long journey (Olya and Altinay, 2016). Hence, a multidisciplinary scientific approach is necessary to propose innovative, valuable and timely solutions to such a complex problem at local and global scales, particularly in the climate crisis (Sheedy *et al.*, 2020) within the hospitality and tourism industry. To this end, our special issue aimed to enhance our readers' determination to understand climate change and sustainable consumption trends and develop innovative solutions to stimulate attitudinal and behavioral changes against climate change in the hospitality and tourism industry.

### **The papers in this special issue**

This special issue comprises a collection of 11 articles broadly categorized into three main research streams based on their primary focus on climate change and sustainability, consumer behavior and ethical practices and organizational strategies:

- (1) climate change and sustainability;
- (2) consumer behavior and ethical practices; and
- (3) organizational performance and innovation.

Each of these streams represents a unique facet of the current research landscape in sustainable hospitality and ethical tourism practices, providing valuable insights for academics and practitioners alike.

The first stream, climate change and sustainability, encompasses five articles that explore the intersection of tourism, hospitality and the pressing global issue of climate change. These articles delve into topics such as carbon footprints, sustainability values and the role of technology in mitigating climate change impacts. For instance, the study by Yoo *et al.* (2023) investigated the resistance to blockchain adoption in the food service industry. They found that employee characteristics and perceived risk of blockchain technology contribute to this resistance. However, public pressures and climate change awareness can weaken the negative impact of this resistance on adoption intentions. This study suggests

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that addressing employees' negative perceptions and considering stakeholder pressures can aid in the adoption of blockchain for environmental practices in the food service industry.

The second article by [Apolloni \*et al.\* \(2023\)](#) delves into the motivations and challenges of carbon footprint analysis among Australian accommodation providers. This study investigates the drivers and barriers for these providers in measuring their businesses' carbon footprints. The findings reveal that corporate responsibility, environmental concern, eco-certification requirements and business benefits drive carbon footprint analysis adoption. However, barriers such as data gathering difficulties, lack of standard methodology, lengthy decision-making processes and resource scarcity hinder adoption. This study also develops a conceptual framework for implementing carbon footprint analysis in the accommodation context and suggests strategies to increase its adoption. This research responds to the call for more studies on carbon footprint in the hotel context and is the first to explore the specific drivers and barriers for implementing carbon footprint analysis in the accommodation sector.

In the third article, a comprehensive review has been conducted by [Pan \*et al.\* \(2023\)](#). The authors examined empirical studies on the relationship between climate change and tourism from 2007 to 2021. The study analyzed research subjects, topics and economic development levels. The researchers used a literature review approach and a staged article selection process from the Scopus database. They found that research articles on climate change and tourism have been increasing, with 893 articles published in 254 different journals, over 60% of which were from non-tourism or cross-disciplinary journals. Significant differences were found by period between developed and developing countries. This study identified gaps in policy analysis and insufficient research for developing nations. It recommends more research on climate change and tourism in developing countries and on biodiversity declines due to climate change. This study is unique in its exclusive focus on empirical research studies and its comparison of results across different time periods and between developing and developed countries.

In the fourth article, [Song \*et al.\* \(2023\)](#) explored the impact of nudging on low-carbon travel choices. They found that destination attributes and climate change perceptions significantly influence these choices. Nudging increased preference for low-carbon choices, especially among tourists with higher climate change awareness. This study suggests that nudging can promote sustainable tourism and the selection of low-carbon destinations. In the same vein, [Farrukh \*et al.\* \(2023\)](#) studied the impact of team-level green human resource management practices (TGHRM) on team-level green creative behavior (TGCB) via team green psychological climate. They found that TGHRM significantly influences TGCB and that ethical leadership (EL) and green culture (GC) can moderate these relationships. This study fills a gap in the literature by examining the effects of TGHRM on TGCB and the role of EL and GC in these dynamics.

The second stream, consumer behavior and ethical practices, encompasses three key articles and focuses on the behaviors and ethical practices of consumers within the hospitality and tourism industry. These articles investigate patterns in travel behavior, ethical dining practices and the gap between sustainable intentions and behaviors. For instance, [Kim \*et al.\* \(2023\)](#) studied how the matching effect of local food and color influences ethical dining behaviors. They found that consistent color and sustainability marketing significantly improve customer attitudes and visit intentions. This study also revealed the moderating role of credibility and the mediating role of green image in these relationships. This research provides insights for effectively promoting sustainability initiatives using color as a marketing tool on social media. On the other hand, [Turk \*et al.\* \(2023\)](#) examined the interplay between sustainability values and pro-sustainable tourist behaviors. They

introduced a new mediator variable, “environmentally intellectualist behavior,” and found that it significantly influences these behaviors. The study also revealed that the culture or origin of tourists impacts their decision-making process. This research advances the value theory by demonstrating that sustainability values can be modeled as higher-order factors and must be included in consumer behavior models. Lastly, in their article, [Khan et al. \(2024\)](#) addressed the intention-behavior gap in sustainable hospitality. They analyze 71 scientific papers and provide a descriptive overview and critical analysis of the literature. This study offers four directions for future research and practical insights for navigating the intention-behavior gap. The paper’s originality lies in its focus on the intention-behavior gap and its call to reevaluate traditional behavioral frameworks. It provides a roadmap for future research in sustainable hospitality.

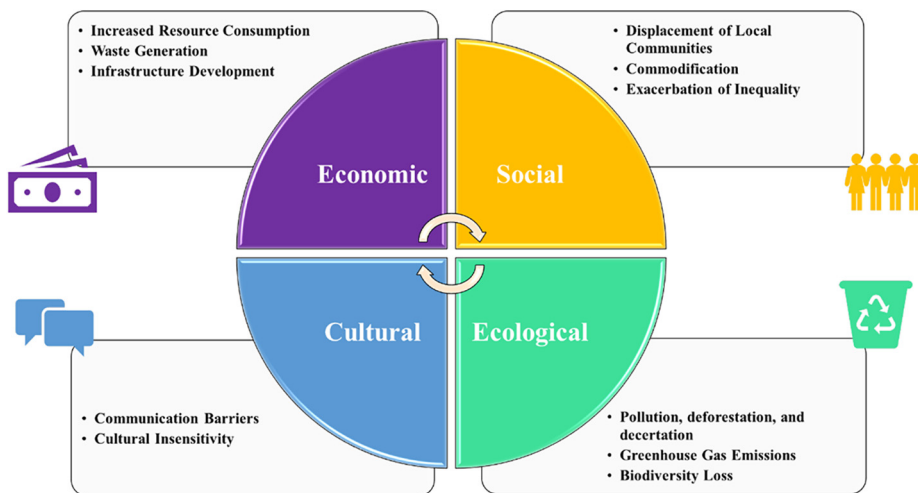
The third stream, organizational performance and innovation, includes three articles that examine the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on job performance and innovative strategies to address seasonality in the industry. In their study, [Papp et al. \(2023\)](#) assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a shock event, on deep-rooted travel patterns. They use the value-belief-norm (VBN) theory of environmentalism and conduct a large-scale survey across Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands and the UK. The findings reveal that the pandemic caused only temporary changes in deep-rooted travel patterns, with pre-pandemic behavior aligning with value orientations and predicting projected travel behavior. The authors identify four market segments – frontrunners, laggards, comfortable crowd and entitled stewards – and note variations in the extent of adaptation and the phases of the customer journey where changes are likely to occur. This research offers a new perspective by using the VBN theory to understand the impact of shock events on deep-rooted travel patterns and is one of the first studies to examine the impact of the health crisis on these patterns rather than focusing on risk perception.

Moreover, [Guo et al. \(2023\)](#) explored the impact of perceived CSR on employee outcomes in tourism companies. They found that CSR perceptions significantly influence job performance, which is mediated by psychological needs fulfillment and organizational identification. This study provides strategic insights for integrating CSR with HR strategies and shifts the focus of CSR research from the organizational to the individual level. Finally, the article by [Dalir \(2023\)](#) investigates seasonality in the hospitality and tourism industry, comparing visitor behaviors during peak and off-peak seasons. The study reveals that off-peak visitors may be fewer, but they spend more daily. It also finds events to be more effective than digital innovations in encouraging off-peak travel. This research provides a broader perspective on seasonality and offers innovative strategies for addressing it.

The diverse array of topics covered in this special issue underscores the multifaceted nature of sustainable hospitality and ethical tourism practices. From exploring technological innovations for mitigating climate change impacts to understanding consumer behaviors and organizational strategies for fostering sustainability – each article contributes a piece to the complex puzzle. As we move forward in this era marked by rapid environmental changes and increased awareness about sustainable practices – integrating insights from these varied perspectives will be crucial for shaping a future where tourism and hospitality not only thrive but also contribute positively to global sustainability efforts.

### **Impacts of hospitality and tourism on climate change**

The hospitality and tourism industry, involving various stages of planning, travel, accommodation, food and beverage and leisure activities ([World Tourism Organization, 2023](#)), encompasses negative economic, social, environmental and cultural impacts on climate change. As illustrated in [Figure 1](#), efforts to maximize the economic benefits of



**Source:** Authors

**Figure 1.**  
The negative impacts of hospitality and tourism on climate change

hospitality and tourism lead to increased resource consumption, waste generation and infrastructure development, straining ecosystems and contributing to environmental degradation, thereby fueling the climate change process. In terms of social impacts, ambitious hospitality and tourism projects can displace local communities, commodify cultures and exacerbate inequality by benefiting certain groups over others. The hospitality and tourism industry is recognized as one of the contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, pollution, deforestation and desertification. We believe that pushing the sustainability agenda and fostering competition among destinations can not only create communication conflicts among key actor groups but also trigger cultural insensitivity and disrespect from local communities. We contend that implementing mitigative and adaptive solutions against these negative impacts requires a holistic, pragmatic and collaborative approach. We advise using an effective evaluation model (e.g. ToCRESA) to track the change of complex projects aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of the hospitality and tourism industry on climate change (Roodbari and Olya, 2024). It is imperative to consider the two-way impacts between climate change and the hospitality and tourism industry. The next section discusses emerging research themes in relation to the impacts of climate change on the hospitality and tourism industry.

### Emerging themes capturing the impacts of climate change on the industry

We propose a series of interconnected research themes exploring the multifaceted impacts of climate change on the hospitality and tourism industry. As presented in Table 1, each theme is accompanied by a corresponding research question aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by this pressing global issue. These questions further necessitate in-depth investigation to identify effective responses and potential solutions. For a further overview of our proposed areas and directions for future research, see Table 1.

Themes	Related question	Possible responses
Theme 1: Sustainable practices and adaptation strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the hospitality and tourism industry adopt sustainable practices to mitigate the impacts of climate change?</li> <li>• What adaptation strategies can hotels and tourism destinations implement to cope with the changing climate?</li> <li>• How can the tourism industry innovate to address challenges associated with seasonality and promote year-round sustainability?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research can focus on identifying best practices for reducing carbon emissions, implementing renewable energy sources, promoting responsible tourism behaviors and fostering partnerships with local communities for sustainable development.</li> <li>• Studies can explore innovative solutions such as resilient infrastructure design, adaptive management strategies for natural disasters, severe weather, diversification of tourism offerings and the integration of climate risk assessments into business planning.</li> <li>• Research can explore innovative strategies for diversifying tourism offerings, extending the tourism season through creative marketing campaigns, developing new products and experiences that appeal to off-peak travelers and leveraging technology to optimize resource allocation and capacity management.</li> </ul>
Theme 2: Consumer engagement and ethical consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does consumer awareness of climate change impact their travel preferences and choices?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research can investigate consumer perceptions of climate-related risks, preferences for sustainable tourism products and services, willingness to pay for eco-friendly accommodations and the effectiveness of educational campaigns in promoting responsible travel behavior.</li> </ul>
Theme 3: Toward a net-zero emissions policy and regulatory framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies can the hospitality and tourism industry adopt to achieve net-zero carbon emissions and mitigate their environmental footprint?</li> <li>• What policy interventions are needed to support climate change mitigation and adaptation in the hospitality and tourism sector?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research can explore innovative approaches such as carbon offsetting programs, investment in renewable energy infrastructure, adoption of circular economy principles and the implementation of carbon capture and storage technologies.</li> <li>• Studies can examine the effectiveness of existing policies related to carbon pricing, environmental regulations, land use planning and incentives for green investments.</li> </ul>

**Table 1.** Forward-thinking research themes regarding climate change impacts on the hospitality and tourism industry

*(Continued)*

Themes	Related question	Possible responses
Theme 4: Technological innovations and green infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can technological innovations and green infrastructure contribute to climate resilience in the hospitality and tourism industry?</li> <li>• How can AI technologies be leveraged to enhance climate resilience and sustainability in the hospitality and tourism sector?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research can focus on emerging technologies such as smart energy management systems, green building materials, low-carbon transportation options and nature-based solutions for climate adaptation.</li> <li>• Research can explore the potential applications of AI for predictive modeling of climate-related risks, optimization of resource management and energy efficiency, personalized tourism experiences and real-time decision support systems for crisis response and adaptation planning. In addition, studies can assess the ethical implications, privacy concerns and socio-economic impacts of AI adoption in the hospitality and tourism industry. We call for studies that assess innovative solutions (e.g. Vida Kit as a virtual influencer) that prevent the application of AI in misinformation and disinformation about the climate change particularly in the hospitality and tourism industry (Gerrath <i>et al.</i>, 2024; Olya <i>et al.</i>, 2023).</li> </ul>
Theme 5: Interactional effects of multiple crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do interactions between climate change and other crises, such as the rising cost of living and political instabilities, impact the resilience of the hospitality and tourism industry?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research can investigate the interconnected nature of multiple crises, examining how climate-related events exacerbate socio-economic vulnerabilities, contribute to political instability and affect consumer behavior and travel patterns. Studies can also explore strategies for building resilience to compound risks and enhancing adaptive capacity at both individual and systemic levels.</li> </ul>

Source: Authors

Table 1.

### Concluding remarks

This special issue advances current knowledge of ethical consumption and climate change in the hospitality and tourism industry, focusing on three critical areas: climate change and sustainability, consumer behavior and ethical practices and organizational performance and innovation. We critically discuss the two-way impacts of hospitality and tourism on climate

change. To this end, we have developed [Figure 1](#) to demonstrate the negative economic, sociocultural and ecological impacts of hospitality and tourism that trigger climate change causes and implications. On the other hand, we propose five forward-thinking themes, along with related research questions and responses ([Table 1](#)), to stimulate further intellectual discourse aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change on the hospitality and tourism industry. Last but not least, we would like to thank a number of people for their efforts on this special issue. We extend our gratitude to the reviewers for providing constructive feedback during the review process of this special issue. Moreover, we hope that the articles in this special issue act as a starting platform to encourage tourism and hospitality scholars to advance this field of research by addressing current issues and trends in climate change and ethical consumption.

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### About the Guest Editors

Babak Taheri is a Full Professor in the Department of Hospitality, Hotel Management and Tourism at Texas A&M University. He is also visiting Professor at Nottingham Business School in Nottingham Trent University. He has an established reputation in the marketing field with a specific expertise in *sustainability and CSR, marketing management, consumer research, hospitality, tourism, leisure and cultural consumption*. The innovative nature of his research traces to multidisciplinary work and to methodologically robust measurement and assessment of key concepts. In recent years, he has over 150 academic publications, a significant number of which are in internationally rated top-tier journals with high impact factors. He is Associate Editor of two journals: *The Service Industries Journal* and *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. Furthermore, he received extensive coverage in media outlets such as *The Conversation*, *The Irish Times*, *Travel Daily News* and *Esports News*. Babak Taheri is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: [b.taheri.260@gmail.com](mailto:b.taheri.260@gmail.com)

Hossein Olya is a Full Professor and Head of Marketing and Cultural and Creative Industries at Sheffield University Management School, UK. His research focuses on using digital innovations to develop creative solutions to eco-societal challenges. He developed the first climate-based recreation management system and a new tourism climate index called the fuzzy-based Tourism Climate Index. In addition, he proposed a framework to guide policymakers and businesses on how to nudge the public toward engaging in climate change action. He also suggested tourism weather insurance as an adaptive strategy against climate change. Currently, he leads a research project creating the first virtual influencer in academic setting, aiming to promote responsible communication about climate change. He serves as Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Consumer Studies*.

Wided Batat is Professor of Marketing at the University of Lyon 2 France. Her research broadly examines marketing theory, consumer experience, consumer behaviors and well-being in different sectors (e.g., food, luxury, tourism, digital, etc.), with an ethnographic focus on consumption cultures and how policymakers and businesses can adopt responsible initiatives that help consumers to achieve their well-being. Dr Batat has been the guest editor of multiple top leading journals in business, ethics, management and marketing fields. Her research has been published in academic journals such as: *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Marketing Theory*, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of Macromarketing*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *Journal of Service Management*, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *Employee Relations*, *Hospitality and Society*, *International Journal for Consumer Studies*, *Qualitative Marketing Journal*, *Young Consumers*, *Journal of Research for Consumers*, *Advances in Consumer Research*, amongst others.