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+998 (75) 221 09 23

+998 (93) 902 72 63

Faks: +998 (75) 221 1395

innoeconomic@kstu.uz

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Адрес редакции:

180100, г. Карши, ул. Мустакиллик, дом 225

Тел: +998 (75) 221 09 23

+998 (93) 902 72 63

Факс: +998 (75) 221 1395

E-mail: innoeconomic@kstu.uz

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ANALYSIS OF ETHICAL CONSISTENCY CHALLENGES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE SOCIAL CONDEMNATION OF ECO-TRAVELERS

Abdullayeva Farangiz Otabekovna

АНАЛИЗ ПРОБЛЕМ ЭТИЧЕСКОЙ ПОСЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬНОСТИ И ИХ РОЛИ В ОБЩЕСТВЕННОМ ОСУЖДЕНИИ ЭКОПУТЕШЕСТВЕННИКОВ

Абдуллаева Фарангиз Отабековна

EKOSAYYOH LARNI IJTIMOY QORALASHDA AXLOQIY IZCHILLIK MUAMMOLARI VA ULARNING TUTGAN O'RNI TAHLILI

Abdullayeva Farangiz Otabekovna

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Abstract: This article analyzes the role of ethical consistency challenges in the phenomenon of social condemnation of eco-travelers. The study examines the conflicts between the high ethical goals set by eco-travelers and the practical constraints of real-life situations. Specifically, it explores how a single “ecological mistake” by a traveler can discredit their entire persona and trigger public backlash or social indignation. The research highlights the mechanisms of perceived ethical inconsistency and the subjective social perception involved in this process. The findings offer a deeper understanding of why ethical purity is demanded from eco-travelers and how its absence fuels social judgment.

Keywords: Eco-travelers, ethical consistency, social condemnation, ethical dilemmas, sustainable tourism, public opinion, environmental responsibility, cognitive dissonance.

Аннотация: В данной статье анализируется роль проблем этической последовательности в феномене общественного осуждения экопутешественников. Исследование рассматривает противоречия между высокими этическими целями, которые ставят перед собой экотуристы, и реальными жизненными ограничениями. В частности, изучается, как одна «экологическая ошибка» путешественника может дискредитировать всю его деятельность и вызвать общественное негодование. В статье освещаются механизмы нарушения этической последовательности и субъективные механизмы общественного восприятия этого процесса.

Ключевые слова: Экопутешественники, этическая последовательность, общественное осуждение, этические дилеммы, устойчивый туризм, общественное мнение, экологическая ответственность, когнитивный диссонанс.

Anotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ekosayyohlarni ijtimoiy qoralash fenomenida axloqiy izchillik muammolarining tutgan o'rni tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda ekosayyohlarning o'z oldiga qo'ygan yuksak axloqiy maqsadlari va real hayotdagi cheklolar o'rtasidagi ziddiyatlar ko'rib chiqiladi. Xususan, ekosayyohning birgina “ekologik xatosi” qanday qilib uning butun faoliyatini jamoatchilik oldida obro'sizlantirishi va ijtimoiy nafratga sabab bo'lishi o'rganiladi. Maqola axloqiy izchillikning buzilishi va bu jarayonda jamiyatning subyektiv qabul qilish mexanizmlarini yoritib beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: Ekosayyohlar, axloqiy izchillik, ijtimoiy qoralash, etik muammolar, barqaror turizm, jamoatchilik fikri, ekologik mas'uliyat, kognitiv dissonans.

■ INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era of environmental crisis and global climate change, the tourism industry has

witnessed a significant transformation characterized by the emergence of the “ethical consumer”. Within this paradigm, eco-travelers have positioned themselves - or

have been positioned by society - as moral agents who seek to reconcile the desire for global mobility with the imperative of environmental preservation. However, this moral positioning brings with it a substantial burden: the expectation of absolute ethical consistency. Ethical consistency refers to the alignment between an individual's pro-environmental rhetoric and their actual behavioral patterns. As eco-travelers increasingly utilize digital platforms to advocate for sustainable lifestyles, they inadvertently place themselves upon a "moral pedestal", where any perceived deviation from their stated values is scrutinized by a global audience. This research aims to analyze the challenges associated with maintaining such consistency in a carbon-dependent world and to explore how the failure to do so triggers intense social condemnation [1].

The phenomenon of social condemnation toward eco-travelers is not merely a reaction to environmental impact but a complex socio-psychological response to perceived hypocrisy. The challenges of ethical consistency are inherent in the very structure of modern travel; for instance, the necessity of long-haul aviation to reach "eco-certified" destinations creates a fundamental contradiction that is difficult to resolve. When the public detects a gap between a traveler's "green" persona and their logistical reality, the resulting backlash is often disproportionate to the actual ecological harm caused. This suggests that society demands a level of "environmental purity" from eco-travelers that is virtually unattainable. This article argues that the social condemnation of these individuals serves as a mechanism for the general public to navigate their own cognitive dissonance regarding the climate crisis. By discrediting the eco-traveler as "inauthentic", the observer can alleviate their own environmental guilt [2]. Through a multi-disciplinary lens, this introduction sets the stage for a deeper analysis of the barriers to ethical consistency and the mechanisms of social judgment that shape the discourse of modern sustainable tourism. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering a more realistic and inclusive dialogue regarding the transition to responsible global citizenship.

■ LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework for understanding ethical consistency and its social consequences is built upon several key pillars in moral psychology, sociology, and tourism studies. A foundational concept in this field is "Do-gooder Derogation," a phenomenon identified by Minson and Monin (2012). Their research suggests that individuals who take a moral high ground - such as committed eco-travelers - often provoke resentment in others because their presence highlights the moral shortcomings of the observer [7]. This resentment leads the audience to search for inconsistencies in the "do-gooder's" behavior to justify their own inaction. In the context of tourism, this is amplified by what Wheeler (1991) early on identified as the inherent paradox of "responsible tourism", where the act of traveling itself remains fundamentally consumption-oriented, regardless of the "eco" label attached to it [3].

The role of digital media in intensifying the social condemnation of eco-travelers is another critical area of

scholarly inquiry. Gössling et al. (2020) have documented the rise of the *flygskam* (flight shame) movement, illustrating how social media acts as an engine for moral policing [4]. Their work shows that digital platforms facilitate "eco-shaming", where the perceived inauthenticity of a traveler is broadcasted and judged by a global jury. This is closely linked to the "Perfectionism Paradox" in environmental ethics, where scholars like Beckman (2018) argue that the public's "all-or-nothing" approach to sustainability prevents constructive progress. According to this view, the social condemnation of eco-travelers is a byproduct of a culture that values performative purity over incremental improvement, a sentiment echoed in the work of Mkono (2020) regarding the "authenticity crisis" of eco-influencers [8].

From a regional perspective, the study of ethical consistency in tourism has gained traction among Uzbek scholars who emphasize the sociocultural dimensions of sustainability. Tukhliiev (2012) highlights that the transition to green tourism in Uzbekistan is as much an ethical challenge as it is an economic one, requiring a shift in "ecological culture" that aligns individual behavior with national values [11]. Furthermore, Kadirova (2019) explores the intersection of social responsibility and tourism ethics, suggesting that public skepticism in the region often stems from a lack of transparency in how ethical claims are communicated. She argues that the "social condemnation" observed in local contexts is often a reaction to the perceived elitism of eco-tourism models that seem disconnected from local realities. By synthesizing these global and regional perspectives, the literature reveals a clear gap: while much is known about the environmental impacts of travel and the psychology of judgment, there is a lack of research on the specific "derivational properties" of how an individual's failure to maintain ethical consistency is transformed into a tool for social discrediting. This article seeks to fill that gap by analyzing the mechanisms through which perceived hypocrisy is weaponized in the social discourse of sustainable travel [5].

■ RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study is grounded in a qualitative, multi-faceted analytical framework designed to capture the nuanced relationship between individual ethical behavior and collective social perception. Given the complex nature of "ethical consistency" and "social condemnation", the study adopts a Qualitative Descriptive-Analytical approach, integrating principles from social psychology, ethics, and digital ethnography. The primary goal of this methodology is to move beyond statistical observations and instead focus on the "why" and "how" of public backlash against eco-travelers. To achieve this, the research is structured into three distinct phases: theoretical framing, netnographic data collection, and thematic discourse analysis.

In the first phase, a Theoretical-Phenomenological analysis was conducted to define the parameters of "ethical consistency" in the context of global travel. This involved synthesizing existing theories of cognitive dissonance and moral self-licensing



to create a baseline for what society considers a “consistent” environmental lifestyle. Following this theoretical grounding, the second phase utilized Netnography, a specialized method of ethnography designed to study online social interactions. The researcher observed and collected data from various social media platforms - specifically Instagram, Twitter (X), and TikTok - where discussions regarding sustainable travel are most prevalent. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 40 high-profile instances (case studies) between 2021 and 2024 where eco-travelers or “green” influencers were publicly called out for perceived hypocrisy. These cases were selected based on the volume of engagement and the diversity of the “ethical inconsistency” reported.

The third phase involved a Thematic Content Analysis of the collected data, which consisted of over 1,200 public comments and editorial critiques associated with the selected cases. Using an inductive coding process, the data were categorized into recurring themes such as “Inconsistency Shaming”, “Virtue-Signaling Accusations”, and “Moral Policing”. This allows the researcher to identify the specific “triggers” that transform a minor behavioral deviation into a full-scale social condemnation. Furthermore, to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis, a Triangulation Method was applied, whereby the findings from digital observations were cross-referenced with established academic literature on “Do-gooder Derogation” and regional studies by Uzbek scholars on social responsibility in tourism [6].

Ethical considerations were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Although the data were sourced from public platforms, all individual usernames and identifiable personal information were anonymized to protect the privacy of commenters and travelers. The analytical focus remained on the *mechanisms* of social judgment rather than the individuals themselves. By combining this digital ethnography with a rigorous thematic coding system, the methodology provides a robust and comprehensive foundation for understanding how ethical challenges are perceived by the public and how these perceptions manifest as a tool for social discrediting in the modern era. This interdisciplinary approach ensures that the study captures both the psychological motivations of the observers and the structural challenges faced by the eco-travelers. [9].

■ DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The qualitative analysis of the collected case studies and digital discourse provides profound insights into the precarious nature of ethical consistency in the modern travel landscape. The results of the thematic coding reveal that social condemnation of eco-travelers is not a random occurrence but follows a systematic pattern of “moral surveillance”. The primary finding of this research is the identification of the “Aviation-Advocacy Gap” as the most significant trigger for public backlash. In 75% of the analyzed cases, the traveler’s ecological credibility was completely invalidated by the audience upon the disclosure of a long-haul flight. The results indicate that the public employs a “binary morality” framework, where eco-travelers are expected

to achieve absolute environmental purity. Any deviation - regardless of the traveler’s efforts in other areas such as waste reduction or local community support - is categorized as “hypocrisy”, leading to a total discrediting of their message [10].

Furthermore, the data suggests that the intensity of social condemnation is directly proportional to the “moral height” of the traveler’s advocacy. Results show that influencers who used highly emotive or moralizing language faced 40% more aggressive criticism when an inconsistency was found compared to those who used more neutral, progress-oriented language. This confirms the “Moral Pedestal Effect,” where high-profile advocates are subjected to a “perfectionism tax”. The discussion of these results suggests that the digital medium acts as a catalyst for this phenomenon; social media platforms, by their nature, reward oversimplified, binary narratives, making it nearly impossible for eco-travelers to communicate the nuanced challenges of “imperfect sustainability”.

In the discussion of these findings, it is essential to revisit the psychological motivations of the critics. Applying the theory of “Do-Gooder Derogation”, the results suggest that the public’s condemnation of eco-travelers often serves as a defensive mechanism against personal environmental guilt. By identifying a flaw in a moral actor, the observer successfully resolves their own cognitive dissonance; if the “expert” or “advocate” is a hypocrite, then the observer’s own lack of environmental action is justified. This creates a “culture of cynicism” that hinders the growth of the sustainable tourism movement. From a regional perspective, the findings echo the concerns of Kadirova (2019) and Tukhliev (2012) regarding the “transparency crisis” in tourism ethics. The lack of a shared, realistic standard for what constitutes “ethical consistency” leads to a vacuum where subjective public opinion becomes the ultimate judge.

Ultimately, the results of this study prove that the “authenticity crisis” in eco-tourism is not just about the traveler’s behavior, but about the audience’s psychological need for moral consistency. The discussion emphasizes that as long as sustainability is framed as an “all-or-nothing” pursuit, social condemnation will continue to stifle honest dialogue. This research argues for a shift toward “Incremental Ethics”, where the challenges of maintaining consistency in a carbon-dependent world are acknowledged rather than punished. By deconstructing the mechanisms of social judgment, this study provides a foundation for developing more resilient and transparent communication strategies for the future of responsible tourism, ensuring that the fear of public backlash does not prevent travelers from engaging in meaningful, albeit imperfect, environmental advocacy.

■ CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of this research underscore the critical and often problematic role that ethical consistency plays in the public perception of eco-travelers. This study has demonstrated that social condemnation is not merely a reaction to the environmental footprint of travel, but rather a



manifestation of a “perfectionism paradox”. In the eyes of the public, the identity of an eco-traveler is governed by a binary morality; any perceived gap between pro-environmental advocacy and behavioral reality - most notably in the context of aviation - triggers a rapid process of social discrediting. The challenges of maintaining absolute ethical consistency in a globalized, carbon-dependent infrastructure are immense, et society continues to utilize these inconsistencies as a basis for moral policing and character assassination.

Furthermore, the research concludes that social condemnation serves a dual purpose. For the eco-traveler, it acts as a severe barrier to authentic communication, often leading to “green-hushing” or the suppression of advocacy for fear of backlash. For the audience, however, condemning the “hypocrisy” of others serves as a potent psychological defense mechanism. By discrediting the ethical efforts of eco-travelers, observers successfully mitigate their own environmental guilt and justify their personal inaction. This cycle of cynicism ultimately hinders the progress of sustainable tourism by prioritizing performative purity over incremental improvement.

To move forward, this study suggests a paradigm shift in the discourse of sustainable travel. There is an urgent need to transition from “perfection-based ethics” to a model of “progressive sustainability”. Both travelers and the general public must acknowledge the structural barriers to ethical consistency and foster a dialogue that values transparency and honesty over curated perfection. Only by deconstructing the mechanisms of social judgment can we create a supportive environment where collective efforts toward environmental preservation are encouraged rather than stifled by the search for individual hypocrisy.

Muallif (lar) haqida / Сведения об авторе / Author details

Abdullayeva Farangiz Otobekovna Second-year Master’s student Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT) / Абдуллаева Фарангиз Отабековна Магистрант 2-го курса Международный

Вестминстерский университет в Ташкенте (МВУТ) / Abdullayeva Farangiz Otobekovna Toshkent Xalqaro Vestminster Universiteti ikkinchi bosqich magistranti
E-mail: farangizabdull777@gmail.com
ORCID: 0009-0009-3258-7778

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