

# Predicting Behavioural Intention of International Tourists Towards Geotours

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Received: 21 April 2015 / Accepted: 17 October 2016  
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**Abstract** Geotourism could be one of the powerful tools for protecting the environment. It provides a long-term competitive edge through geomangement. As a niche area of the global tourism industry, geotourism is growing rapidly due to the high appreciation of landscape and geological phenomena. Fostering the nature and cultural sustainability, geotourists seek geological wonders framed in a natural and cultural authenticity. Responding to the call of the Egyptian Tourism Ministry to study non-traditional patterns of tourism, this study aims to investigate the factors predicting the behavioural intention to take geotours among international tourists. The study incorporated new constructs in the theory of reasoned action to achieve its aim. Employing structural equation modelling, findings revealed that behavioural intention of taking geotours is affected by geotourists' attributes, attitudes towards geotours, cultural heritage and subjective norms. The study introduces useful implications to policymakers and managers of tourism authorities in developing countries.

**Keywords** Geotourism · Geotourists · Geotours · Ecotourism · TRA · Egypt

**Electronic supplementary material** The online version of this article (doi:10.1007/s12371-016-0200-5) contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users.

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## Introduction

Tourism is based on geographical places, which are socially constructed as travel destinations (Young 1999). The identities of these places are reinforced as travel destinations using unique images associated with the destination (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride 2004). In the 1990s, a niche tourism called geotourism has emerged whereby tourists are shying away from mass tourism to ecological-based travel. Geotourism is a tourism activity that relates to geological sites and features, including geomorphological sites and landscape (Joyce 2006). It is recognized as an exciting new direction for tourism surrounding geological and geomorphology attractions and destinations (Yalgouz-Agaj et al. 2010) and as a distinct area of special interest tourism (Dowling and Newsome 2008).

In general, geotourism deals with abiotic parts of the natural environment (abiotic nature or geodiversity: geological features, landforms and land processes) (Sadry 2009). According to Hose, Markovic, Komac and Zorn (2011) and Newsome et al. (2012), geotourism can be a powerful tool for sustainable development but, if not managed effectively, can constitute a direct threat to geoheritage resources. Geotourism has also some overlap with other tourism segments such as ecotourism, sustainable tourism and alternative tourism and potentially much overlap with educational travel and environmental, nature-based and heritage tourism. Many countries, such as USA, England, Australia and South Africa, have increased their focus on geotourism, particularly relying on their geoattractions (Hose 2011; Newsome and Dowling 2010a).

Due to its vast and unique natural environment, typical geographical location, diverse climate and various habitats, Egypt, the setting of this study, has become one of the best tourist destinations of the world. Immense historic potentiality and geological phenomena present in this country have turned it into one of the attractive geotourism regions of the world.