

p-ISSN 1733-1218; e-ISSN 2719-826X

<https://doi.org/10.21697/seb.5888>

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution

(CC BY-ND 4.0 International) license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0>



Environmental Ethics and Tourism Development: A Normative Analysis

Etyka środowiskowa a rozwój turystyki: analiza normatywna

Mohammad Talukder^{1*}, Firoj Kabir²

¹ International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Bangladesh

² Daffodil International University, Bangladesh

ORCID MT <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1662-9221>; FK <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3014-3163>

• badru01@gmail.com

Received: 2025-12-27; Revised: 2026-03-10; Accepted: 2026-03-18; Pre-published: 2026-03-19

Abstract

Tourism development has emerged as a global economic powerhouse, driving economic growth, destination competitiveness, and job creation. But with the mushrooming of tourism, especially in ecologically sensitive and culturally significant regions, ecological degradation, biodiversity loss, resource depletion, and increased vulnerability to climate change have worsened. The study discusses the development of tourism in relation to environmental ethics by analysing it based on normative approaches. The paper uses qualitative concepts in environmental ethics, such as anthropocentrism, biocentrism, ecocentrism, stewardship ethics, and intergenerational justice, to critically challenge the dominant growth-focused tourism paradigms that prioritize profit-driven, short-term objectives over environmental integrity and long-term sustainability. We found that existing tourism policies do not fully meet ethical requirements regarding responsibilities towards the ecosystem and future generations and therefore consider sustainability a tactical or administrative challenge rather than a moral obligation. The study posits that to realize truly sustainable and fair tourism development, environmental ethics should be incorporated into tourism planning, policymaking, and governance. The study helps develop the theoretical context of tourism ethics by re-caring for the concept of sustainability in tourism as a moral duty. It helps offer value-based solutions to policymakers, destination managers, and tourism developers seeking ethically viable, responsible tourism solutions.

Keywords

Environmental ethics, tourism development, normative analysis, sustainable tourism, ecocentrism, intergenerational justice, SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, normative ethics

Streszczenie

Rozwój turystyki stał się globalną siłą napędową gospodarki, przyczyniając się do wzrostu gospodarczego, zwiększania konkurencyjności destynacji turystycznych oraz tworzenia miejsc pracy. Jednocześnie gwałtowny rozwój turystyki, zwłaszcza w regionach wrażliwych ekologicznie i o dużym znaczeniu kulturowym, prowadzi do nasilonej degradacji środowiska, utraty bioróżnorodności, wyczerpywania zasobów naturalnych oraz zwiększonej podatności na skutki zmian klimatycznych. W niniejszym artykule rozwój turystyki analizowany jest z perspektywy etyki środowiskowej. Przeprowadzona analiza ma charakter normatywny. W badaniu wykorzystano koncepcje etyki środowiskowej, takie jak antropocentryzm, biocentryzm, ekocentryzm, etyka zarządzania oraz sprawiedliwość międzypokoleniowa, aby poddać krytycznej analizie dominujące paradygmaty rozwoju turystyki, które przedkładają krótkoterminowe cele ekonomiczne nad integralność środowiskową i długoterminowy zrównoważony rozwój. Analiza wskazuje, że istniejące polityki turystyczne często nie spełniają etycznych wymogów odpowiedzialności wobec ekosystemów i przyszłych pokoleń, przez co zrównoważony rozwój bywa traktowany raczej jako wyzwanie administracyjne lub taktyczne niż jako moralny obowiązek. W artykule argumentuje się, że osiągnięcie rzeczywiście zrównoważonego i sprawiedliwego rozwoju turystyki wymaga włączenia zasad etyki środowiskowej do procesów planowania, kształtowania polityki oraz zarządzania turystyką. Niniejsze badanie ma na celu rozszerzenie teoretycznych ram etyki w sektorze turystycznym poprzez weryfikację koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju w turystyce w kategoriach obowiązku moralnego. Artykuł proponuje również rozwiązania oparte na wartościach, skierowane do decydentów, zarządców destynacji turystycznych oraz przedsiębiorców poszukujących bardziej etycznych i odpowiedzialnych modeli rozwoju turystyki.

Słowa kluczowe

Etyka środowiskowa, rozwój turystyki, analiza normatywna, zrównoważona turystyka, ekocentryzm, sprawiedliwość międzypokoleniowa, SDG 8 – Godna praca i wzrost gospodarczy, SDG 12 – Odpowiedzialna konsumpcja i produkcja, etyka normatywna

1. Introduction

Tourism has been one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy and has played a significant role in job creation, foreign exchange earnings, infrastructure development, and diversification of regional economies (Holden 2019). Tourism has also served as an important channel of economic development, poverty alleviation, and global integration in many developing and emerging economies. However, along with these advantages, tourism has also led to rapid growth in tourism development in environmentally sensitive areas such as coastal regions, protected landscapes, mountain ecosystems, forests, wetlands, and rural populations. This growth has increased environmental strains, such as destruction of habitats, biodiversity loss, water shortages, waste accumulation, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions.

The increasing environmental impact of tourism has brought about widespread concern among scholars, policymakers, and civil society (Bernauer and Gampfer 2013). Tourism is no longer considered only

an economic or recreational activity but is increasingly recognized as a practice with deep environmental, social, and ethical consequences. In many destinations, tourism development has contributed to the degradation of ecological values, affecting the natural and cultural resources on which tourism itself depends and casting doubt on the ethical legitimacy of the current development paradigms.

In response to these challenges, the concept of sustainable tourism has emerged as a dominant theme in both scholarly literature and policy discussions. Existing research has mostly focused on environmental management tools, regulatory systems, technological interventions, and sustainability measures aimed at reducing the adverse ecological impacts of tourism. Although these are critical approaches, they tend to concentrate on efficiency, mitigation, and control - addressing how tourism should be managed rather than whether specific forms of tourism development are ethically justified.

This gap suggests the need for a stronger philosophical and normative engagement with tourism development (Ceron and Dubois 2003). Environmental ethics provides a sound methodology for analysing moral obligations to nature in opposition to anthropocentric views of the world, where utility to the human and economic development of a particular nation is more important than ecological quality. Other types of ethics, like biocentrism, ecocentrism, stewardship ethics, and intergenerational justice, propose alternative value systems that acknowledge the inherent value of non-human nature and moral commitments that go beyond current economic concerns (Alston 1984).

Environmental ethics is, however, a relatively uncharted territory in the mainstream tourism research, where empirical, managerial, and market-driven approaches retain leading positions. Ethical issues are frequently regarded as peripheral rather than central, which limits the ability of tourism studies to address questions of fundamental morality. This paper fills this gap by discussing tourism development on the basis of a normative ethical approach, focusing on what tourism development should be and not how it functions (Radomskaya and Bhati 2025).

This paper thus aims to critically examine tourism development as a concept analysed through environmental ethics as a guiding framework, and more specifically, through the concepts of moral responsibility, sustainability, and intergenerational justice. The normative approach of this study contributes to the theoretical development of tourism ethics and offers a value-based foundation for more responsible, equitable, and environmentally sound tourism development.

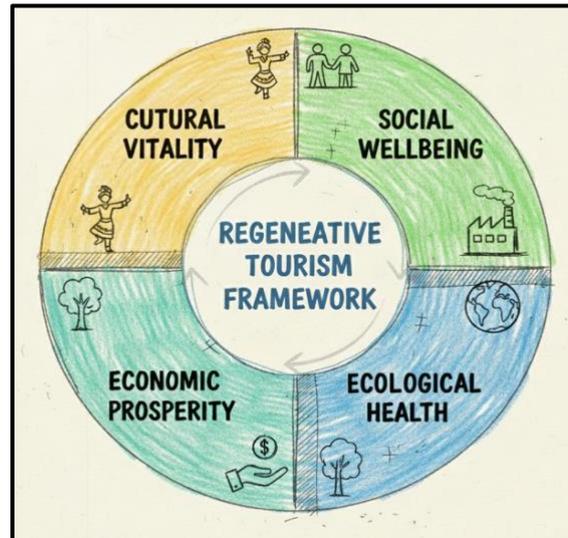


Figure 1. Conceptual Overview of Tourism Development and Environmental Ethics. *Source:* Author's compilation based on (Duffy 2004)

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this research are to:

- A. Examine environmental ethics as a tool for analysing tourism development by studying the main ethical frameworks and their application to human-environment relationships in tourism contexts.
- B. Provide a critical assessment of mainstream tourism development models through a normative lens, with reference to the ethical constraints related to environmental sustainability, responsibility, and justice.
- C. Propose an ethically based framework for tourism development that incorporates environmental ethics into tourism planning, policymaking, and governance to promote sustainable and responsible tourism practices.

2. Theoretical Background

The theoretical basis of this study is supported by the fact that environmental ethics provides a normative approach to assessing tourism development beyond considerations of economic efficiency and managerial effectiveness. Environmental ethics examines moral values, duties, and obligations that regulate the relationship between human beings and the natural environment. It can be used to explain the reasons why some types of development are ethically defensible, while others are morally problematic when applied to tourism (Tomassini and Baggio 2022).

In order to make the concept clearer, the main ethical theories related to tourism development are

described in the following subsections with the help of colourful, intuitive visual figures that can be used both academically and pedagogically.

2.1. Environmental Ethics as a Normative Framework

Environmental ethics is a field of moral philosophy that focuses on ethical human-nature interactions. In contrast to descriptive methods of study, which concentrate on observed effects, environmental ethics adopts a normative approach in which questions of moral responsibility, obligation, and value are central (Holden 2005). In tourism research, this school of thought has shifted the focus towards ethical justification rather than operational efficiency, questioning whether tourism development practices are ethically justifiable.

Implicit value judgment is involved in tourism planning, infrastructure development, and consumption patterns related to nature, growth, and responsibility. Environmental ethics render these values clear, providing a philosophical basis for sustainable tourism based on moral accountability, and not on technical compliance.

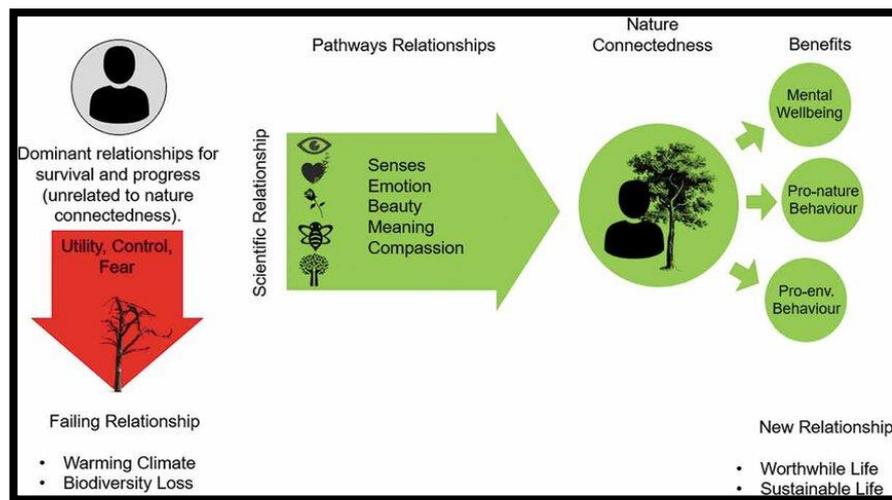


Figure 2. Scientific Relationship between Environmental Ethics and Normative Framework. *Source:* Author’s compilation based on (Li et al. 2023).

2.2. Anthropocentrism and Tourism Development

Anthropocentrism places human needs and interests as well as human welfare at the centre of moral consideration. In tourism development, mass tourism, growth-oriented destination strategies, and large-scale infrastructural developments are often based on this perspective. Nature is perceived as a source of human pleasure, recreation, and financial gain.

Although anthropocentrism has facilitated economic growth and destination competitiveness, its opponents argue that it justifies the exploitation of the environment by placing human needs above ecological concerns. This has led to overdevelopment, degradation of the ecosystems, and unsustainable consumption of

resources in tourism settings (Haniifa and Palimirmo 2025).

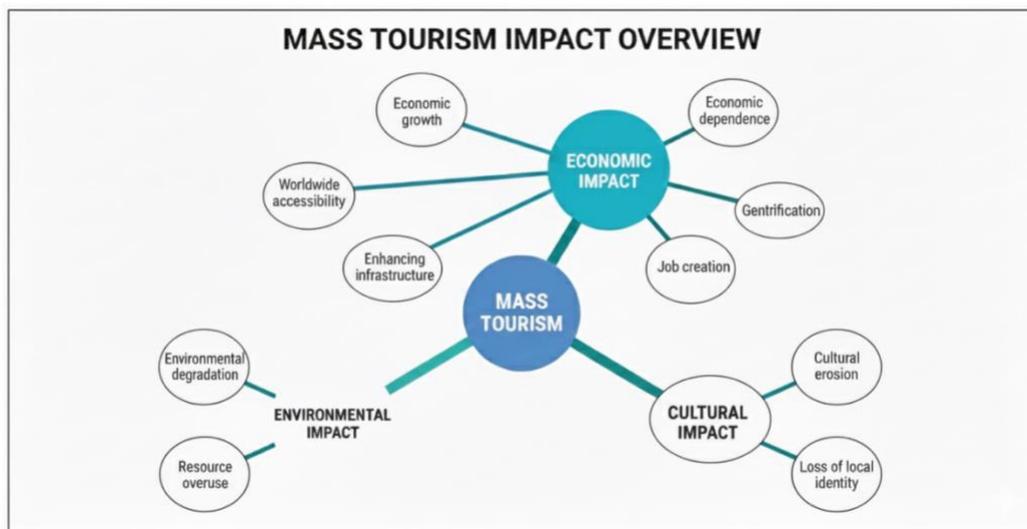


Figure 3. Mass tourism impact overview. *Source:* Author's compilation based on (Xing and Dangerfield 2011)

2.3. Biocentrism: Ethical Considerations for Living Beings

Biocentrism gives moral priority to living organisms and holds that animals and plants possess intrinsic value regardless of their utility to human beings. This ethical position is mainly pertinent to the field of wildlife tourism, ecotourism, and the management of protected areas. Tourism development, according to the biocentric view, should avoid causing harm to animals, their habitat, and biodiversity. Habitat destruction, animal exploitation, and disturbance of ecosystems are all ethically unacceptable, irrespective of economic gains.

2.4. Ecocentrism and Holistic Tourism Sustainability

Ecocentrism is a holistic ethical theory in which moral worth is attributed to ecosystems as wholes rather than to individual species. It focuses on carrying capacity, ecological balance, and resilience. Ecocentric ethics strongly support the principles of sustainable tourism by promoting limits to growth, ecosystem-based planning, and long-term environmental protection. This school of thought questions the unlimited growth of tourism and advocates destination stewardship based on ecological integrity (Haniifa and Palimirmo 2025).

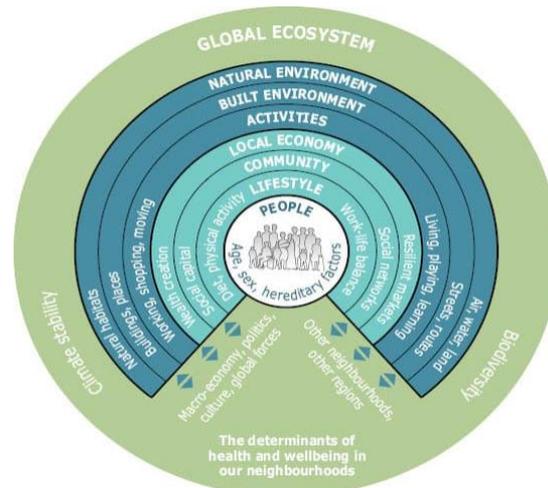


Figure 4. An Integrated Model of Tourism Evolution: Ecocentrism and Holistic Tourism Sustainability. *Source:* Author’s Compilation based on (Robledo 2025)

The core Sustainable Tourism Framework represents a convergence of two spheres: economic and ecological integrity. The model is reconfigured to emphasize deep nature connectedness through specific Pathways Relationships such as senses, emotion, beauty, meaning, and compassion. The holistic gains of this new relationship are mental well-being, pro-nature behaviour, and sustainable existence in the larger global ecosystem.

2.5. Stewardship Ethics and Responsible Tourism Governance

Stewardship ethics views humans as custodians of nature who are charged with the responsibility of managing resources for current and future generations. Stewardship ethics in the development of tourism highlight ethical governance, community participation, transparent decision-making, and precautionary planning. Tourism stakeholders - governments, businesses, and tourists - are perceived as moral actors rather than passive beneficiaries (Bramwell et al. 2008).



Figure 5. Stakeholder-Driven Framework for Sustainable Destination Management and Ecosystem Wellbeing. *Source:* Author’s compilation based on (Rakkarn et al. 2025)

This management framework functions under the umbrella of the Global Ecosystem, with the determinants of health being climate stability and biodiversity (Smith and Kelly 2006). It is the balance between social and economic activities and the environmental constraints that enables the framework to shift towards from failing relationships based on control and fear to a new model of nature connectedness. The ultimate goal is to encourage pro-environmental and mental well-being so that tourism can contribute to a sustainable life for both individuals and the planet.

2.6. Intergenerational Ethics and Long-Term Tourism Sustainability

Intergenerational ethics is concerned with moral responsibilities towards future generations and contends that the present development should not undermine future environmental and social welfare. The ethical issue within this framework concerns tourism development that depletes non-renewable resources, harms vulnerable ecosystems, and accelerates climate change. Intergenerational ethics emphasises the necessity of long-term planning and tourism policies based on Sustainability (Qu 2025).

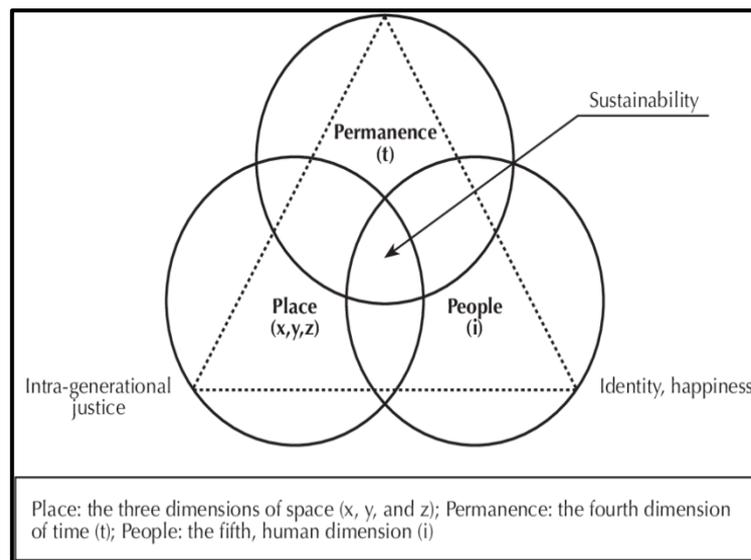


Figure 6. Intergenerational Ethics and Long-Term Tourism Sustainability. *Source:* Author’s compilation based on (Lupton and Samy 2022).

2.7. Integrated Ethical Framework for Tourism Development

The combination of these ethical perspectives provides a comprehensive theoretical basis for the normative analysis of tourism development. This offers an integrated framework of how environmental ethics can guide tourism development towards ecological responsibility, social justice, and, in a moral sense. It supports the claim that sustainable tourism is not merely a technical or managerial goal but an ethical requirement of a normative nature.

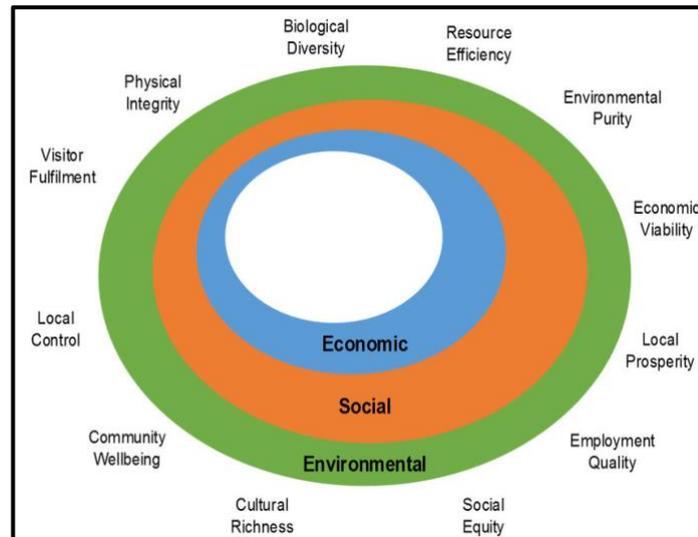


Figure 7. Integrated Ethical Framework for Tourism Development. *Source:* Author's compilation based on (Hariram et al. 2023).

3. Literature Review

The interaction between environmental ethics and tourism development has attracted increasing academic interest with the escalating environmental degradation, climate change, and social injustices related to tourism. The literature can be subdivided into three interdisciplinary strands, namely (i) tourism development and environmental impacts, (ii) sustainable tourism and ethical concerns, and (iii) the new trend of applying environmental ethics to tourism studies.

3.1. Tourism Development and Environmental Impacts

There is a significant amount of literature that records the environmental impacts of tourism development. Researchers have continuously raised issues regarding the degradation of the ecosystems, biodiversity reduction, overuse of water and energy, generation of wastes and carbon emission, which come along with mass tourism and building of the infrastructure (Pan et al. 2018). In particular, coastal tourism, mountain tourism, and tourism in protected areas are often given as especially sensitive contexts in which uncontrolled development results in ecological irreparability. These studies offer solid empirical evidence that tourist activities driven primarily by economic growth tend to surpass the carrying capacity of the environment and destroy the sustainability of destinations in the long run.

However, much of this literature remains descriptive and impact oriented. Although it can be quite useful in identifying the issues that are present in the environment, it usually fails to examine the moral and ethical basis underlying tourism development decisions. Consequently, environmental degradation is often

put in the context of a failure in management as opposed to the ethical factors founded on a value system and a development agenda.

The formalisation of moral considerations in tourism emerged rather late in relation to the wider discussions on environmental theory that ensued after the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, while representing a significant normative achievement, remains predominantly anthropocentric, voluntary, and inadequately enforced. Contemporary philosophical critiques argue such moral frameworks insufficiently consider developing viewpoints such as Earth Ethics and Animal Ethics, which highlight the intrinsic value of ecosystems and non-human species (Queirós 2020; Dilemata 2023).

3.2. Sustainable Tourism and Ethical Dimensions

Sustainable tourism emerged as an idea to address the adverse environmental and social effects of traditional tourism development. Researchers have pointed out the necessity of balancing between economic viability, environmental protection, and social equity in what is often referred to as the triple bottom line approach. In this discussion, ethical considerations are implicitly present, specifically in the contexts of responsibility, equity, and long-term Sustainability (Jamal and Camargo 2014).

Some literature suggests that without ethical commitment from stakeholders in the tourism industry, such as governments, tourism businesses, and tourists themselves, there can be no sustainability in tourism. Responsible consumption, corporate social responsibility, community involvement, and environmentally sensitive destination management have been associated with ethical tourism. However, ethical aspects are often viewed as means to achieving sustainability objectives rather than as moral standards that should be used as the framework in tourism development (Jamal and Camargo 2014).

3.3. Environmental Ethics in Tourism Research

Environmental ethics offers a philosophical basis for studying tourism-environment relationships by using normative arguments (Holden 2009). Researchers who have relied on ethical theories such as anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism have criticized the dominance of anthropocentric tourism models that focus on profit and visitor satisfaction at the expense of ecological integrity. These works posit that anthropocentric developmental practices are some of the major contributors to environmental misuse and the deterioration of the sustainability agenda.

The latter has received more support in recent literature with an emphasis on ecocentric and stewardship perspectives, support of ecosystem-oriented tourism planning, limits to growth, and ethical responsibility to nature. Another perspective that has come to the fore is intergenerational ethics, which focuses on the fact that unsustainable tourism development breaches the commitments to future generations by destroying the natural and cultural resources. Nevertheless, normative ethical analyses are still comparably limited in mainstream tourism journals, where empirical and managerial studies continue to predominate.

3.4. Research Gaps and Contribution of the Study

The literature review shows that there is a clear gap in the environmental impact literature and the application of ethical theory in tourism research. Though sustainability-based studies have broadened remarkably, clear normative studies based on environmental ethics are relatively rare. There is limited literature that comprehensively incorporates ethical frameworks into tourism development theory to assess what tourism development should be from a moral perspective.

This paper addresses this gap by providing a detailed normative discussion of tourism development based on environmental ethics. The synthesis of ethical theories and tourism development discourse makes the study important to the theoretical field of tourism in providing the basis of value-based tourism development that is ethically responsible and sustainable.

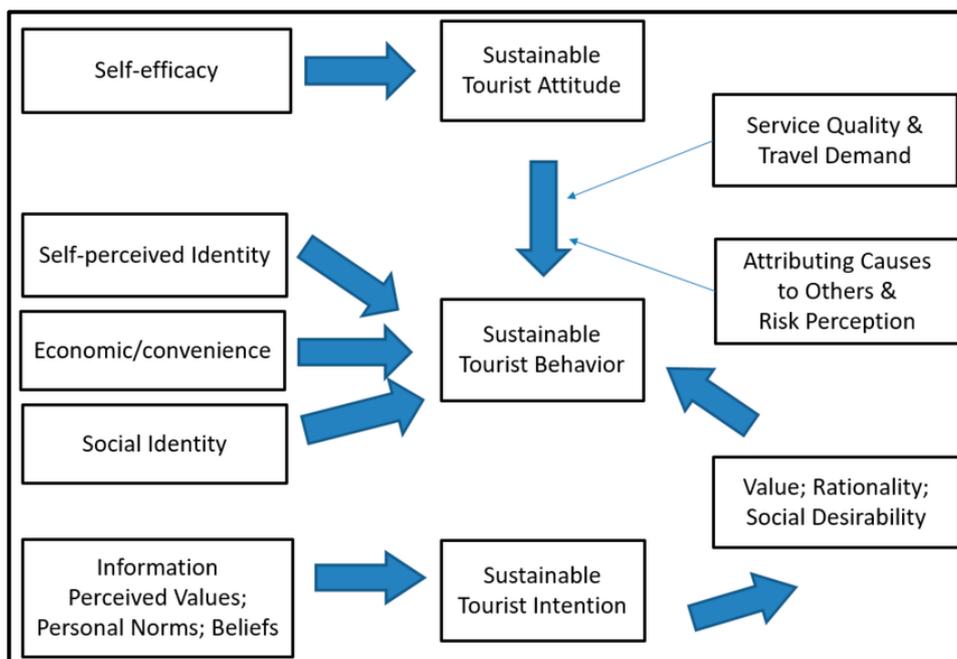


Figure 8. Research Gap Model Based on Theoretical Foundations and Literature Review. *Source:* Author’s compilation based on (Stumpf et al. 2016)

4. Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative, conceptual, and normative research design based entirely on secondary data to explore tourism development from the perspective of environmental ethics. The methodology comprises a systematic review and critical analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and policy reports on tourism development, sustainability, and environmental ethics. Academic databases and other scholarly sources were used to identify relevant literature, which was filtered according to relevance and theoretical contribution and analysed to identify main concepts, ethical assumptions, and development paradigms. A normative ethical analysis was next conducted, reviewing the existing environmental ethics models, including anthropocentrism, biocentrism, ecocentrism, stewardship ethics, and intergenerational justice, in order to appraise tourism development models and sustainability narratives (Holden 2019). The analysis further focuses on moral reasoning, value judgments, and ethical justification in order to determine what tourism development should be in terms of environmental responsibility, instead of measuring and evaluating it through empirical methods. The information presented in the literature and the ethical considerations were synthesised in order to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework and define research gaps, which resulted in ethically grounded conclusions and implications for sustainable tourism planning and governance (Jamal and Camargo 2014). The normative and philosophical nature of this research renders it impossible to test hypotheses. Instead, the study presents moral arguments and normative reasoning to assess the advancement of tourism from the perspective of environmental ethics.

5. Results

Following the three mentioned objectives, the research conducted is conceptual and normative, rather than empirical; thus, the conclusions are given as analytical and theoretical findings obtained from a structured examination of secondary literature. The results are systematically organized thematically according to the specified research objectives to ensure clarity, consistency, and integrity.

5.1. Results Related to Objective 1: Examination of Tourism Development through Environmental Ethics

This review shows that tourism development is largely approached through anthropocentric ethical considerations in which natural environments are viewed as economic resources to be used for human leisure, consumption, and development purposes. Tourism literature implicitly places visitor satisfaction,

infrastructure development, and income generation at the centre, while environmental protection is treated as a secondary or instrumental issue.

Nevertheless, the usage of biocentric and ecocentric ethical models indicates serious ethical flaws in such strategies. These perspectives underline the importance of living organisms and ecosystem, and they demonstrate that most tourism development activities fail to show sufficient respect for ecological integrity and biodiversity. These findings indicate that environmental ethics offers a strong normative perspective that can be used to critically evaluate tourism development beyond economic rationality and to emphasize moral obligation towards nature.

5.2. Results Related to Objective 2: Normative Evaluation of Dominant Tourism Development Models

Normative analysis of mainstream tourism development models shows that mass tourism and the growth paradigm are ethically questionable. These models often externalize the environmental costs, exceed the ecological carrying capacities, and focus on short-term economic gains at the expense of long-term sustainability. Ethically, these practices can be considered contrary to the concept of stewardship, responsibility, and intergenerational justice.

The analysis also reveals that sustainable tourism, despite its popularity in the literature, is usually given only shallow or instrumental attention in ethical discussions. Ethical obligations are often conceived of as managerial tools rather than as the basis of moral commitments. This finding highlights an inconsistency between sustainability discourse and ethical responsibility in the process of tourism development. Nonetheless, it is recognized that these forms of development persist due to fundamental economic interdependence, employment needs, and governmental limitations, especially in areas of growth.

5.3. Results Related to Objective 3: Development of an Ethically Grounded Tourism Framework

The study is based on the synthesis of environmental ethics and tourism literature to propose the formation of an ethically founded conceptual framework for tourism development. The findings suggest that incorporating environmental ethics into tourism planning requires a shift from financial performance indicators towards value-based decision-making.

The main constructs in the proposed framework include recognition of the intrinsic value of nature, adoption of stewardship-based governance, respect for ecological boundaries, and acknowledgment of moral responsibilities to future generations. The framework lays environmental ethics as the underlying foundation

of tourism policy, planning, and governance rather than as an additional consideration. This finding can be used to show that ethically informed tourism development can offer a more coherent and morally defensible route to real sustainability.

The results derived from the three objectives reveal a persistent ethical disparity between prevailing tourism development practices and sustainable moral standards, underscoring the necessity for an ethically grounded framework to direct tourism strategy and governance.

Table 1 shows that ethically oriented tourism practices—such as stewardship, ecocentrism, and intergenerational justice—contribute significantly to long-term destination resilience, inclusive development, and consistent economic gains. As presented in the table, tourism planning grounded in environmental ethics links ethical principles with their applications in tourism development, resulting in positive economic development outcomes while maintaining strong global relevance. This alignment demonstrates that incorporating environmental ethics into tourism strategies not only enhances environmental protection but also supports sustainable and equitable economic growth across diverse tourism contexts.

Table 1. Environmental Ethics–Based Tourism Development and Economic Implications

This table summarises how different principles of environmental ethics translate into specific forms of tourism development and their economic consequences. It highlights that ethically oriented approaches – such as biocentrism, ecocentrism, stewardship and intergenerational justice – tend to support long-term destination resilience and more stable, inclusive economic growth while still maintaining global relevance across diverse tourism contexts. The table shows that integrating ethical principles into tourism planning reframes sustainability from a purely managerial challenge into a moral obligation linked to responsibility for ecosystems and future generations.

Environmental Ethics Principle	Application in Tourism Development	Economic Development Outcomes	Global Relevance
Anthropocentrism (Balanced)	Tourism development focused on human welfare while respecting environmental limits.	Job creation, income generation, and infrastructure development	Applicable to developing and emerging economies seeking growth
Biocentrism	Protection of wildlife, habitats, and biodiversity in tourism planning	Sustainable nature-based tourism revenues, reduced ecological risk	Critical for biodiversity-rich regions and protected areas
Ecocentrism	Ecosystem-based tourism planning and limits to growth (Haniifa and Palimirmo 2025)	Long-term destination resilience, stable tourism income	Relevant for fragile ecosystems (coasts, mountains, islands)
Stewardship Ethics	Responsible governance, ethical destination management, stakeholder accountability	Improved investor confidence, reduced environmental restoration costs	Applicable across public and private tourism sectors

Environmental Ethics Principle	Application in Tourism Development	Economic Development Outcomes	Global Relevance
Intergenerational Justice	Long-term tourism planning safeguards resources for future generations	Sustained economic benefits, reduced long-term economic loss	Essential for long-term national tourism strategies
Ethical Governance	Transparent regulations, ethical impact assessments, and community participation	Inclusive economic growth, equitable benefit distribution (Radomskaya and Bhati 2025)	Relevant for global tourism governance and policy alignment
Ethical Tourist Behavior	Promotion of responsible consumption and low-impact travel	Support for local businesses, enhanced destination reputation (Duffy 2004)	Increasingly important in global tourism markets

6. Normative Framework Development and Practical Implications

6.1. Normative Framework Development

This paper constructs a normative framework for tourism development that is ethically acceptable based on the normative analysis and synthesis of environmental ethics and tourism literature. The framework places environmental ethics as the foundational layer guiding tourism decision-making, rather than treating sustainability as a secondary or operational issue (Lovelock and Lovelock 2013). It combines five fundamental ethical orientations, including anthropocentrism, biocentrism, ecocentrism, stewardship ethics, and intergenerational justice, into a coherent value-based model of tourism development. The fundamental element of the framework is that tourism development is, in fact, a moral activity, involving decisions on resource utilization, environmental protection, and social responsibility. While anthropocentric considerations recognise legitimate human interests such as economic growth and livelihoods, the framework expands moral consideration through biocentric and ecocentric ethics, which emphasise the intrinsic value of living beings and ecosystems (Alroy 1999). The values are converted into governance roles through the concept of stewardship ethics, which positions tourism stakeholders as custodians of natural resources. Intergenerational justice further ensures that tourism development does not compromise the rights and well-being of future generations. By reframing environmental ethics as a normative foundation rather than a secondary concern, the framework provides a coherent and practically relevant contribution to ongoing debates on sustainable tourism development. The proposed normative framework overcomes the limitations of present ethical instruments, such as the anthropocentric and advisory Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. It responds to contemporary environmental philosophy by integrating ecocentric, conservation-oriented, and intergenerational ethical perspectives into a stronger normative foundation for tourism development.

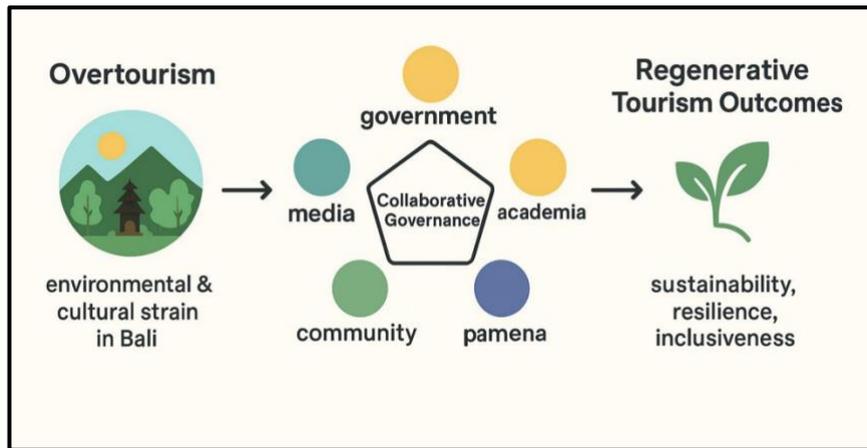


Figure 9. Normative Framework Development (Example: Bali). *Source:* Author's compilation based on (Mananda et al. 2025).

6.2. Practical Implications

6.2.1. Implications for Policymakers

The normative framework can be used by policymakers to integrate ethical considerations into tourism legislation, national tourism policies, and environmental policies. Ethical impact assessment complements the conventional environmental impact assessment by evaluating tourism projects in terms of ecological integrity, stewardship, and intergenerational responsibility. This approach helps ensure long-term policy coherence and prevents development that is short-term and environmentally harmful due to selfish, short-term economic interests.

6.2.2. Implications for Tourism Planners and Destination Managers

The framework can be used by tourism planners and destination managers to make decisions in destination development, especially in areas that are sensitive to the environment. Planners will be able to establish thresholds for tourism growth, adopt carrying capacity principles, and emphasize ecology-driven planning by taking an ecocentric and stewardship approach. The framework also promotes governance in which local communities are involved, and their ethical concerns regarding environmental protection are recognized.

6.2.3. Implications for Tourism Businesses

In the case of the tourism business, the framework emphasizes the significance of ethical responsibility beyond regulatory compliance and corporate social responsibility reporting. Enterprises are encouraged to go green, reduce their ecological footprints, and make operations congruent with sustainability objectives. Ethical

branding based on genuine environmental commitment can also strengthen credibility and trust among destinations and consumers.

6.2.4. Implications for Tourists and Society

The framework highlights the moral role of tourists as agents whose consumption decisions impacts destinations and ecosystems. Ethical awareness among tourists can be promoted to foster responsible tourism practices, environmentally friendly behaviour, and respect for cultural and natural heritage.

7. Integrating Environmental Ethics and Tourism Development to Economic Growth Recommendations

Environmental ethics should be incorporated into tourism development, as it is vital for ensuring sustainable economic growth on a global scale. Ethical business principles, which consider both profitability and environmental responsibility, should be applied to the development of the tourism industry so that natural resources can serve as long-term economic benefits and not be depleted as quick-fix earnings. Through the inculcation of stewardship, ecological integrity, and intergenerational justice into tourism policies and planning systems, nations can advance the high-value, low-impact tourism models, which create employment, foreign exchange, and entrepreneurship locally and at the same time reduce environmental degradation. Ethical governance, transparent regulation, and responsible investment also increase destination credibility and bring sustainable finance, which promotes resilient tourism economies. In addition, decentralization of local communities and creation of ethical consciousness among tourism stakeholders and tourists themselves result in inclusive development and equitable allocation of benefits. Globally, environmentally ethical development of tourism enhances economic resilience, complies with the international commitments to sustainability, and ensures that tourism remains a significant contributor to the long-term economic development without undermining the ecological and social welfare.

8. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

8.1. Conclusion

This paper discusses the issue of tourism development based on environmental ethics using the qualitative, conceptual, and normative approach, which is founded on secondary data. It demonstrates that tourism development is not a value-neutral economic process, but a morally charged practice, which entails making highly critical choices concerning environmental protection, social responsibility, and long-term

sustainability. The results indicate that the prevalent growth-based tourism paradigms are largely based on anthropocentric premises, fail to acknowledge the intrinsic value of nature, and externalise environmental costs, thus compromising ecological integrity and intergenerational equity.

This study contributes to a normative framework that defines sustainable tourism as a moral duty rather than a technical or managerial goal by integrating environmental ethical frameworks, which include anthropocentrism, biocentrism, ecocentrism, stewardship ethics, and intergenerational justice. The paper finds that environmentally responsible tourism development can facilitate economic growth while protecting natural resources, enhancing governance, and increasing destination resilience. It is thus important to incorporate ethical considerations into tourism policy, planning, and governance to attain sustainable, inclusive tourism-based economic development on a global scale.

8.2. Future Research Directions

Future research should examine the practical application of the normative framework proposed in this paper in specific tourism destinations, sectors, or policy contexts. Comparative case studies of developed and developing economies could provide a better understanding of the role of environmental ethics in tourism governance, stakeholder behaviour, and economic performance in varying ecological and cultural contexts. Future research can take into consideration the ways of incorporating environmental ethics with current tourism issues like climate change, overtourism, digital transformation, and ethical tourism infrastructure investment. Adopting a more interdisciplinary approach towards environmental ethics, tourism management, and economics would be particularly valuable in translating normative principles into practical actions for sustainable tourism development.

Declarations

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M.B.T. and F.K.; Methodology, M.B.T.; Validation, F.K.; Formal Analysis, M.B.T.; Investigation, F.K.; Writing – Original Draft Preparation, M.B.T.; Writing – Review & Editing, M.B.T.; Visualization, F.K.; Supervision, M.B.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: The author acknowledges the academic support and encouragement of colleagues at the College of Tourism and Hospitality Management (CTHM), International University of Business Agriculture

and Technology (IUBAT), Dhaka, Bangladesh, and the scholarly resources provided by academic libraries and research databases.

AI Tools Declaration: The authors declare that no artificial intelligence tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Alroy, John. 1999. "The Fossil Record of North American Mammals: Evidence for a Paleocene Evolutionary Radiation." *Systematic Biology* 48 (1): 107–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/106351599260472>.
- Alston, Philip. 1984. "Conjuring Up New Human Rights: A Proposal For Quality Control." *American Journal of International Law* 78 (3): 607–21. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2202599>.
- Bernauer, Thomas, and Robert Gampfer. 2013. "Effects of Civil Society Involvement on Popular Legitimacy of Global Environmental Governance." *Global Environmental Change* 23 (2): 439–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2013.01.001>.
- Bramwell, Bill, Bernard Lane, Scott McCabe, Jan Mosedale, and Caroline Scarles. 2008. "Research Perspectives on Responsible Tourism." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 16 (3): 253–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802208201>.
- Ceron, Jean-Paul, and Ghislain Dubois. 2003. "Tourism and Sustainable Development Indicators: The Gap between Theoretical Demands and Practical Achievements." *Current Issues in Tourism* 6 (1): 54–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500308667944>.
- Duffy, Rosaleen. 2004. *The Ethics of Tourism Development*. 1st ed. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203634325>.
- Haniifa, Rahmadita, and Rian Palimirmo. 2025. "From Anthropocentrism to Ecocentrism: The Role of Local Wisdom and Religious Tradition in Transforming Environmental Ethics." *Holistic: Journal of Tropical Agriculture Sciences* 3 (1): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.61511/hjtas.v3i1.2025.1234>.
- Hariram, N. P., K. B. Mekha, Vipinraj Suganthan, and K. Sudhakar. 2023. "Sustainalism: An Integrated Socio-Economic-Environmental Model to Address Sustainable Development and Sustainability." *Sustainability* 15 (13): 10682. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151310682>.
- Holden, Andrew. 2005. "Achieving a Sustainable Relationship Between Common Pool Resources and Tourism: The Role of Environmental Ethics." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 13 (4): 339–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580508668561>.
- Holden, Andrew. 2009. "THE ENVIRONMENT-TOURISM NEXUS." *Annals of Tourism Research* 36 (3): 373–89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2008.10.009>.

- Holden, Andrew. 2013. "Tourism and the Green Economy: A Place for an Environmental Ethic?" *Tourism Recreation Research* 38 (1): 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2013.11081725>.
- Holden, Andrew. 2019. "Environmental Ethics for Tourism- the State of the Art." *Tourism Review* 74 (3): 694–703. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-03-2017-0066>.
- Jamal, Tazim, and Blanca Alejandra Camargo. 2014. "Sustainable Tourism, Justice and an Ethic of Care: Toward the Just Destination." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 22 (1): 11–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2013.786084>.
- Li, Jingyu, Arie Stoffelen, and Frank Vanclay. 2023. "A Conceptual Framework and Research Method for Understanding Protected Area Governance: Varying Approaches and Epistemic Worldviews about Human-Nature Relations." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 66 (7): 1393–412. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2022.2034605>.
- Lovelock, Brent, and Kirsten Lovelock. 2013. *The Ethics of Tourism*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203854532>.
- Lupton, Katie, and Christine Samy. 2022. "Restoring the Balance between Humanity and Nature through Tourism Entrepreneurship: A Conceptual Framework." *Journal of Tourism Futures* 8 (3): 367–74. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-01-2022-0035>.
- Macbeth, Jim. 2005. "Towards an Ethics Platform for Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 32 (4): 962–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.11.005>.
- Mananda, I. G. P. B. S., I. M. K. Negara, Y. Kristianto, I. G. K. H. Angligan, and C. Deuchar. 2025. "From Overtourism to Regeneration: A Penta-Helix Governance Model for Sustainable Tourism in Bali." *Tourism and Hospitality* 6 (5): 240. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp6050240>.
- Pan, Shu-Yuan, Mengyao Gao, Hyunook Kim, Kinjal J. Shah, Si-Lu Pei, and Pen-Chi Chiang. 2018. "Advances and Challenges in Sustainable Tourism toward a Green Economy." *Science of The Total Environment* 635 (September): 452–69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.04.134>.
- Qu, Mingjing. 2025. "Intergenerational Dynamics and Sustainability in Community-Based Tourism: A Case Study of Koh Kret." *SAGE Open* 15 (3): 21582440251370840. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251370840>.
- Radomskaya, Valeriya, and Abhishek Singh Bhati. 2025. "Examining the Legitimacy Landscape of the Right to Tourism." *Tourism Management Perspectives* 57 (June): 101365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2025.101365>.
- Rakkarn, Subin, Parichart Visuthismajarn, Prakrit Noppradit, and Parichat Singsaktrakul. 2025. "Towards Sustainable Coastal Tourism: Implementing the Railway Model for Environmental and Stakeholder-Centric Destination Management." *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, November 25, 2578–87. <https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i2.1980>.

- Robledo, Marco Antonio. 2025. "The Evolution of Tourist Consciousness: A Developmental Model of Tourist Behavior." *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality* 20 (3): 313–27. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CBTH-10-2024-0334>.
- Smith, Melanie, and Catherine Kelly. 2006. "Holistic Tourism: Journeys of the Self?" *Tourism Recreation Research* 31 (1): 15–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2006.11081243>.
- Stumpf, T. S., Jennifer Sandstrom, and Nancy Swanger. 2016. "Bridging the Gap: Grounded Theory Method, Theory Development, and Sustainable Tourism Research." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 24 (12): 1691–708. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1149183>.
- Tomassini, Lucia, and Rodolfo Baggio. 2022. "Organisational Effectiveness for Ethical Tourism Action: A Phronetic Perspective." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 30 (8): 2013–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1963974>.
- Xing, Y, and B Dangerfield. 2011. "Modelling the Sustainability of Mass Tourism in Island Tourist Economies." *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 62 (9): 1742–52. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jors.2010.77>.