

ABSTRACT

Responsible Environmental Behaviour: An Examination of Select Correlates and Predictor Variables in the Jamaican Coastal Setting

Chandra Adjwoa Degia

Responsible environmental behaviour (REB) is defined as a demonstration or aspect of environmental empathy that includes activities which have been recommended to resolve problems in the natural environment (Van Liere and Dunlap 1981). Because tourism is Jamaica's leading foreign exchange earner, and local persons and overseas visitors heavily utilise Jamaican beaches for recreation, an investigation of beach responsible environmental behaviour was warranted.

This study was conducted to determine whether or not locus of control, environmental sensitivity, knowledge of environmental action strategies and skill in environmental action strategies are significantly correlated to or can predict responsible environmental behaviour in Jamaica. An instrument was designed and administered, between 2002 and 2006, to 557 local Jamaican residents and overseas visitors who had visited at least one Jamaican beach. The research hypotheses were tested using regression analyses. It was found that of the four

main predictor variables under examination, only environmental sensitivity was found to be a significant predictor of beach responsible environmental behaviour in Jamaica. Further scientific investigation needs to be conducted in order to ascertain what is the most parsimonious set of predictor variables for beach responsible environmental behaviour in Jamaica.

In addition to the quantitative data analysis, the results of a qualitative, descriptive analysis were presented. The qualitative findings convey the concerns, opinions and salient beliefs of Jamaicans with regard to the use, care and upkeep of Jamaican beaches. The main themes that arose from the qualitative data were: 1) environmental education, 2) garbage and cleanliness, 3) beach management. These themes show promise for further research in the psychology of beach environmental behaviour in Jamaica.

Keywords: Chandra Adjwoa Degia; responsible environmental behaviour; environmental education, beaches

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