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Interactions and Relationships between Personal Factors in Pro-Environmental Golf Tourist Behaviour: A Gender Analysis

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Abstract: There is a very clear link between tourism and sustainability due to the importance and consequences of the tourism sector in the world economy. Behavioural studies are among the major topics of sustainable tourism research. There are several factors that influence our sustainable behaviour at home and in vacation settings. In general, the main objective of this paper is to examine the personal factors in pro-environmental tourist behaviour from a gender perspective. This study is based on a sample of 347 golf tourists from 16 European countries. The results corroborated the relationships between ecological habits, personal capabilities and environmental attitudes. However, interactions between personal factors were more limited. It was shown that only the interaction between personal capabilities and externally-oriented habits have an influence on environmental attitudes. Also, some gender differences were found.

Keywords: environmental attitudes; gender; golf tourism; habits; personal capabilities

1. Introduction

The relationship between tourism and sustainability is a very important issue due to the role of tourism and travel in the global economy [1]. Although sustainable tourism has been an important topic for more than 30 years, a literature review suggested that the proportion of papers that cover sustainable tourism out of all tourism papers had not increased since 2010, and was possibly even in decline [2]. Recently, several studies have synthesised the most popular research themes on sustainability and tourism/hospitality [1–4]. In this vein, Qian, Shen, and Law [4] identified six major themes of sustainable tourism research: climate change, policy instruments, volunteer tourism, poverty reduction, indigenous tourism, and behavioural studies. Research under the latter topic focuses on examining the environmentally-sustainable behaviour that tourists exhibit while travelling. Several models have been proposed to fulfil this goal [5–13].

In general, people exhibit different behaviours in places other than their place of residence. It is logical to think that tourists behave differently in the places they visit than they do at home. In this sense, the concepts of regional identity or place attachment can play an important role in environmental behaviour [14,15]. Tourists are different from normal local residents because of their temporary status as visitors to a destination [6]. Hence, Kollmuss and Agyeman [16] indicated that the relationship between environmental attitudes and environmentally-friendly behaviour is expected to be weaker when the cost of not acting pro-environmentally is relatively low. Also, Dolnicar [17] found that pro-environmental behaviour drops during vacations due to the inability to behave as environmentally as one would ordinarily do at home. Juvan and Dolnicar [18] studied the environmental attitude and

behaviour gap between home and vacation settings. They reported that a number of respondents feel that holidays are an exception that justifies different behaviours. As Chubchuwong, Beise-Zee and Speece [6] suggested, tourists are not in their usual environment, and they tend to feel unobligated to be responsible for the environmental impacts created during their short stays.

The factors associated with more pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours are still poorly understood [19]. Pro-environmental behaviour is extremely complex, both in its variety and in its causal factors [20]. It is necessary to know which factors influence environmental behaviour as a requirement for changing that behaviour [21] and for achieving sustainability, both at home and in the destinations visited [13]. There are several conditions that influence our sustainable behaviour. The existing literature broadly distinguishes between personal factors and contextual forces that influence green behaviour [22]. On the one hand, personal influences relate to attitudinal factors, personal capabilities and habits or routines [20]. On the other hand, situational or contextual influences relate to factors like social norms, government regulations, advertising or available technology [20,23]. The overall aim of this paper is to empirically examine the personal factors in pro-environmental behaviour from the tourist's perspective. In particular, we analyse the interactions and relationships between environmental attitudes, habits and personal capabilities in a tourist golf context, observing the moderating effect of gender. The conclusions of Stern's study [20] (p. 422) propose that "the causal factors may interact". It is therefore necessary to study these interactions, which have received little attention in the literature thus far.

This paper is conducted in the context of the golf tourism. In this sense, there is an extensive literature on golf courses and their negative environmental impacts, such as excessive water use, environmental pollution, chemical inputs and effects on wildlife and habitat [24–27]. However, as Minoli and Smith [28] affirm, golf courses have positive and negative environmental impacts. Thus, golf courses may have a potential role in biodiversity protection and management in human-dominated landscapes [29]. Therefore, sustainability research has been focused on the impacts of golf courses, and, to date, empirical studies on environmental attitudes and behaviours have been limited in golf tourism [30].

Numerous studies have examined the associations between gender and environmental behaviours [31–44]. In this sense, research on this field of study consistently finds that women participate more actively than men in ecological behaviours in the private sphere, such as recycling activity and green purchasing [32,43]. However, public sphere pro-environmental behaviours that focus on actions outside households, such as being a member of an activist group or protesting, align with masculine roles [35]. Another robust finding in the literature demonstrates that women show stronger pro-environmental values, beliefs, and attitudes than men [43]. Generally, the gender differences in environmental attitudes and behaviours may reflect the tendency for nature to be perceived as less critical by males than by females; still, this interpretation is rather provocative [33]. One explanation for this gender gap may be that men accept a higher degree of environmental damage, probably because their threshold for risk avoidance is more elevated than that of women [33]. Therefore, gender differences can be expected to affect the interactions and relationships between personal factors in the ecological behaviour of golf tourists.

2. Theoretical Foundations

As several authors have suggested [45,46], the most common and accepted theories in the environmental psycho-social domain for understanding decision-making are the following: The Theory of Reasoned Action [47]; the Norm-Activation-Theory [48]; the Theory of Planned Behaviour [49]; and Value-Belief-Norm-Theory [50]. More than 80 percent of the relevant studies have used at least one of these four theories as a theoretical approach. Following Juvan and Dolnicar [51], other prevalent theories in the literature include Cognitive Dissonance Theory [52], Social Identity Theory [53] and Theory of Environmentally Significant Behaviour [20].

Scholars are actively conducting research on environmentally-related tourism and hospitality, although this topic is a relatively young one [4,54–56]. For example, Gao, Mattila and Lee [54] provide a meta-analysis examining the relationship between consumers' perceptions and green behaviour through 26 articles published in hospitality journals. These authors indicated in their meta-analysis that the Theory of Planned Behaviour was used in 17 articles, the Theory of Reasoned Action was used in five articles and the Social Identity Theory was used in three articles. However, the applications of the Norm-Activation-Theory and the Value-Belief-Norm-Theory have been scarcer. Hence, it seems that only recent studies have been based on the Norm-Activation-Theory [12,57,58] and the Value-Belief-Norm-Theory [9,59–61].

Stern [20] develops a conceptual approach for advancing theories of Environmentally Significant Behaviour (ESB), which is focused on the Value-Belief-Norm Theory. However, this theory has not yet been used as the basis for the study of pro-environmental behaviour in the tourism context [18]. Stern [20] classifies the causal factors that determine ESB into four major categories affecting individual decision-making: attitudinal aspects, habits or routines, personal capabilities, and contextual forces. The first three of these factors are personal in nature.

Stern's [20] work has been cited numerous times. However, there are very few studies that have included all, or almost all, of these factors. In this sense, Russell and Fielding [62] provided an overview of the psychological literature reviewing the key drivers of water conservation behaviours. These authors examined the determinants of water conservation behaviours, categorizing them into five underlying causes: attitudes, beliefs, personal capabilities, habits or routines, and contextual forces. These authors separated beliefs from attitudinal factors, because it is commonly accepted that scholarship conceives of beliefs as precursors to attitudes.

Wati, Koo and Chung [63] empirically studied the determinants of behaviour intention to use green technology, integrating attitudinal factors, contextual factors and personal capability. The findings indicated that personal norms (attitudinal factors) and legislative pressure (contextual factors) had positive and significant effects on the intention to use green information systems. They also found that eco-environmental knowledge (personal capabilities) also positively, significantly and indirectly influenced intention to use green technology.

März [64] used a qualitatively method to understand the decision-making processes of small private landlords (SPL) when considering energy renovations. This author examined, in addition to economic aspects, related values, beliefs, norms, habits, personal capabilities and contextual factors. He analysed the interviews according to the model adapted from Stern [20], and demonstrated that all these factors play an important role in decision-making.

According to the aforementioned personal factors developed by Stern [20], attitudes feature strongly in the pro-environmental behaviour literature [65]. Attitude is defined as an evaluation of an object or a behaviour [62]. Attitudinal factors include norms, beliefs and values [20]. These factors influence behavioural intentions which, in turn, impact on specific actions [16]. Recently, tourism research has supported the correlation between environmental attitudes and behaviours [5,30,66,67]. However, Juvan and Dolnicar [18] studied the attitude and behaviour gap between home and vacation settings, and found that having a positive environmental attitude does not emerge as a good predictor of making environmentally-sustainable vacation choices. According to this study, Kiatkawsin and Han [60] observed that a number of respondents indicated that "vacations are a special treat", hinting at their internal justification to relax their normal routine.

Personal capabilities may affect pro-environmental behaviours and ecological habits. Stern [20] (p. 417) defines personal capabilities as "knowledge and skills required for particular actions, the availability of time to act, and general capabilities and resources such as literacy, money, and social status and power". This author also includes socio-demographic factors in his definition, because they may be proxies for behaviours that depend strongly on personal capabilities. In fact, within the environmental literature, most studies have focused on sociodemographic criteria [68–71] as indicators for personal capabilities. Thus, for example, energy-saving behaviour has been identified with

younger, feminine, highly-educated, and high-income individuals in past studies [72–75]. However, following Dietz, Stern and Guagnano [32], for many environmentally-significant behaviours, it is possible that the socio-demographic variables have less explanatory power than knowledge, skills and competencies. In this sense, as Testa, Cosic and Iraldo [76] indicated, it is very difficult to classify the “green consumer” profile through demographic characteristics. According to Dolnicar, Crouch and Long [77], age and gender are the central socio-demographic personal characteristics associated with environmental behaviour. Several studies have investigated the possible relationships between sociodemographic data and environmental behaviour without yielding conclusive results [13]. Sudbury-Riley, Hofmeister-Toth and Kohlbacher [78] also confirmed that the general findings on demographics and ecological consumption are inconclusive. In the present study, gender is posed as a moderating factor in the relationships between the examined variables.

Lynn [79] identified three dimensions of pro-environmental behaviours: at-home, transport-related and purchasing behaviour. However, in the present study, pro-environmental habits have been interpreted from two different perspectives: (i) ecological habits of internal consumption, with a direct effect inside the home; and (ii) ecological habits of external consumption, with a direct effect outside of the home.

Based on this rationale, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1a (H1a). *Personal capabilities may positively influence internally-oriented habits in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 1b (H1b). *Gender may act as a moderator on the relationship between personal capabilities and internally-oriented habits in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 2a (H2a). *Personal capabilities may positively influence externally-oriented habits in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 2b (H2b). *Gender may act as a moderator on the relationship between personal capabilities and externally-oriented habits in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 3a (H3a). *Personal capabilities may positively influence attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 3b (H3b). *Gender may act as a moderator on the relationship between personal capabilities and attitudes in golf tourists.*

Habits also feature strongly in the pro-environmental behaviour literature [65]. Habit is defined as situation-behaviour sequences that are automatic and occur without self-instruction; furthermore, ordinarily, the individual is not ‘conscious’ of these sequences [80]. As Klöckner and Matthies [81] suggest, habit is different from other concepts used as synonyms in the literature, such as routine, repeated actions and past behaviour. Hence, these two authors consider habit as a behavioural script. In this sense, habit strength is the degree of automaticity a behaviour has in a given stable situation [45]. The environmental attitude-behaviour gap is frequently studied in the literature [22,30,82–86]. However, the relationship between environmental habits and attitude or behaviour has received marginal attention. Habits have less relevance for the research agenda [87,88], although they are considered to be among the key determinants of ecological behaviour [20,89]. Therefore, the following hypotheses are to be studied:

Hypothesis 4a (H4a). *Internally-oriented habits may positively influence attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 4b (H4b). *Gender may act as a moderator on the relationship between internally-oriented habits and attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 5a (H5a). *Externally-oriented habits may positively influence attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 5b (H5b). *Gender may act as a moderator on the relationship between externally-oriented habits and attitudes in golf tourists.*

Dolnicar, Crouch and Long [77] conducted a review of tourism research and found that environmentally-friendly tourists are more educated and earn more money; however, further study is required with respect to age and gender, because the results were not entirely clear. Following Mehmetoglu [13], previous studies have indicated that women worry more about environmental issues, whereas studies of the effect of age have produced contradictory results.

Finally, a key issue in this study is to check whether Stern's [20] proposition holds, i.e., that the causal factors may have interactions, and if so, which factors do so. The present study is based on the personal variables influencing environmentally-significant behaviours, including attitudes, habits and personal capabilities, in addition to gender as a moderator. Based on the Stern's proposal [20], the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 6a (H6a). *Interactions between personal capabilities and internally-oriented habits may positively influence attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 6b (H6b). *Gender may act as a moderator on the interaction between both personal capabilities and internally-oriented habits and the influence on attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 7a (H7a). *Interactions between personal capabilities and internally-oriented habits may positively influence attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 7b (H7b). *Gender may act as a moderator on the interaction between both personal capabilities and externally-oriented habits and the influence on attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 8a (H8a). *Interactions between internally- and externally-oriented habits may positively influence attitudes in golf tourists.*

Hypothesis 8b (H8b). *Gender may act as a moderator on the interaction between internally- and externally-oriented habits and their influence on attitudes in golf tourists.*

By integrating all these research hypotheses, the proposed theoretical model of this study is shown in Figure 1.

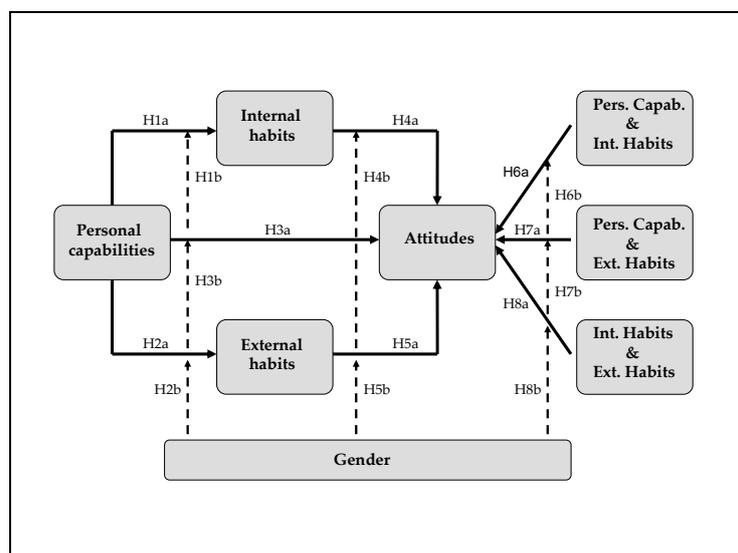


Figure 1. Proposed research model.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participants and Data Collection

This study confines the sample to golf tourists. All respondents reported that playing golf was one of the main motivations of their trip. Moreover, they had significant experience as golf players, with an average of 14.8 years of practising this sport. Golf tourism takes place outdoors and provides products and services that are focused on the environment. The environmental concerns of golf tourists can have a wide impact on the attractiveness and competitiveness of a destination [30].

A sample of 347 European golf tourists from 16 countries completed a questionnaire on their environmental attitudes, habits and behaviours. The sample characteristics are gathered in Table 1. This study confines the sample to only respondents with higher education, because previous research has suggested a strong relationship between education level and pro-environmental behaviour [37]. A higher education level is positively correlated with concern about environmental issues. Moreover, research on golf identified that the majority of players had college/university or more advanced academic degrees [11,90]. The respondents were selected using a convenience sampling method. The tourists who participated in the study were visiting the destination where the golf course was located. It is a very diversified sample, especially with respect to age and gender. There were 82 females and 265 males.

Table 1. Sample characteristics (N = 347).

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	265	76.37
Female	82	23.63
Age		
18–29	16	4.61
30–39	48	13.83
40–49	88	25.36
50–59	83	23.92
60–69	90	25.94
70+	22	6.34
Country		
Spain	210	60.52
Germany	50	14.41
United Kingdom	36	10.37
Sweden	9	2.59
Ireland	8	2.31
Belgium	6	1.73
Finland	5	1.44
Italy	5	1.44
Netherlands	4	1.15
Norway	4	1.15
Denmark	2	0.58
Iceland	2	0.58
Luxembourg	2	0.58
Swiss	2	0.58
Albania	1	0.29
France	1	0.29
Years of playing golf		
1–3	43	12.39
4–10	136	39.19
11–20	98	28.24
20+	70	20.17
Current handicap		
1–10	38	10.95
10.1–20	147	42.36
20.1–30	113	32.56
30+	49	14.12

Indeed, golf tourists could be considered relatively highly educated and more likely spend more money at the destination; therefore, they should be closer to being considered as environment-friendly tourists [77]. The questionnaire was handed out on several golf courses located on the Andalusian coast (Spain), because this area receives a large influx of international tourists. A team of interviewers conducted the surveys.

3.2. Measures

Variables such as age, educational attainment, race and income may be indicators or proxies for personal capabilities [20]. However, we believe that the personal capabilities of golf tourists can be better represented by their golf handicaps. A golf handicap is a numerical measure of a golfer's skill or ability: the lower the number, the better the player [91,92]. As McHale [91] states, the handicap is the extra number of shots above the course par that the player should, on average, take in one round. For example, this measure is used by Schön, Ehrmann and Rost [93] as proxies for managers' extra effort.

The questionnaire of the present study includes questions about the current handicap and the highest handicap reached by a golfer. The handicap can be considered as a consequence of the frequency of playing golf. We have also asked about the player's years of experience, since this can provide insights into the extent in which their environmental behaviours reflect continued exposure to the outdoors. Thus, a personal capabilities scale has been developed based on these three indicators. The scale's items are as follows: (1) the handicap that the player currently has; (2) the highest handicap that the player has reached; (3) the current handicap divided by the years of experience; and (4) the highest handicap divided by the years of experience.

Attitudinal factors have been measured through the Brief Ecological Paradigm (BEP) scale, which was developed by López-Bonilla and López-Bonilla [94]. This scale is a short-form measure consisting of five items and providing a balanced measure of the four facets identified in the Revised NEP scale. The New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) scales have become the most widely-used measures of environmental concern in the world [95]. The NEP scales are based on general attitudes regarding the relationship of human beings to the environment [96]. The BEP scale was measured using a Likert-type scale (1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree).

Internally- and externally-oriented habits were measured following the work of Dolnicar and Leisch [97], which includes questions on environmentally-friendly behaviour in the home setting. We selected two items for each variable, i.e., internal and external habits. We suggest that these ecological habits at home can be divided into two categories, depending on whether these habitual behaviours have a direct effect inside or outside of the home. For example, it is different to save domestic water than to vote for a political candidate who has expressed a high degree of environmental concern. There is an individualistic perspective, inside the house, and a more collectivist perspective outside of the house. Both scales were measured through a Likert-type scale (1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree).

3.3. Analytical Procedure

Structural equation modelling was used for the analyses of the hypothesised relationships. In this context, models based on covariances and on variances can be distinguished. The differences between both types have been explored in diverse studies [98,99]. In the present investigation, partial least squares path modelling (PLS-PM) is used, which is based on variances. PLS-PM has been provided as open-source software, and was included in the free R software environment developed by Sánchez [100].

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of the Measurement Model

4.1.1. Unidimensionality of Indicators

According to the rule that a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 is considered acceptable, personal capabilities and environmental attitudes are good blocks of indicators, but externally-oriented habits are not (see Table 2).

Dillon-Goldstein's rho considers that a block is unidimensional when it is larger than 0.7. This index is considered a better indicator than Cronbach's alpha. If the four latent variables have values greater than 0.7, then they adequately explain their blocks of indicators.

The third metric that is used to contrast the unidimensionality of the indicators is the comparison of the first and second eigenvalues of the correlation matrix of each set of indicators. If the results show that the first eigenvalue is larger than 1 but the second is smaller, then the unidimensionality of indicators is demonstrated.

Table 2. Unidimensionality of the constructs.

Variables	C.alpha	DG.rho	Eig.1st	Eig.2nd
Personal capabilities	0.959	0.970	3.56	0.389
Internally-oriented habits	0.453	0.785	1.29	0.707
Externally-oriented habits	0.614	0.838	1.44	0.557
Environmental Attitudes	0.871	0.907	3.31	0.659

4.1.2. Convergent Validity

Table 3 shows that loadings greater than 0.7 and communalities greater than 0.5 are acceptable. Nevertheless, loadings lower than 0.7 are acceptable too if they are greater than 0.5 and the rest of indicators of the same construct are greater than 0.7 [101].

Table 3. Loadings and communalities.

Variables	Items	Weight	Loading	Communality
Personal capabilities	PC1	0.248	0.932	0.868
	PC2	0.289	0.944	0.891
	PC3	0.253	0.949	0.900
	PC4	0.271	0.948	0.898
Internally-oriented habits	IOH1	0.464	0.687	0.471
	IOH2	0.761	0.896	0.804
Externally-oriented habits	EOH1	0.207	0.602	0.362
	EOH2	0.891	0.983	0.966
Environmental attitudes	EA1	0.222	0.821	0.675
	EA2	0.248	0.732	0.535
	EA3	0.267	0.863	0.745
	EA4	0.272	0.872	0.760
	EA5	0.220	0.768	0.590

Table 4 details the other two measurements for the convergent validity. Hence, if the composite reliability (CR) and average of extracted variance (AVE) are greater than 0.7, then the convergent validity index (loadings, CR and AVE) of the different latent variables is corroborated.

Table 4. Composite reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Variables	Composite Reliability	AVE
Personal capabilities	0.970	0.889
Internally-oriented habits	0.776	0.637
Externally-oriented habits	0.789	0.664
Environmental Attitudes	0.907	0.661

4.1.3. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity of the constructs of the research model is evaluated by using the average variance extracted (AVE), as proposed by Fornell and Larcker [102]. The results, which are presented in Table 5, show that all the correlations are lower than the variances, and, therefore, that discriminant validity exists. The correlation between the latent variables is represented below the diagonal of the table, while the square root of the AVE is located on the diagonal.

Table 5. Discriminant validity.

Variables	Personal Capabilities	Internally-Oriented Habits	Externally-Oriented Habits	Environmental Attitudes
Personal capabilities	0.9428			
Internally-oriented habits	0.1155	0.7981		
Externally-oriented habits	0.0858	0.2936	0.8148	
Environmental Attitudes	-0.0038	-0.1860	0.2271	0.8130

The convergent and discriminant analyses demonstrate the validity of the measurement model.

4.2. Analysis of the Structural Model

To contrast the precision of the parameter that estimates the different relationship between the latent variables in both female and male groups, bootstrapping was used with one thousand samples. The results are shown in Table 6. This table shows the relationships and interactions that are corroborated with a significance level of the 5%. Therefore, Hypotheses H1a, H2a and H4a are confirmed in both sexes; Hypotheses H5a and H7a are confirmed only in men; and Hypotheses H3a, H6a and H8a are rejected in both sexes.

Table 6. Groups of men and women (Paths).

Relationships/Interactions	G	Original	Mean.Boot	Std.Error	Perc.025	Perc.975	Sig.
Personal capabilities → Internally-oriented habits	M	0.0900	0.0873	0.0482	0.00187	0.1868	Yes
	W	0.0853	0.098	0.125	-0.1618	0.327	Yes
Personal capabilities → Externally-oriented habits	M	0.1111	0.1089	0.0441	0.01896	0.1961	Yes
	W	0.2241	0.2243	0.103	0.0232	0.421	Yes
Personal capabilities → Environmental attitudes	M	-0.0838	-0.0912	0.0913	-0.29168	0.0655	No
	W	-0.0838	-0.0912	0.0913	-0.29168	0.0655	No
Internally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	M	0.2468	0.2393	0.0718	0.10014	0.3717	Yes
	W	0.3737	0.3569	0.141	0.0463	0.613	Yes
Externally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	M	-0.2708	-0.2700	0.0645	-0.39320	-0.1499	Yes
	W	-0.1360	-0.1494	0.126	-0.4024	0.106	No
Personal capabilities and Internally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	M	-0.1302	-0.1384	0.0790	-0.29931	0.0222	No
	W	0.1315	0.1334	0.138	-0.1628	0.382	No
Personal capabilities and Externally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	M	0.1597	0.1816	0.0981	0.02649	0.3910	Yes
	W	-0.0234	-0.0406	0.137	-0.3469	0.207	No
Externally-oriented habits and Internally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	M	-0.0325	-0.0344	0.0681	-0.16585	0.0997	No
	W	0.0487	0.0330	0.163	-0.3287	0.317	No

Comparison between Both Groups

To explore the moderator effect of sex, a multi-group analysis is needed. In our study, we use the bootstrapping method to analyse possible differences in the paths between male and female golfers, as this is well established within the community of researchers using PLS [103]. The path comparisons show few significant differences between women and men. Therefore, only Hypothesis H7b is confirmed. These results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Comparison between men and women (Paths).

Relationships/Interactions	Global	Men	Women	Diff.abs	T.stat	Dg.fr	p-Value	Sig.
Personal capabilities → Externally-oriented habits	0.1155	0.1111	0.2241	0.1130	1.1584	345	0.1238	No
Personal capabilities → Internally-oriented habits	0.0858	0.0900	0.0853	0.0046	0.0511	345	0.4796	No
Personal capabilities → Environmental attitudes	−0.0030	−0.0838	0.2133	0.2972	1.4948	345	0.0679	No
Externally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	−0.2773	−0.2708	−0.1360	0.1348	0.9596	345	0.1690	No
Internally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	0.3036	0.2468	0.3737	0.1269	0.8380	345	0.2013	No
Personal capabilities and Externally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	0.0381	0.1597	−0.0234	0.1831	1.1337	345	0.1289	No
Personal capabilities and Internally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	−0.0415	−0.1302	0.1315	0.2616	1.7351	345	0.0418	Yes
Externally-oriented habits and Internally-oriented habits → Environmental attitudes	−0.0362	−0.0325	0.0487	0.0812	0.5235	345	0.3005	No

Table 8 details the explained variance (R^2) of the endogenous variables. The environmental attitudes are explained by 21.6% of the variance in the group of women players and by 13.13% of the variance in the group of men players. The results exceed the minimum value recommended by Falk and Miller [104], that is, an R^2 value equal to or greater than 10%.

Table 8. Explained variance of the endogenous variables.

Variables	R^2 Global	R^2 Men	R^2 Women
Internally-oriented habits	0.00736	0.00809	0.00728
Externally-oriented habits	0.01333	0.01235	0.05021
Environmental Attitudes	0.12425	0.13131	0.21599

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Research on sustainability and golf has increased in recent years. However, the vast majority of the studies have focused on the sustainable perspective of golf courses, while research on the sustainability of golf from the user's point of view has been scarce [94]. For this reason, the present paper aims to contribute to the literature on sustainability and golf from the tourist perspective.

Golf provides an extension of contact with the physical environment. Although golf courses are very controversial in environmental terms [105], the "natural environment" is a key-determining factor to attract golf tourists [106]. Thus, it is necessary to understand the behavioural patterns and processes that motivate the choices of golf tourists to help managers of golf courses. Golf players may be a key element by which to promote and support pro-environmental behaviour [30].

In general, the descriptive data show only limited gender differences in golf tourists. The results indicate that, on average, women score higher than men in internally- and externally-oriented habits. These results are in line with other scholarship [37,40,41], which has found that women usually exhibit more pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour than men. However, contrary to previous findings, men score higher than women in environmental attitudes. Concerning golf tourists' personal

capabilities, men reached a better handicap than women, but the latter have fewer years of experience than the former. As McGinnis, Gentry and Haltom [39] (p. 4) recently pointed out, “females do not have the requisite time to develop their golf skills”.

The present work has several theoretical implications, and therefore, enriches our understanding of the relationships between pro-environmental factors. We believe that this is the first study in the field of tourism-hospitality that integrates personal capabilities, habits and environmental attitudes into a single model. Moreover, it is possible that our work is the first to analyse the interactions and relationships between the causal factors influencing environmentally-significant behaviours, as proposed by Stern [20].

Regarding interactions between golf tourists’ personal factors, no gender differences were found. It is only the interactions between personal capabilities and externally-oriented habits that had a positive effect on environmental attitudes in the case of men. The results of this study may be more interesting regarding the relationships between personal capabilities, ecological habits and environmental attitudes. The relationships between personal factors in our research model were different between men and women.

Our findings are consistent with those of Miller, Merrilees and Coghlan [65] in supporting the idea that habits emerge as the dominant antecedent (and consequence) in this study. In general, internally- and externally-oriented habits affect golf tourists’ environmental attitudes; this is in line with the results of previous studies [107,108]. However, gender differences were found in our study. Thus, personal capabilities influence externally-oriented habits in both sexes, but only affect internally-oriented habits in men. Moreover, internally-oriented habits have a positive influence on environmental attitudes in women, while externally-oriented habits only positively affect environmental attitudes in men. Following Matthies, Kuhn and Klöckner [38], women might have a different pattern of pro-environmental behaviour than men. On the one hand, women are more active only in the private sphere, according to Dietz, Stern and Guagnano [32], favouring pro-environmental behaviour (e.g., recycling and buying organic products), but the same does not hold true in other, more public spheres (e.g., using public transport and voting for a more environmentalist candidate). The private sphere has a direct environmental impact, whereas the public sphere has an indirect one. The fact that only internal habits in females have a significant effect on environmental attitudes is in line with the findings of some previous studies that have suggested that women generally show more environmental concern, but less activism, than males [35,36,40,43].

On the other hand, environmental actions related to the public sphere are considered to be more dominated by men. However, we find a significant negative effect of externally-oriented habits on environmental attitudes in men. As Jansson, Marell and Nordlund [109] suggest, these findings indicate that previously formed habits can act as an obstacle to performing environmental behaviours that require more involvement. Thus, for example, Moller and Thøgersen [110] noted that car use habits act as barriers to the transformation of intentions to commute by public transportation into action. In this sense, women may develop stronger use of public transport than men, because they are presumably the first ones to travel less frequently by car [38].

The present study is one of the few investigations that has analysed the personal capabilities through knowledge and skills, according to the definition provided by Stern [20], and not through demographic variables, as the vast majority of previous research has done [68–71,74,76]. It is possible that knowledge and skills have more explanatory power for many environmental behaviours. However, as Miao and Wei [111] found in a hotel setting, increases in knowledge do not necessarily lead to greater displays of ecological behaviour. Gungor et al. [112] suggested that environmental knowledge plays a key role in pro-environmental behaviour, but no meaningful relation was found in terms of gender. Our results indicated that golf tourists’ personal capabilities only significantly influence internally and externally-oriented habits in men. It is possible that increased knowledge and skills induce pro-environmental behaviour in men. This also means that male players need more knowledge and skills than female players to adopt environmental habits. A possible explanation of this gender

difference, in general, is based on socialization theory and the different roles occupied by males and females. This framework promotes the role of caregivers in women [31,34,42,43].

As Eom, Kim, Sherman and Ishii [113] suggest, it is possible that concern for the environment is affected by cultural values. Several studies found that different factors in individualistic and collectivistic cultures are determinants of the formation of pro-environmental behaviour. For example, both older and more recent studies have confirmed that collectivist orientation has a significant effect on recycling attitude [114], environmental commitment [115] and attitudes toward renewable energy technologies [116,117]. Thus, a society's collectivism develops stronger eco-friendly behaviours. However, the literature notes that most Western countries are associated with high levels of individualism [118,119].

These findings also have practical implications for promoting environmentally-sustainable attitudes and actions. Personal variables are of special interest to policy-makers and macro-marketers when situational forces cannot be changed, and personal influences may provide the only factors that affect environmental behaviour [22]. In this sense, habits are identified as being among the key determinants of pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours [20,90], and therefore, pro-environmental habits of golf tourists are relatively low. In this case, weak habits can be approached via downstream marketing (focused on individual behaviour), although the development of system-derived sustainable consumption behaviours requires the creation of new habits and social practices [120]. However, as Dahlstrand and Biel [90] pointed out, environmental concern is more influential when habits are weak. Thus, golf course management may include rules of environmental behaviour that encourage user habits. Golf courses could also adopt social marketing practices to promote norms in order to engage players in their environmental change programmes. Social marketing may be useful in helping to bring about changes in behaviour for sustainable tourism [121,122].

Green advertising and green marketing, in general, are increasingly important; however, the effectiveness of these strategies is questionable [3]. Unlike much research in the field of green consumer behaviours [20,32,123], we found that gender is useful for profiling golf tourists. To increase competitiveness, golf course managers must add ecologically-friendly designs and management policies in terms of emphasizing diverse kinds of information for different segments, especially distinguishing men and women.

It is important to comment on some limitations in the present study and some key opportunities for further research. First, our results should be considered with caution and in taking into account the sampling limitations. In this sense, the convenience sample method may create some problems for generalizing the results. However, as Calder, Phillips and Tybout [124] suggested, it is not so unsuitable for the data used to be inappropriate for testing a theory.

Second, the sample was dominated by male respondents. This predominance of male respondents is not surprising given the demographics of golf players worldwide [125–127]. Future studies should expand the female sample and also consider tourists from Eastern cultures. For example, several studies have indicated that Asian cultures have higher levels of environmental concern and conservation attitudes [128–130]. In this sense, the profiles of individualism and collectivism of travellers could be compared in future research, examining the influence of the cultural orientations as antecedents to environmental habits and attitudes.

Third, the construct of habit is difficult to measure [131–133]. The number of items used to assess the ecological habits might, to some extent, contribute to lower associations with the environmental attitudes observed in the present research. Therefore, the use of more refined measurements may be needed to examine the relationship between habits and environmental attitudes more accurately. On the one hand, for example, item 1, which is related to the use of public transport, may be influenced by age. As Lynn [79] noted, young adults are the most environmentally-friendly in their transport behaviour. However, the sample age of the golf tourists is high, with an average of over 50 years. In this case, an interesting extension of this study would be to examine our model across a wide range of age groups.

On the other hand, it is possible that item 4, which is related to voting for a more environmentalist candidate, is not a good option to include in the scale of externally-oriented habits. As Kurtz, Gartner, Verplanken and Abraham [134] indicate, habits require repetition and minimal conscious monitoring. However, political elections are usually every four or five years, and are not frequently held. This motivates an individual or voter to engage in more deliberate decision making. Moreover, habits are context-dependent. Thus, in some countries, such as Germany, a green political party has been consolidated throughout the national territory. However, in other countries, such as Spain, this political trend has not yet developed. In this sense, future research should look at the role of local identity in moderating the environmental habits, attitudes and behaviours of tourists. As Chubchuwong, Beise-Zee and Speece [6] suggest, destination attachment is stronger if visitors are quasi-residents of the community.

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