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Comparing Malay and Chinese Perspectives on Sustainable Tourism Content and Decision-Making through Short-Form Social Media Videos in Malaysia

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Abstract - This study examines differences between Malay and Chinese respondents in how sustainable tourism content presented through short-form social media videos influences tourism decision-making in Malaysia. The growing use of platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts has increased their importance in tourism communication and destination promotion. However, sustainability messages may be interpreted and translated into behavioural outcomes differently across culturally diverse groups. Guided by the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), this study examines attention, internalisation, attitude, behavioural intention, and actual sustainable tourism behaviour. Two research questions were addressed: (1) What are the levels of attention, internalisation, and attitude toward sustainable tourism messages presented in short-form travel videos among Malaysian tourists? (2) To what extent do tourists engage in sustainable travel behaviours after watching short-form travel videos? A quantitative survey was conducted with 159 Malaysian respondents comprising Malay and Chinese participants. Independent-samples t-tests were used to compare the two groups. The findings indicate significant differences across several dimensions, with Malay respondents generally reporting higher levels of attention, attitude, behavioural intention, and sustainable tourism behaviour than Chinese respondents. The findings highlight the importance of combining engaging visuals and entertainment with clear sustainability messages to effectively communicate sustainable tourism to culturally diverse audiences in Malaysia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has experienced a strong recovery and growth in recent years, supported

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JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

by the rapid expansion of digital media and social media platforms. Globally, international tourist arrivals reached approximately 1.4 billion in 2024, an 11% increase from 2023 (World Tourism Barometer, 2024). This recovery highlights tourism's continued importance to national economies and social development. At the same time, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has emphasised sustainable tourism development as a global priority, reflecting growing awareness of the need to balance tourism growth with environmental protection, cultural preservation, and community well-being.

In Southeast Asia, tourism growth has been remarkably rapid, and countries in the region are actively promoting sustainability to mitigate the negative impacts of mass tourism. Malaysia, like neighbouring countries such as Thailand, has positioned tourism as a key economic sector while also facing growing sustainability challenges. Before the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, tourism contributed approximately 15.9% of Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Malaysia Investment Development Authority, MIDA,2021). More recently, Malaysia recorded 16.9 million foreign visitors between January and May 2025, an increase of about 20% over the same period in the previous year (Travel and Tour World, TTW, 2025). These figures highlight the rapid growth of Malaysia's tourism industry and raise significant concerns about how to manage it sustainably.

Alongside tourism growth, short-form video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts have become increasingly influential in shaping tourists' perceptions of destinations and travel decisions. These platforms provide visually engaging, fast-paced content that can quickly attract attention and shape attitudes. Recent studies have shown that environmentally friendly short-form videos significantly enhance behavioural intentions for low-carbon, sustainable tourism through both cognitive and emotional processes (Chen & Cheng, 2023). Similarly, Zhou (2024) found that cognitive absorption factors such as immersion, attention, and interaction in short-form video travel content significantly increase users' willingness to travel, highlighting the importance of engagement in influencing travel behaviour. Furthermore, Qiu et al. (2024) demonstrated that perceived platform usefulness, influencer credibility, and entertainment value strongly influence tourists' attitudes, which in turn significantly predict travel intentions. These findings suggest that social and technological features of short-form video content play a critical role in shaping tourists' attitudes and decision-making processes.

The continued recovery of international and domestic tourism has increased the importance of managing tourism growth in ways that protect environmental resources, preserve cultural heritage, and benefit local communities. Malaysia's tourism sector has continued to attract a substantial number of visitors, with a total of 6,002,175 recorded this year, underscoring the sector's continued importance to the country. Malaysia's National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2020–2030 identifies sustainability as a key direction for the tourism sector, with "Practising Sustainable and Responsible Tourism" included among its transformation strategies. The policy also envisions Malaysia as "a sustainable tourism destination rich in culture" (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia [MOTAC], 2026). This continued growth highlights the importance of understanding how to communicate sustainability messages effectively to tourists and translate them into responsible travel decisions.

Moreover, Malaysia is a multicultural society, and ethnic background may influence how

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

individuals interpret, internalise, and respond to sustainability messages. Malay and Chinese tourists represent two significant segments of the domestic tourism market, each shaped by distinct cultural values, media consumption patterns, and social norms (Idris, 2011). These cultural differences may affect levels of attention to sustainable tourism behaviour. However, limited research has explicitly examined segment-specific differences in the sustainability of short-form video content among Malay and Chinese tourists.

Although previous research has examined the influence of short-form videos on tourism intention and sustainable tourism behaviour, less attention has been given to whether audiences from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds respond differently to sustainability messages presented through these platforms. Malaysia provides an appropriate context for such a comparison because its multicultural population includes diverse cultural, social, and value orientations. Understanding these differences is important because the same sustainability message may attract attention, be internalised, and influence behavioural intentions differently across audience groups. Therefore, comparing Malay and Chinese respondents can provide a more nuanced understanding of how short-form social media content communicates sustainable tourism messages and how these messages may influence tourism-related decision-making.

Therefore, this study aims to examine differences between Malay and Chinese tourists in Malaysia in their responses to sustainable tourism content in short-form videos and their subsequent tourism decisions. Specifically, the study addresses two research questions: (1) What are the levels of attention, internalisation, and attitude towards sustainable tourism messages presented in short-form videos and their subsequent tourism decisions. Specifically, the study addresses two research questions: (1) What are the levels of attention, internalisation, and attitude towards sustainable tourism messages presented in short-form travel videos among Malaysian tourists? (2) To what extent do tourists engage in sustainable travel behaviours after watching short-form travel videos? These questions provide a clear basis for the descriptive and comparative analyses presented in the findings. The study also examines whether significant differences exist between Malay and Chinese respondents across five constructs: attention, internalisation, attitude towards sustainable tourism, behavioural intention, and actual sustainable tourism behaviour.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), explains behavioural decision-making through the relationships among attitudes, subjective norms, behavioural intention, and actual behaviour (see Figure 1). According to TRA, individuals form behavioural intentions based on their evaluation of a behaviour and perceived social expectations, with intention subsequently influencing behaviour. In the context of sustainable tourism, the theory has been applied to explain environmentally responsible and socially responsible tourism decisions. Previous studies have also demonstrated the relevance of behavioural theories in explaining tourists' sustainable intentions and consumption decisions (Patwary et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023; Luongo et al., 2024).

In this study, TRA is adapted and extended to examine how attention to sustainability messages and internalisation of sustainability cues may contribute to attitudes and behavioural intentions, which may subsequently influence actual sustainable tourism behaviour. As illustrated in Figure 2, the proposed framework extends the conventional TRA sequence by incorporating

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

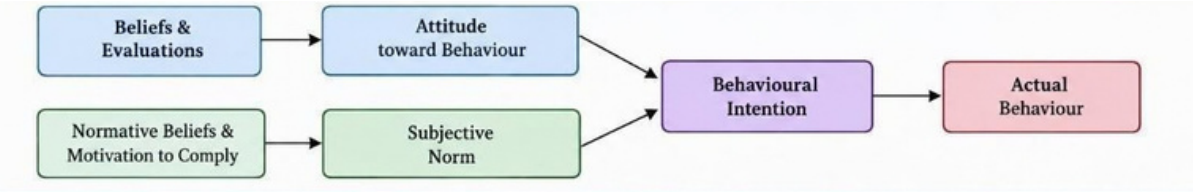

Figure 1. Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1975)

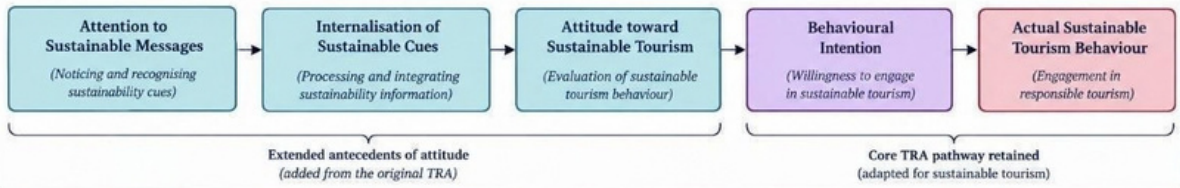

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of This Study

attention and internalisation as cognitive antecedents and actual behaviour as the behavioural outcome. In other words, the proposed framework modifies the TRA's front end by introducing two sustainability-specific cognitive processes.

2.1 Attention to Sustainability Message

Attention to sustainability messages represents the initial cognitive engagement with sustainability-related cues embedded in short-form travel videos. Prior research suggests that attention is a prerequisite for effective message processing, as sustainability cues are unlikely to influence attitudes or intentions when viewers are engaged (Qu et al., 2022; Han et al., 2022). Based on the literature reviewed, research hypothesis (RH) 1 proposes that a significant difference exists between Malay and Chinese respondents in their attention to sustainable tourism messages in short-form travel videos.

2.2 Internalisation of Sustainability Cues

Internalisation of sustainability cues refers to the extent to which sustainability values are adopted into an individual's personal belief system. Studies indicate that internalised values are stronger predictors of sustainable behaviour than surface-level awareness or external pressure (Wut et al., 2023; Xue et al., 2024). Based on the literature reviewed, RH2 proposes that Malay and Chinese respondents differ significantly in their internalisation of sustainability cues in short-form travel videos.

2.3 Attitude toward Sustainable Tourism

Attitude towards sustainable tourism reflects an individual's overall evaluation of sustainable tourism practices. In line with TRA, attitude serves as a key mediator between cognitive antecedents and behavioural intention, with positive attitudes increasing the likelihood of engaging in sustainable tourism behaviours (Patwary et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2024). Based on the literature reviewed, RH3 posits a significant difference in attitudes towards sustainable tourism between Malay and Chinese respondents.

2.4 Behavioural Intention

Behavioural intention represents tourists' readiness and willingness to engage in sustainable travel practices and is a central predictor of behaviour with the TRA framework. Empirical evidence indicates that exposure to sustainability-oriented digital content positively influences intentions to

eISSN: 3122-6744

make eco-friendly and responsible tourism choices (Chen et al., 2023). Based on the literature reviewed, RH4 proposes that a significant difference exists between Malay and Chinese respondents in their sustainable tourism behavioural intention.

2.5 Actual Behaviour

Actual behaviour refers to observable sustainable tourism actions, such as conserving resources, maintaining cleanliness, respecting local culture, and supporting local communities. Including actual behaviour allows this study to examine whether positive intentions translate into tangible actions, thereby addressing the intention-behaviour gap highlighted in sustainable tourism (Wur et al., 2023). Based on the literature reviewed, RH5 proposes that a significant difference exists between Malay and Chinese respondents in their actual sustainable tourism behaviour.

2.6 Ethnic Perspective among Malays and Chinese

Ethnic and cultural background may influence how individuals interpret sustainability messages, form attitudes, and make tourism decisions. In the Malaysian context, Malay and Chinese communities have distinct cultural and historical backgrounds that may contribute to differences in values, social norms, and consumption patterns. However, such differences should not be interpreted as fixed characteristics of all individuals within an ethnic group, as substantial variation may exist within each group.

For Chinese respondents, Confucian values have been associated with concepts such as harmony, responsibility, social relationships, and moral conduct. Previous research has found that Confucian values can contribute to environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviour by encouraging responsibility towards society and the natural environment (Ma et al., 2018; Chen & Liu, 2025; Li & Wei, 2023). These values may therefore influence how Chinese tourists interpret sustainability-related information and evaluate responsible tourism practices.

Malay respondents in Malaysia are predominantly Muslim, and Islamic principles include stewardship, responsibility, moderation, cleanliness, and care for creation. Such principles may provide a cultural and religious context through which environmental and social responsibility is understood (Sian et al., 2010). Previous research has also highlighted the role of cultural and religious values in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviour among Malays and Chinese in Malaysia.

Nevertheless, cultural or religious background alone cannot fully explain individual tourism behaviour. Factors such as personal values, social influence, perceived benefits, cost, convenience, travel opportunities, and exposure to sustainability information may also affect sustainable tourism decisions. Therefore, this study does not assume that all Malay or Chinese respondents hold identical values. Instead, it examines whether statistically significant differences exist between the two groups in attention, internalisation, attitudes, behavioural intentions, and actual sustainable tourism behaviour.

2.7 Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism refers to tourism development and practices that consider the needs of tourists, host communities, the environment, and the tourism economy while protecting resources for future generations. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC, 2018) provides global criteria and principles for sustainable tourism that emphasise responsible destination management,

eISSN: 3122-6744

environmental conservation, social and cultural considerations, and economic sustainability.

Sustainable tourism can be understood through three interconnected dimensions: environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Environmental sustainability focuses on conserving natural resources, protecting biodiversity, reducing pollution, and minimising the negative ecological impacts of tourism. Social sustainability emphasises respect for local culture, community participation, social inclusion, and the equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Economic sustainability focuses on maintaining long-term economic viability through employment, support for local businesses, and fair distribution of tourism-related benefits (Alhaddi, 2015).

These dimensions are particularly relevant to tourism decision-making because tourists may consider sustainability when selecting destinations, accommodation, transportation, activities, and tourism businesses. Previous studies have shown that environmentally responsible values and sustainability-oriented information can influence tourists' attitudes and behavioural intentions (Patwary et al., 2022; Chen & Cheng, 2023). Social media can further support sustainable tourism by increasing awareness of responsible travel practices and exposing users to sustainability-related information. Consequently, short-form social media videos serve as an important communication channel for conveying environmental, social, and economic sustainability messages to potential tourists.

2.8 Short-form Video

Short-form social media videos are brief videos designed for rapid consumption and commonly distributed on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. These videos typically combine visual elements, audio, text, music, and concise storytelling to attract viewers' attention and encourage engagement (Zhou, 2024). Their algorithm-driven distribution can increase repeated exposure to content that matches users' interests, thereby influencing engagement and information processing (Liu et al., 2023).

In tourism, short-form social media videos have become an important source of travel inspiration and destination information. Features such as audio-visual quality, storytelling, influencer credibility, and audience interaction can influence viewers' travel motivation and intentions (Asdecker, 2022; Zhu et al., 2024). Short-form videos can also communicate sustainability-related information by presenting environmental conservation, local community support, cultural preservation, responsible travel practices, and eco-friendly tourism options (Chen & Cheng, 2023; Liu et al., 2023).

For this study, sustainable short-form tourism videos were defined as short tourism-related videos that contain at least one sustainability-related message or visual cue. Examples included environmental conservation, protection of natural resources, respect for local culture, support for local communities, responsible travel practices, and environmentally friendly tourism choices. This definition was provided to respondents before they answered the questionnaire to ensure a consistent understanding of the concept.

Based on the presented literature, the research hypotheses are as follows:

RH1: There is a significant difference between Malay and Chinese respondents in their attention to sustainable tourism messages in short-form travel videos.
RH2: There is a significant difference between Malay and Chinese respondents in their internalisation of sustainable tourism messages in

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

in short-form travel videos.

RH3: There is a significant difference between Malay and Chinese respondents in their attitudes towards sustainable tourism messages in short-form travel videos.

RH4: There is a significant difference between Malay and Chinese respondents in their sustainable travel behavioural intentions.

RH5: There is a significant difference between Malay and Chinese respondents in their self-reported sustainable tourism behaviour.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey to examine differences between Malay and Chinese respondents in their responses to sustainable short-form social media tourism content. A quantitative approach was appropriate because the study aimed to collect numerical responses from a relatively large group of participants and statistically compare the mean scores of the two ethnic groups across several constructs.

Quantitative survey methods are particularly suitable when researchers seek to measure attitudes, perceptions, intentions, and behavioural responses using standardised instruments and statistical procedures. The study measured five key constructs: attention to sustainability messages, internalisation of sustainability cues, attitude towards sustainable tourism, behavioural intention, and actual sustainable tourism behaviour.

3.1 Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprises Malaysian travellers who frequently watch short-form tourism-related videos on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. To enable meaningful cross-cultural comparisons, the study focuses on respondents from diverse ethnic backgrounds, with particular emphasis on Malay and Chinese participants, as their cultural values and social norms may influence how sustainability messages are attended to, internalised, and translated into tourism behaviour. The population spans different generations, capturing variations in digital literacy, media engagement, and travel behaviour across age groups. According to the latest data from Tourism Malaysia, domestic tourism recorded 69.7 million domestic visitor trips in the first quarter of 2025, up 18.9 % year-on-year and 25.5 million domestic visitor trips in the first quarter of 2025, up 37.6% year-on-year. The scale of domestic travel suggests a substantial pool of Malaysian travellers engaged with tourism content, supporting the feasibility of recruiting a sample from this population.

The intended sample size is 150–200 respondents, which is considered sufficient for quantitative analyses, including multiple regression and correlation. Following Tabachnick and Fidell (2019), the minimum sample size for regression is calculated as 50 + 8m, where m represents the number of independent variables; with three independent variables in this study (attention, internalisation, and attitude), a minimum of 74 participants would be required, making the proposed 150–200 sample size more than adequate. Additionally, Hair et al. (2021) note that a sample exceeding 150 is appropriate for multivariate analysis, providing stable estimates and sufficient statistical power.

A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit respondents who met the study's inclusion criteria. Participants were required to be Malaysian residents, belong to either the Malay or Chinese ethnic group, have experience watching short-form social media videos such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, or YouTube Shorts, and have sufficient familiarity with tourism-related content to respond to questions concerning sustainable tourism

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

messages. Recruitment was conducted by distributing the questionnaire to individuals who met these criteria. Respondents self-identified their ethnic group in the demographic section of the questionnaire, allowing the researchers to classify participants into the Malay and Chinese comparison groups. A total of 159 valid responses were obtained, comprising 78 Malay respondents and 81 Chinese respondents. The purposive sampling approach was selected because the research required participants with relevant exposure to short-form tourism content rather than a general population sample.

3.5 Research Instrument

The questionnaire serves as the primary data collection instrument, which is divided into six sections, each corresponding to a construct examined. Each construct is measured using statements on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents received a brief explanation of sustainable short-form tourism content. They were informed that the term referred to short, tourism-related videos that convey messages or visual information about environmental protection, conservation of natural resources, respect for local culture, support for local communities, responsible travel practices, or environmentally friendly tourism choices. This explanation was provided to minimise differences in interpretation and to ensure that respondents answered the awareness question using a consistent definition. Table 1 demonstrates the instrument design according to the research question and hypotheses.

Table 1. Instruments for data collection

Variables	Measurement items (Likert scale)	Source
Attention to Sustainability Messages RQ1: What are the levels of attention, internalisation, and attitude towards sustainable tourism messages presented in short-form travel videos among Malaysian tourists? RH1: There is a significant level of attention among respondents towards sustainable tourism messages in short-form travel videos.	1. I usually notice when short-form videos include messages about protecting the environment or local communities. (adapted) 2. I pay attention to travel videos that highlight responsible or eco-friendly tourism. (adapted) 3. I am attracted to short-form videos that feature nature conservation or local culture. (adapted) 4. I focus more on travel videos that show authentic and ethical travel practices. (adapted)5. I easily get attention for sustainability messages in short-form videos (adapted)	Liu et al. (2023).
Internalisation of Sustainability Cues RQ1: What are the levels of attention, internalisation, and attitude towards sustainable tourism messages presented in short-form travel videos among Malaysian tourists? RH2: There is a significant level of internalisation among respondents towards sustainable tourism messages in short-form travel videos.	1. The sustainability values shown in short-form videos match my personal values. 2. I feel personally motivated to support responsible travel after watching such videos. 3. These videos make me reflect on my role in environmental conservation. 4. I act in line with the sustainability messages I see online.5. I feel that watching these videos strengthens my belief in sustainable living.	Liu et al., (2023)
Attitude Towards Sustainable Tourism RQ1: What are the levels of attention, internalisation, and attitude towards sustainable tourism messages presented in short-form travel videos among Malaysian tourists? RH3: There is a significant level of attitude among respondents towards sustainable tourism messages in short-form travel videos.	1. I feel that travelling sustainably is a positive and meaningful behaviour. (adapted) 2. I believe sustainable tourism benefits both the environment and local people. (adapted) 3. I think being a responsible tourist is personally meaningful. (adapted)4. I feel good when I engage in eco-friendly and cultural travel activities. (adapted)5. I feel I am contributing to society when supporting sustainable tourism. (adapted)	Rahman et al. (2023).

eISSN: 3122-6744

Table 1. Continued

Variables	Measurement items (Likert scale)	Source
RQ2: To what extent do tourists engage in sustainable travel behaviours after watching short travel videos? RH4: Attention, internalisation, and attitude towards sustainable tourism messages in short-form travel videos have a significant positive influence on sustainable travel behavioural intention.	1. I plan to choose destinations that promote sustainability. (adopted) 2. I intend to travel in an environmentally responsible way. (adopted)3 3. I am willing to support eco-friendly tourism businesses. (adopted) 4. I intend to recommend sustainable destinations to others. (adopted) 5. I will consider sustainability messages when deciding where to travel. (adapted)	Rahman et al. (2023)
Actual Sustainable Behaviour RQ2: To what extent do tourists engage in sustainable travel behaviours after watching short travel videos? RH5: Attention, internalisation, and attitude towards sustainable tourism messages in short-form travel videos have a significant positive influence on actual sustainable travel behaviour.	1. I have taken green actions (reduce waste/ eco-friendly accommodation/ transport) during travel. (adapted) 2. I support local businesses when visiting new destinations. (adapted) 3. I try to conserve the environment and culture according to rules and regulations. (adapted) 4. I share sustainability-related travel content on social media. (adapted) 5. I avoid visiting places that exploit nature or culture. (adapted)	Rahman et al. (2023)

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and independent-samples t tests. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise the participants' demographic characteristics and response patterns. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the measurement items for each construct. A coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered an acceptable indicator of internal consistency.

Independent-samples t tests were conducted to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between Malay and Chinese respondents in their attention to sustainability messages, internalisation of sustainability cues, attitude towards sustainable tourism, behavioural intention, and actual sustainable tourism behaviour. This statistical procedure was appropriate because the study compared the mean scores of two independent groups. Statistical significance was assessed using a p-value of less than 0.05. Cohen's d was also calculated to determine the effect size or magnitude of the differences between the two groups. The effect size was interpreted as small (0.20), medium (0.50), or large (0.80).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement items used in the study. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each construct, with values of 0.70 or above generally considered acceptable for social science research. The results in Table 2 indicate that all five constructs demonstrated acceptable to excellent internal consistency. Attention recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.828, internalisation recorded 0.893, attitude recorded 0.898, behavioural intention recorded 0.902, and actual sustainable behaviour recorded 0.797. These results indicate that the measurement items within each construct were sufficiently consistent for subsequent statistical analysis.

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Table 2. Reliability analysis results

Variables	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Attention	5	0.828	Good reliability
Internalisation	5	0.893	Excellent reliability
Attitude	5	0.898	Excellent reliability
Behavioural intention	5	0.902	Excellent reliability
Actual behaviour	5	0.797	Acceptable reliability

The reliability coefficients indicate that the scales demonstrated adequate internal consistency and were suitable for subsequent analyses.

4.2 Demographic Profile

Table 3 presents the respondents' demographic profile, including age, gender, ethnicity, preferred social media platform, and awareness of sustainable tourism content in short-form videos.

The age group of this study is distributed into four categories. The 13–28 age category represented the largest proportion of respondents in the study (75.5%, n = 120). This group broadly overlaps with Generation Z, although the study does not classify all respondents aged 13–28 as Generation Z because generational boundaries vary across sources. Therefore, age is reported as a category rather than as a strict generational classification. The age group aged 29 to 44 comprises 9.4% (n = 15), and the age group aged 45 to 60 comprises 10.7% (n = 18). Lastly, the smallest percentage of the category groups is 61-79, at 6% (n = 3.8). In this study, 54 % (n = 87) of the respondents are male, and 45 % (n = 7) are female. The percentage of male respondents is higher than that of female respondents. The ethnic groups chosen are Chinese and Malay. 50.9% (n = 81) of the respondents are Chinese, and 49.1% (n = 78) are Malay. The quantities of each ethnic group are equal; the difference between the two groups is 1.8%.

Respondents who prefer Instagram Reels tend to score higher on the scale. The most significant finding is that respondents select the highest preference level (on the Instagram Reels scale), at 35% (n = 56), followed by 27% (n = 44), indicating that more than half of respondents prefer Instagram Reels. Other than that, the lower preference level (scale 0-for) for Instagram Reels is 17.6% (n = 2), lower than TikTok (23.3%, n = 37) and YouTube Shorts (22.6%, n = 36). Overall, Instagram Reels is the most preferred platform, followed by TikTok, while YouTube Shorts is the least preferred. Among 159 respondents, 128 are aware of short-form videos on sustainable tourism.

Table 3. Demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	13-28	120	75.5
	29-44	15	9.4
	45-60	18	10.7
	61-79	6	3.8

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Table 3. Continued

Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Total	159	100
Gender	Male	87	54.7
	Female	72	45.3
	Total	159	100
Ethnic	Chinese	81	50.9
	Malay	78	49.1
	Total	159	100

4.3 Discussion on Research Questions

4.3.1 Measurement of The Level of Attention, Internalisation, and Attitude Towards Sustainable Tourism Messages Presented in Short-Form Travel Videos

As for the first research question, Table 4 shows that 61% of respondents strongly agreed that they noticed sustainability messages in short-form videos. Additionally, the findings indicate strong and sustained engagement with eco-friendly media. Approximately 64% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they actively paid attention to sustainable travel videos. Similarly, 70.4% were attracted to short-form videos highlighting environmental conservation and local heritage. Ethical travel content commanded particularly strong attention, with 76.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing that such content attracted greater focus. Furthermore, 62.9% agreed or strongly agreed that sustainability cues in short-form videos readily captured their attention.

These findings suggest that short-form videos provide a potentially effective communication environment for presenting sustainability-related tourism messages. The consistently high levels of positive responses across attention, attraction, and engagement indicate that sustainability content can gain visibility among viewers when communicated through concise and visually appealing formats. The particularly high response for ethical travel content (76.1%) suggests that messages emphasising responsible and values-based tourism may be especially relevant to contemporary audiences. Likewise, the strong attraction to content featuring environmental conservation and local heritage (70.4%) indicates that sustainability messages may become more engaging when linked to tangible destinations, cultural assets, and meaningful tourism practices.

The findings further imply that short-form video content may serve as an initial point of engagement through which tourists encounter and process sustainability-related information. Rather than relying solely on lengthy or text-based communication, tourism stakeholders may benefit from integrating clear sustainability cues into visually compelling short-form content. Nevertheless, these results primarily demonstrate respondents' reported attention and engagement; they should not be interpreted as conclusive evidence that exposure to such videos directly produces sustainable tourism behaviour. Instead, the findings establish a strong foundation for examining whether this heightened attention and engagement subsequently translates into sustainability-oriented attitudes, intentions, or actions.

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Table 4. Frequency and percentage of attention to sustainability messages

Item	Rate	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
A1. I usually notice when short-form videos include messages about protecting the environment or local communities.	Strongly Disagree	4	2.5
	Disagree	16	10.1
	Neutral	42	26.4
	Agree	49	30.8
	Strongly Agree	48	30.2
	Total	159	100
A2. I pay attention to travel videos that highlight responsible or eco-friendly tourism.	Strongly Disagree	4	2.5
	Disagree	12	7.5
	Neutral	42	26.4
	Agree	55	34.6
	Strongly Agree	46	28.9
	Total	159	100
A3. I am attracted to short-form videos that feature nature conservation or local culture.	Strongly Disagree	4	2.5
	Disagree	7	4.4
	Neutral	3.7	23.3
	Agree	51	32.7
	Strongly Agree	60	37.7
	Total	159	100
A4. I focus more on travel videos that show authentic and ethical travel practices.	Strongly Disagree	2	1.3
	Disagree	7	4.4
	Neutral	29	18.2
	Agree	66	41.5
	Strongly Agree	55	34.6
	Total	159	100
A5. I easily get attention for sustainability messages in short-form videos	Strongly Disagree	4	2.5
	Disagree	16	10.1
	Neutral	39	24.5
	Agree	52	32.7
	Strongly Agree	48	30.2
	Total	159	100

As detailed in Table 5, the findings demonstrate a strong alignment between sustainability content and respondents' personal values. Overall, 64.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the sustainability values conveyed through short-form videos aligned with their personal principles. Exposure to these videos also appeared to foster responsible tourism orientations, with 74.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the content motivated them to support responsible tourism practices. In terms of personal reflection, 69.8% agreed or strongly agreed that the content prompted them to consider their individual role in environmental conservation. This positive orientation was further reflected in behavioural alignment, with 66.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they aligned their actual actions with sustainability cues encountered online. Finally,

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

71.7% agreed or strongly agreed that exposure to short-form travel videos reinforced their commitment to sustainable living.

These findings suggest that short-form travel videos may extend beyond awareness-building by encouraging more personal, action-oriented engagement with sustainability. The relatively high level of agreement across all dimensions indicates that sustainability messages delivered through concise, visually engaging content can resonate with viewers' existing values while strengthening their motivation to adopt responsible tourism practices. Notably, the progression from value alignment and personal reflection to behavioural alignment and commitment suggests that such content can link cognitive and affective responses to everyday sustainability intentions. The particularly high proportions reporting greater motivation to support responsible tourism (74.3%) and a reinforced commitment to sustainable living (71.7%) further indicate that short-form videos can function as persuasive communication tools rather than merely informational media. This supports the view that social media content can influence tourism-related attitudes and behavioural orientations when sustainability messages are presented in accessible and personally meaningful formats. However, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of perceived influence and self-reported behavioural alignment rather than definitive proof of actual behavioural change.

Table 5. Frequency and percentage of internalisation of sustainable cues

Item	Rate	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
B1. The sustainability values depicted in short-form videos align with my personal values.	Strongly Disagree	2	1.3
	Disagree	11	6.9
	Neutral	44	27.7
	Agree	60	37.7
	Strongly Agree	42	26.4
	Total	159	100
B2. I feel personally motivated to support responsible travel after watching such videos.	Strongly Disagree	1	0.6
	Disagree	12	7.5
	Neutral	28	17.6
	Agree	71	44.7
	Strongly Agree	47	29.6
	Total	159	100
B3. These videos make me reflect on my role in environmental conservation.	Strongly Disagree	1	0.6
	Disagree	10	6.3
	Neutral	37	23.3
	Agree	59	37.1
	Strongly Agree	52	32.7
	Total	159	100
B4. I align my actions with the sustainability messages I see online.	Strongly Disagree	3	1.9
	Disagree	11	6.9
	Neutral	39	24.5
	Agree	66	41.5
	Strongly Agree	40	25.2

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Table 5. Continued

Item	Rate	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Total	159	100
B5. I feel that watching these videos strengthens my belief in sustainable living.	Strongly Disagree	2	1.3
	Disagree	10	6.3
	Neutral	33	20.8
	Agree	64	40.3
	Strongly Agree	50	31.4
	Total	159	100

As detailed in Table 6, the findings indicate a strong positive orientation towards sustainable tourism among the respondents. Overall, 83.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that travelling sustainably constitutes positive and meaningful behaviour. Similarly, 79.2% perceived sustainable tourism as generating mutual benefits for both the environment and local communities. Notably, 84.9% agreed or strongly agreed that being a responsible tourist was personally important to them, representing the highest level of positive response across the items. In addition, 78.6% reported that engaging in eco-friendly travel activities provided them with a sense of personal satisfaction. A comparable proportion, 76.1%, agreed or strongly agreed that supporting sustainable tourism enabled them to feel that they were contributing to society.

Taken together, these findings suggest that respondents generally associate sustainable tourism with positive personal and societal meanings. The strong agreement that sustainable travel represents meaningful behaviour indicates that sustainability is not perceived solely as an environmental concern but may also be understood as a personally valued form of tourism participation. The high level of perceived personal importance attached to being a responsible tourist (84.9%) further suggests that responsible tourism resonates with respondents' individual values and self-perceptions. Meanwhile, the findings on personal satisfaction and societal contribution indicate that sustainable tourism may provide both intrinsic and socially oriented benefits, whereby environmentally responsible practices are associated with personal fulfilment and a sense of contributing to the wider community.

The finding that 79.2% perceived benefits for both the environment and local communities is also noteworthy. It suggests that respondents recognise sustainability as having a broader scope that extends beyond environmental protection to include community-related outcomes. This perception is consistent with a more holistic understanding of sustainable tourism, in which environmental stewardship and local community well-being are viewed as interconnected considerations. However, these findings primarily reflect respondents' attitudes and perceptions. While the consistently high positive responses indicate a favourable orientation towards sustainable tourism, they should not be taken as direct evidence that respondents consistently engage in sustainable travel behaviours. Further analysis of behavioural intentions or actual practices would be necessary to establish whether these positive perceptions translate into sustained responsible tourism behaviour.

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Table 6. Frequency and percentage of attitude towards sustainable tourism

Item	Rate	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
C1. I feel that travelling sustainably is a positive and meaningful behaviour.	Strongly Disagree	1	0.6
	Disagree	8	5.0
	Neutral	18	11.3
	Agree	62	39.0
	Strongly Agree	70	44.0
	Total	159	100
C2. I believe sustainable tourism benefits both the environment and local people.	Strongly Disagree	1	0.6
	Disagree	7	4.4
	Neutral	25	15.7
	Agree	50	31.4
	Strongly Agree	76	47.8
	Total	159	100
C3. I think being a responsible tourist is personally important to me.	Strongly Disagree	2	1.3
	Disagree	2	1.3
	Neutral	20	12.6
	Agree	42	26.4
	Strongly Agree	93	58.5
	Total	159	100
C4. I feel good when I engage in eco-friendly and cultural travel activities.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	7	4.4
	Neutral	27	17.0
	Agree	53	33.3
	Strongly Agree	72	45.3
	Total	159	100
C5. I feel I'm contributing to society when supporting sustainable tourism.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	6	3.8
	Neutral	32	20.1
	Agree	48	30.2

Table 7 summarises the mean scores for attention, internalisation, and attitudes towards sustainable tourism messages.

Based on a five-point Likert scale, the three independent variables indicate agreement and strong agreement with sustainable content. The first

Table 7. Summarises the mean scores for attention, internalisation, and attitudes towards sustainable tourism messages

Variables	Mean Score
Attention	3.86
Internalisation	3.89
Attitude	4.24

eISSN: 3122-6744

Based on a five-point Likert scale, the three independent variables indicate agreement and strong agreement with sustainable content. The first research question aims to measure the level of attention, internalisation, and attitude towards sustainable tourism messages presented in short-form travel videos. The finding shows that respondents agree they pay attention to sustainable short-form videos (M = 3.86). This result indicates that the respondents have focused on videos that feature sustainable content, such as nature, the environment, and culture. Moreover, the respondents are aware of videos that show responsible and ethical practices. Align with the previews by Han et al., 2022; Li & Tay, 2024: attention to sustainable short-form videos is an action that involves recall and understanding of content. This means short-form video can capture respondents' attention and deliver sustainable travel content. Additionally, supported by Kullolli et al. (2023) Gen Z is the age group that is highly influenced by social media, which is the main respondent in this study. The reason for this is that Gen Z have smartphones and constantly engages with social media, which makes them pay close attention towards social content.

Moreover, the internalisation of sustainable cues was also found to agree among respondents (M = 3.89). This means that respondents are motivated to support responsible travel and are more concerned about the environment because the sustainable content strengthens their acceptance of sustainable tourism. Consistent with Wut et al. (2023), an individual adopts sustainability values derived from media messages, and their belief becomes more about doing the right thing and aligns with their self-concept. This means that the respondents are not only aware of the videos but also cognitively processed and accepted them. Respondents internalise sustainable cues rather than just consuming content.

Lastly, attitude has the highest mean score (M = 4.24), indicating a positive attitude towards sustainable tourism content. This is because respondents feel good about travelling responsibly and believe that sustainability aligns with their personal beliefs and behaviour. Aligning with Ashraf et al. (2020), attitude refers to an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of performing something. This means that respondents have a positive attitude towards the sustainable travel video.

4.3.2 The Extent To Which Tourists Engage in Sustainable Travel Behaviours after Watching Short-form Travel Videos

As for the second research question, Table 8 presents respondents' behavioural intentions towards sustainable tourism. Overall, the findings indicate a strong inclination towards sustainability-oriented travel choices. The most prominent result concerned respondents' intention to travel in an environmentally responsible manner, with 76.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Similarly, 76.7% indicated that they intended to recommend sustainable destinations to others, suggesting that sustainability may extend beyond personal travel choices to positive word-of-mouth intentions.

A further notable finding was that 74.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would consider sustainability messages when deciding where to travel. This suggests that sustainability-related information may play a meaningful role in destination decision-making. In addition, 74.2% expressed an intention to choose destinations that promote sustainability, while 79.3% indicated a willingness to support eco-friendly tourism businesses. Taken together, these findings demonstrate consistently positive behavioural intentions across destination selection,

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

environmentally responsible travel, support for sustainable tourism businesses, and recommendation of sustainable destinations.

However, these findings should be interpreted as indicators of behavioural intention rather than evidence of actual sustainable tourism behaviour. Although the high levels of positive responses suggest that sustainability is relevant to respondents' intended travel decisions, intentions do not necessarily translate into consistent behaviour in practice. Nevertheless, the findings provide evidence of a favourable behavioural orientation towards sustainable tourism and indicate respondents' potential readiness to incorporate sustainability considerations into future travel-related decisions.

Table 8. Frequency and percentage of behavioural intention towards sustainable tourism

Item	Rate	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
D1. I plan to choose destinations that promote sustainability.	Strongly Disagree	1	0.6
	Disagree	7	4.4
	Neutral	33	20.8
	Agree	73	45.9
	Strongly Agree	45	28.3
	Total	159	100
D2. I intend to travel in an environmentally responsible way.	Strongly Disagree	2	0.6
	Disagree	6	4.4
	Neutral	29	18.2
	Agree	63	39.6
	Strongly Agree	59	37.1
	Total	159	100
D3. I am willing to support eco-friendly tourism businesses.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	4	2.5
	Neutral	29	18.2
	Agree	55	34.6
	Strongly Agree	71	44.7
	Total	159	100
D4. I intend to recommend sustainable destinations to others	Strongly Disagree	3	1.9
	Disagree	5	3.1
	Neutral	28	17.6
	Agree	60	37.7
	Strongly Agree	63	39.6
	Total	159	100
D5. I will consider sustainability messages when deciding where to travel.	Strongly Disagree	1	0
	Disagree	9	5.7
	Neutral	29	18.2
	Agree	55	34.6
	Strongly Agree	65	40.9
	Total	159	100

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Based on Table 9, the findings indicate a generally strong orientation towards sustainable tourism practices. The most prominent result concerned conserving the environment and culture in accordance with relevant rules and regulations, with 83.0% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this practice. Similarly, 78.6% reported supporting local businesses when visiting new destinations, suggesting a strong recognition of tourism's role in contributing to local economic development. Avoiding destinations that exploit natural or cultural resources also received substantial support, with 76.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this practice.

Overall, these findings suggest that respondents exhibit positive behavioural orientations towards environmental

Table 9. Frequency and percentage of actual behaviour towards sustainable tourisms

Item	Rate	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
E1. I have taken green actions (reducing waste/eco-friendly accommodation/transport) during travel.	Strongly Disagree	3	1.9
	Disagree	9	5.7
	Neutral	37	23.3
	Agree	59	37.1
	Strongly Agree	51	32.1
	Total	159	100
E2. I support local businesses when visiting new destinations.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	8	5
	Neutral	25	15.7
	Agree	60	37.7
	Strongly Agree	66	41.5
	Total	159	100
E3. I work to conserve the environment and culture in accordance with the rules and regulations.	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	5	2.5
	Neutral	22	13.8
	Agree	56	35.2
	Strongly Agree	76	47.8
	Total	159	100
E4. I share sustainability-related travel content on social media.	Strongly Disagree	13	8.2
	Disagree	19	11.9
	Neutral	39	24.5
	Agree	42	26.4
	Strongly Agree	46	28.9
	Total	159	100
E5. I avoid visiting places that exploit nature or culture.	Strongly Disagree	2	1.3
	Disagree	6	3.8
	Neutral	30	18.9
	Agree	49	30.8
	Strongly Agree	72	45.3
	Total	159	100

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

conservation, support for local communities, and the responsible of tourism resources. The relatively high level of agreement across these practices indicates that sustainability is reflected not only in respondents' general attitudes but also in several self-reported tourism-related actions. However, the results should be interpreted as indicators of self-reported sustainable practices rather than definitive evidence of consistent behaviour in actual travel contexts. In particular, the comparatively lower level of agreement regarding sharing sustainability-related travel content on social media (55.3%) suggests that sustainable practices may be more readily expressed through direct travel choices than through online advocacy or content-sharing behaviour.

The descriptive results for the second research question show the extent to which respondents demonstrated sustainable travel behavioural intention and actual sustainable behaviour following exposure to short-form travel videos. The findings indicate that respondents generally demonstrated a positive level of sustainable travel behavioural intention and actual sustainable behaviour, with mean scores of 4.01 and 4.09. This suggests that short-form travel videos can encourage viewers to consider and engage in more responsible travel practices.

Table 10. Table of total mean score of behavioural intention and actual sustainable behaviour

Variables	Mean Score
Behavioural Intention	4.09
Actual Sustainable Behaviour	4.01

Note. five-point Likert scale

4.3 Discussion on Examining Differences Between Malay and Chinese Respondents in Their Responses to Sustainable Tourism Content

To examine differences between Malay and Chinese respondents, an independent-samples t test is conducted on the variables' attention, internalisation, attitude, intention, and behaviour towards sustainability, based on the data analysis shown in the table below.

The independent-samples t-test results indicate that Malay respondents reported significantly higher levels of attention to sustainability messages than Chinese respondents on items A1-A4 ($p < 0.05$). The effect sizes ranged from small to large (Cohen's $d = -0.43$ to -0.77), indicating meaningful differences between the two groups. Item A5 also recorded a higher mean score among Malay respondents, although the difference was marginally significant ($p = 0.050$; $d = -0.31$). Overall, the findings suggest that Malay respondents in this sample reported greater attention to sustainability-related content in short-form tourism videos.

One possible explanation is that cultural and religious values may influence how sustainability-related information is perceived. Previous research has associated Islamic principles with stewardship, responsibility, and care for the environment, while studies on Chinese visitors have also identified the role of cultural values in environmentally responsible behaviour (Sian et al., 2010; Ma et al., 2018; Li & Wei, 2023). However, these cultural explanations should not be interpreted as deterministic. Attention to sustainability content may also be influenced by individual interests, prior travel experience, social media exposure, and the video's presentation style. Therefore, the higher attention score among Malay

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Table 11. Independent-samples t test of attention to sustainability messages

Items	ChineseMean (SD)	Malay Mean (SD)	T(df)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Effect Size	Conclusion
A1	3.38 (1.08)	4.15 (0.91)	−4.87(154.46)	<0.001	−0.77	Medium-Large	Significant difference(Malay higher)
A2	3.51 (1.14)	4.10 (0.78)	−3.85(142.02)	<0.001	−0.61	Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
A3	3.73 (1.08)	4.24 (0.86)	−3.33(151.23)	0.001	−0.52	Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
A4	3.85 (0.94)	4.23 (0.84)	−2.69(156.11)	0.008	−0.43	Small-Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
A5	3.62 (1.06)	3.95 (1.06)	−1.98(156.77)	0.050	−0.31	Small	Marginally significant(Malay higher)

respondents should be interpreted as a difference observed within this sample rather than evidence that one ethnic group is inherently more environmentally conscious than the other.

Moreover, the results show that Chinese attention to sustainable video is lower because the emphasis on religion-based environments is weaker in Malay. This is because Chinese in Malaysia practice a variety of religions and beliefs, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, as Ismail and Alice (2025) note. Although many Chinese believe in Confucianism, they do not practice it, meaning the sustainable practices and values are not implemented in daily life. To explain this, institutions that promote Confucianism, such as the Kong Institute, focus more on language and cultural education, explicitly promoting Confucian values, while the Chinese have limited awareness of the philosophy's teachings (as supported by Ngu et al., 2021). Which means individuals who do have this responsibility will pay more attention to sustainable content.

As a result, Malays pay more attention to sustainable content than the Chinese do. This can be further explained using the TRA. Individuals' behaviour is influenced by attitude and subjective norms. Malays have a positive attitude and strong subjective norms towards sustainability. This is because Malay teachings are deeply linked to stewardship, meaning that environmental sustainability is their religious duty rather than a social responsibility.

In contrast, the Chinese exhibit lower attitudes and subjective norms towards sustainability. This is because the Chinese view Confucianism more positively as a cultural and linguistic tradition than as a set of ethical values, meaning that, for them, environmental sustainability is a personal choice rather than a necessity. Even the Chinese's attention towards sustainability content is moderately positive, but it is lower among themselves.

In Table 14, the independent-samples t-test results for Malay and Chinese participants are compared regarding their internalisation of sustainable messages in short-form travel videos. The results show that Malay respondents demonstrated significantly higher mean scores than Chinese respondents. From item B1 to B5 ($p < 0.05$), with the effect size ranging from small to large (Cohen's −0.43 to −0.88), indicating differences in internalised sustainable content. Overall, Malay respondents showed greater internalisation of sustainable short video content than Chinese respondents.

In Table 12, the independent-samples t-test results for Malay and Chinese participants are

eISSN: 3122-6744

compared regarding their internalisation of sustainable messages in short-form travel videos. The results show that Malay respondents demonstrated significantly higher mean scores than Chinese respondents. From item B1 to B5 ($p < 0.05$), with the effect size ranging from small to large (Cohen's −0.43 to −0.88), indicating differences in internalised sustainable content. Overall, Malay respondents showed greater internalisation of sustainable short video content than Chinese respondents.

In the independent-samples t-test results, Malay and Chinese are compared with respect to the internalisation of sustainable messages in short-form travel videos (see Table 12). The results show that Malay respondents demonstrated significantly higher mean scores than Chinese respondents. From item B1 to B5 ($p < 0.05$), with the effect size ranging from small to large (Cohen's −0.43 to −0.88), which shows differences in internalised sustainable content. Overall, Malay respondents showed greater internalisation of sustainable short video content than Chinese respondents.

The reason for this is that Malays accept and internalise sustainable content because of the strong influence of Islam. Aligned with Sian et al. (2010), Islam is a religion not only focused on ritual but also emphasises Al-Din (Way of Life). It is a style that governs conduct, including all aspects of life. To fulfil a Muslim responsibility, Malays will internalise sustainability deeply, ingraining these practices into their perceptions, feelings, and motivations. On the other hand, the Chinese see sustainability as a personal preference rather than compulsory. Even though Confucianism influences Chinese culture, it is not enforced in daily practices. They are values supported by Sian et al. (2010), indicating they are not fully aligned with the philosophy's sustainable values.

In conclusion, Malays are more likely to internalise sustainable content than the Chinese. This can be further explained using TRA: when individuals accept values, internalisation of beliefs will occur. Malay internalises sustainable content because it is part of the way of life. In contrast, Chinese people internalise less sustainable content because, in their perception, it is not compulsory. Even the Chinese internalisation of sustainability content is moderately positive, but it is lower among themselves.

Table 13 presents the independent-samples t-test results comparing Malay and Chinese attitudes towards sustainable messages in short-form travel videos. The results show that Malay respondents demonstrated significantly higher mean scores than Chinese respondents. From item C1 to C5 ($p < 0.05$) except for C3 ($p > 0.05$), with the effect size ranging from small to large (Cohen's = −0.27 to

Table 12. Independent-samples t test of internalisation to sustainability messages

Items	Chinese Mean (SD)	Malay Mean (SD)	T(df)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Effect Size	Conclusion
B1	3.59 (0.95)	4.04 (0.9)	−3.04(156.99)	0.003	−0.48	Small-Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
B2	3.70 (0.93)	4.21 (0.83)	−3.59(156.08)	<0.001	−0.57	Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
B3	3.65 (0.94)	4.26 (0.83)	−4.29(155.87)	<0.001	−0.68	Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
B4	3.58 (0.96)	4.08 (0.88)	−3.57(156.58)	<0.001	−0.88	Large	Significant difference(Malay higher)
B5	3.69 (0.96)	4.21 (0.86)	−3.56(156.21)	<0.001	−0.57	Medium	Significant Difference(Malay higher)

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Table 13. Independent-samples t test of attitude to sustainability messages

Items	Chinese Mean (SD)	Malay Mean (SD)	T(df)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Effect Size	Conclusion
C1	3.99 (0.93)	4.44(0.77)	−3.32(153.41)	0.001	−0.53	Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
C2	4.04 (0.98)	4.40 (0.80)	−2.55(152.62)	0.012	−0.4	Small-Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
C3	4.29 (0.90)	4.51 (0.9)	−1.71(155.87)	0.090	−0.27	Medium	No Significant difference
C4	3.9(0.96)	4.5(0.66)	−4.60(142.42)	<0.001	−0.73	Medium-Large	Significant difference(Malay higher)
C5	3.93 (0.91)	4.45(0.78)	−3.89(155.27)	<0.001	−0.62	Medium	Significant Difference(Malay higher)

−0.73), which shows there are differences in attitude towards sustainable contents. Overall, Malay respondents showed a stronger attitude toward sustainable short video content than Chinese respondents.

The reason for this is that Malay has a strong religious orientation in Islam. Islam encourages attitude, priorities, social welfare, harmony and shared responsibility. These characteristics enable Malay to contribute positively to the principles of stewardship, justice, and environmental care. This makes Malay perceive sustainable content as meaningful and morally important in their attitude.

The differences may be associated with the cultural and social contexts in which sustainability messages are interpreted. Previous research indicates that cultural values can influence environmentally responsible attitudes and tourism behaviour. Islamic principles concerning stewardship and responsibility may provide one context through which Malay respondents interpret sustainability messages, while Confucian values have also been linked to environmental responsibility among Chinese visitors (Sian et al., 2010; Ma et al., 2018; Chen & Liu, 2025). However, cultural background is only one possible influence. Individual attitudes may also be affected by perceived benefits, personal values, previous experiences, cost, convenience, and social influence. The findings, therefore, indicate a difference between the two respondent groups in this sample, rather than suggesting that Malay and Chinese respondents possess fundamentally different attitudes towards sustainability.

As shown in Table 14, the independent-samples results for Malay and Chinese are compared with respect to their intentions toward travel. The results show that Malay respondents demonstrated significantly higher mean scores than Chinese respondents. From item D1 to D5 ($p< 0.05$), with the effect size ranging from medium to large (Cohen's = −0.55 to −0.87), which shows there are differences in behavioural intention towards sustainable travel. Overall, the Malay respondents showed greater intent to engage in travel.

These findings are consistent with the TRA perspective, which posits that favourable attitudes and perceived social expectations can strengthen behavioural intentions. Previous research has similarly found that attitudes, cultural values, and sustainability-related information can influence tourists' intentions to engage in responsible tourism practices (Patwary et al., 2022; Chen & Cheng, 2023; Luongo et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the lower mean scores among Chinese respondents should not be interpreted as a lack of concern for sustainability. Differences in behavioural intention may also reflect factors such as perceived cost, convenience, travel opportunities, personal

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

Table 14. Independent-samples t test of intentional behavioural towards sustainability

Items	ChineseMean (SD)	Malay Mean (SD)	T(df)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Effect Size	Conclusion
D1	3.69 (0.93)	4.26(0.65)	−4.44(143.74)	<0.001	−0.70	Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
D2	3.84 (0.96)	4.32 (0.78)	−3.48(153.05)	<0.001	−0.55	Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
D3	3.95 (0.90)	4.49(0.62)	−4.33(140.54)	<0.001	−0.68	Medium	Significant difference(Malay higher)
D4	3.73(0.95)	4.49(0.73)	−5.63(150.10)	<0.001	−0.89	Large	Significant difference(Malay higher)
D5	3.77 (0.99)	4.44(0.99)	−4.84(147.18)	<0.001	−0.77	Medium-Large	Significant Difference(Malay higher)

priorities, and social influence. The results, therefore, suggest differences in the strength of reported intentions within the sample rather than an inherent difference between the two ethnic groups.

In the independent-samples t-test results, Malay and Chinese are compared in their actual behaviour towards sustainable travel (refer to Table 15). The results show that Malay respondents demonstrated significantly higher mean scores than Chinese respondents. From items E2, E3, and E5 ($p < 0.05$), with effect sizes ranging from medium to large (Cohen's = −0.55 to −0.77), indicating differences in behavioural intention towards sustainable travel. However, two items, E1 and E4, show no significant difference. Item E1 is "I have taken green actions during travel, " and item E4 is "I share sustainability-related travel content on social media. Moreover, the mean scores of two of these items are lower than those of other items. It can be doubted that Malays and Chinese are less likely to engage in green actions and share sustainable content on their personal social media. Overall, Malay respondents showed greater actual behaviour in sustainable travel than Chinese respondents.

The reason for this is that Malays are collectivist, which encourages individuals to act in ways that align beliefs and behaviour, as supported by Sian et al. (2010). This makes Malay practise sustainable behaviour in line with their teaching. Conversely, Chinese people are more individualistic, which is associated with lower sustainability behaviour because it does not align with tangible rewards. Even though respondents show intention and awareness of sustainable content, this does not directly translate into real-life sustainable practices, such as content sharing, due to social perception concerns and psychological barriers, as noted by Shahzalal (2024). Moreover, respondents are less motivated to take actions due to a lack of car convenience, cost, time and distance support, as supported by et al. (2025). This is because awareness and intention are not enough if easy, eco-friendly options are not provided that tourists can practice.

The findings on actual sustainable tourism behaviour indicate that positive attitudes and behavioural intentions do not necessarily translate into equally strong behavioural outcomes. This distinction is important because sustainable tourism research has identified an intention–behaviour gap, whereby individuals may express positive intentions but face practical barriers to implementing sustainable practices (Wur et al., 2023). Factors such as cost, convenience, availability of sustainable options, travel infrastructure, and situational constraints may affect whether tourists can act on their sustainability intentions.

eISSN: 3122-6744

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
KSTCL IIUM

From the perspective of TRA, behavioural intention is an important predictor of actual behaviour; however, the transition from intention to action may be affected by circumstances beyond an individual's direct control. The present findings, therefore, suggest that exposure to sustainability messages and positive attitudes may contribute to sustainable tourism decision-making. However, short-form social media content alone may not be sufficient to guarantee actual behavioural change. Tourism marketers should therefore combine persuasive sustainability messages with practical information, such as the locations of eco-friendly facilities, sustainable transportation options, community-based tourism opportunities, and specific actions tourists can take during their trips.

In summary, Malay and Chinese results show positive attitudes towards sustainable tourism, but Chinese responses are lower than those of Malays. The reason for this is the Malays' internalisation of mobility, which aligns their religious and implementation beliefs with reality and translates them into real life. Moreover, Chinese respondents may hold positive sustainability values. However, practical factors such as cost, convenience, accessibility, and the availability of sustainable tourism options may influence whether these values translate into actual behaviour.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined differences between Malay and Chinese respondents in their responses to sustainable tourism content presented through short-form social media videos in Malaysia, guided by the TRA. Overall, the findings indicate favourable orientations towards sustainability across attention, internalisation of sustainability cues, attitudes, behavioural intentions, and self-reported sustainable tourism behaviour. This overall pattern suggests that short-form social media content provides a relevant context in which sustainability-related messages are noticed, interpreted, and associated with positive tourism orientations.

The comparative findings reveal a consistent pattern: Malay respondents reported significantly higher levels of attention, internalisation, and behavioural intention than Chinese respondents. Differences were also evident across most dimensions of attitude, although the importance attached to being a responsible tourist did not differ significantly between the two groups. Regarding self-reported sustainable tourism behaviour, Malay respondents reported stronger engagement in supporting local businesses, conserving environmental and cultural resources, and avoiding destinations perceived as exploiting these resources. However, the absence of significant differences in other behavioural practices indicates that the observed group differences were not uniform across all aspects of sustainable tourism behaviour.

Taken together, the findings suggest that cultural-group differences may be relevant to how sustainability messages are attended to, internalised, and translated into tourism-related intentions and selected practices. However, these differences should be interpreted cautiously, as the study captures respondents' reported perceptions, intentions, and behaviours rather than objectively observed conduct. The findings, therefore, do not establish that ethnicity directly determines sustainable tourism behaviour. Rather, they highlight the importance of recognising differences in audience responses when developing sustainability communication through short-form social media, while acknowledging that other individual and contextual factors may also shape sustainable tourism engagement.

The findings contribute to the understanding

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of sustainable tourism communication by showing that audiences from different cultural backgrounds may respond differently to sustainability messages presented through short-form social media. However, the results should not be interpreted as evidence that one ethnic group is inherently more sustainable than another. Cultural and religious values may provide part of the context for interpreting sustainability messages. However, individual characteristics, social influence, perceived benefits, cost, convenience, previous experiences, and access to sustainable tourism options may also influence tourism decisions. From a practical perspective, tourism marketers and content creators should develop short-form social media content that combines attractive visuals and entertainment with clear, actionable sustainability messages. Content can highlight practical actions such as reducing waste, respecting local culture, supporting local businesses, conserving natural resources, and selecting environmentally responsible tourism services. Marketers should also consider cultural differences, avoid stereotypes, and use inclusive messaging that enables audiences from diverse backgrounds to identify with sustainable tourism practices.

Future research could expand the sample to include other Malaysian ethnic groups and a larger number of respondents to improve the generalisability of the findings. Future studies could also compare different age groups or generations to determine whether age and social media usage patterns influence responses to sustainable tourism content. Longitudinal or experimental research could further examine whether repeated exposure to sustainability-oriented short-form videos produces sustained changes in actual tourism behaviour rather than only short-term intentions. In addition, future research could examine specific platform characteristics, influencer credibility, video quality, emotional appeals, and different types of sustainability messages to identify which content strategies are most effective in encouraging responsible tourism behaviour.

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