

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Environmentally responsible consumption by rural tourists in Rio Grande do Sul—Brazil

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ABSTRACT

Rural tourism consists of leisure activities in a non-urban environment. The interest in rural tourism has been growing significantly since the 1990s, as well as the rural establishments that started to offer some tourist products in rural areas. Rural tourism fosters environmental practices and can influence environmentally responsible behavior. Thus, this study aimed to identify the environmentally responsible consumption practices carried out by rural tourists. To this end, the research has a quantitative approach, made possible through a questionnaire applied to 103 rural tourists. Data collection took place between 26 November 2020, and 13 March 2021, and the data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The main results showed that rural tourists prefer passive resources, where the tourist is a mere spectator and are motivated by recreationist, as they prefer moments of contemplation and relaxation for physical and mental recovery. In addition, rural tourists consider themselves altruistic, a behavior where the decision to act pro-environmentally is based on the costs and benefits perceived by their peers. However, they do not necessarily have sustainable behavior.

Keywords: rural tourism; environmentally responsible behavior; sustainable consumption; profile of the rural tourist

1. Introduction

The practice of high consumption is harming the planet. According to the main facts pointed out by the United Nations (UN)^[1], 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted daily; more than 1 billion people still lack access to safe drinking water; the global population is expected to reach 9.6 billion people by 2050—the equivalent of three planets would be needed to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles^[1]. The consequence of current annual consumption is the production of more than 2 billion tons of waste worldwide. It should be noted that 99% of purchased products are thrown away within six months. To accommodate the world's 7.6 billion inhabitants, supply the use of resources and absorb the waste generated, 70% of another planet Earth would be needed if part of the waste were not recycled^[1].

Therefore, one proposal for a balanced growth path is to reduce consumption growth^[2]. As a result, the United Nations (UN) created the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which must be met by all countries in the world by 2030^[1]. Goal 12 ensures sustainable production and consumption patterns among the established objectives. An activity that can impact sustainability is tourism because when poorly designed, it is capable of degrading natural resources and causing negative impacts^[3]. A study pointed out negative impacts

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 15 April 2023 | Accepted: 11 May 2023 | Available online: 16 June 2023

CITATION

Ienczak L, da Silva LM, da Silva PM. Environmentally responsible consumption by rural tourists in Rio Grande do Sul—Brazil. *Smart Tourism* 2023; 4(1): 2296. doi: 10.54517/st.v4i1.2296

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in the second half of 2018 after the holiday season. Corrective and environmental awareness actions should be taken so that there are no even greater impacts in the studied region^[3].

Given the above, it was identified that rural tourism could be considered a practice planned and promoted to provide tourists with a better quality of life, aiming at aspects related to environmental Sustainability^[4]. In addition, it enables the perspective of a living space, strengthening the relationships established in an environment close to nature and close to the community's way of life, which preserves its culture and traditions^[5]. The justification is that rural tourism is an activity that combines economic exploitation with other functions, such as the valorization of the rural environment and local culture, which are often some of its main attractions^[6]. Thus, rural tourism consists of leisure activities carried out in this environment. In this context, as rural tourism fosters environmental sustainability, there are indications that people who practice rural tourism considered rural tourists, may also have this same environmentally responsible look, which has repercussions on their consumption practices.

The theme of this research is environmentally responsible consumption, a type of consumption that the consumer seeks for products with minimal environmental impact^[7]. Therefore, aspects such as reduced consumption, disposability, planned obsolescence, and inequality in access to material goods have also emerged and expanded the concept of environmentally responsible consumption^[8]. It is understood that people looking for rural tourism, in general, seek a greater connection with the environment. However, when they are not enjoying this type of tourism, is there an environmentally responsible consumption behavior? Thus, this research sought to identify the environmentally responsible consumption behavior of people who practice rural tourism.

Rural tourism can create an environment and encourage tourists who want to get closer to the environment to carry out these environmentally sustainable consumption practices during all other days of the year. The reason may lie in the connection these tourists seek with nature since environmentally responsible consumption must relate to and include the three stages of the consumption process (acquisition, use, and disposal) and consider the consequences of consumption from the perspective in question^[9].

Thus, the research sought to identify the environmentally responsible consumption practices carried out by rural tourists. In addition to a) identifying the characteristics of environmentally responsible consumption, b) understanding the conceptual, historical, and classificatory aspects of rural tourism, c) identifying the profile of rural tourists, and d) identifying the environmentally responsible consumption practices of rural tourists.

The article is structured in sections that cover the following topics: the theoretical foundation on literature review on the concept and types of environmentally responsible consumption, rural tourism, the profile of these tourists, the relationship between environmentally responsible consumption and the choice of rural tourism. The methodology developed in this study is presented below: the results found, discussion of the results and final considerations.

2. Theoretical background

The increase in environmental concern on the part of society, combined with the need to spread ecological awareness and consolidate environmentally conscious behavior, are important attempts to reduce the problems generated worldwide by the neglect of nature.

Therefore, environmentally responsible consumption is a behavior that aims to satisfy the needs of current generations, benefiting the environment and enabling future generations to meet their needs^[10]. The change in attitudes, with a view to greater environmental awareness, can positively impact the decisions and posture of the individual as a consumer and citizen, creating an environmentally conscious behavior^[11].

Stern^[12] considers that there are three domains of influence on environmentally responsible behavior:

- a) Personal: represents the basic values of the individual, his perception as an integral part of the ecosystem, that is, the relationship between man and the environment, the environmental consequences that threaten his interests and his responsibility to correct these consequences to reduce the threats. The basic values of individuals can be understood as biospheric if the decision to act pro-environmentally is based on the costs and benefits to nature; altruistic if the decision to act pro-environmentally is based on the perceived costs and benefits of their peers; and selfish if one considers the costs and benefits of pro-environmental behavior for oneself.
- b) Behavioral: behaviors aimed directly or indirectly at altering the environment. They are activism (acting in environmental movements), citizen behavior (voting in elections, approval of environmental standards, willingness to pay higher taxes for environmental protection, support for environmental policies), and behaviors in the private or individual sphere (green consumption);
- c) Contextual: includes attributes of man from birth (religion, social class, culture), individual capacities (education and specific skills), the immediate situation of the individual (type of residence where he lives and whether he is owner or tenant, climatic conditions where he lives), constraints and opportunities arising from public policies (public transportation, taxes) economic situation (income, price of products and services, credit facility). These and other contextual factors may or may not limit man's support and engagement with environmentally responsible behavior^[12].

Most of the theoretical views found in the literature on environmentally responsible behavior are based on altruistic views. One justification may be that this view contributes to the emergence of feelings such as powerlessness by emphasizing sacrifices instead of providing solutions that reflect a better quality of life. This behavior is based on concern for the well-being of other people and causes the individual to renounce or sacrifice their interests in search of a greater good^[13].

Therefore, adopting an environmentally responsible behavior is not easy because if, on the one hand, there is recognition that one knows what is right to do and the importance of adopting more sustainable consumption habits, on the other hand, aspects such as convenience, lack of interest, impotence, financial condition, and lack of government incentive appeared as the main limiting factors for the implementation of environmentally responsible behavior. In addition, there is a cultural issue in which it is important to make the general population aware of the need to preserve nature. This must be done by providing information and encouraging the generation of useful knowledge for practical life^[13].

Thus, awareness of environmental consumption can derive from several aspects, including cultural, social, occupation, way of life, financial and emotional situation, and age^[14]. Understanding the drivers and inhibitors of green consumer behavior is a prerequisite for formulating and designing incentives and stimuli that can effectively transform this behavior. Factors that have been shown to influence the ecological behavior of individuals are generally classified as external, related to education, media, family, or culture; internal, supported by knowledge, attitudes, awareness, or involvement; and situational, associated with economic rewards and legislation^[15].

Consumers need information to make their attitudes as responsible consumers. To do this, he reads labels, observes advertising campaigns, and checks on employees, among other actions that provide him with information to be an environmentally responsible consumer. A second need is to control the effects of consumerism that will affect the environment, and, therefore, consumers take preventive measures, such as purchasing natural cleaning products or organic food free of pesticides, for example^[7].

According to Ottman^[7], behavioral relationships as a function of the environment are classified into 5 distinct profiles:

- a) True greens: individuals with strong environmental beliefs that are effectively experienced. They avoid consuming from a company with a questionable environmental reputation and choose environmentally friendly products and services. They believe they can personally make a difference in solving environmental problems.
- b) Money greens: they support environmentalism by donating money and very little with the donation of time or action. They feel too busy to change their lifestyles. However, they are happy and can express their beliefs with wallets and checkbooks.
- c) Quasi-greens: they want more pro-environmental legislation, but they believe they can only do a little to have a positive environmental impact themselves. They want to pay less for pro-environmental products. They are still determining when deciding between the environment and the economy. This group of freedom of action and vagueness can go from one side to the other on any environmental issue.
- d) Grumbling: they take few environmental actions but believe other consumers must do their part. They think that the company should solve the problems and that green products need to work better in addition to costing much more than their non-green counterparts. They feel they need to be more informed about environmental issues, thinking that the whole thing is someone else's problem and that a third party should solve it.
- e) Basic browns: this is the least involved with environmentalism. They believe that not many individuals can make a difference—they are the indifferent ones.

We refer to rural tourism when discussing environmentally responsible consumption and its relationship with tourism. Rural tourism consists of leisure activities carried out in this environment. This generic concept can encompass, among others, the modalities of ecological, adventure, cultural, business, youth, social, health and sports tourism^[16]. As a result, rural tourism tends to be a simpler, individualized, locally based tourism, and therefore, would not lead to major changes in the configuration of the rural landscape^[17]. Furthermore, the search for sustainable tourism contributes to reinforcing the assumption of the circular economy model as an economic system model that facilitates the adoption of behaviors by all those interested in the search for sustainable paths^[18].

Tourism in rural areas encompasses several types of tourism. Thus, it is observed that, unlike sun and beach tourism, which has become the most widespread type of tourism, responsible for the urbanization of beaches, large agglomeration of people and, consequently, socio-spatial impacts, rural tourism usually has as its main characteristic a more simplified offer of equipment and services, in addition to a less concentrated demand and with different motivations from tourists from coastal areas^[17].

Regarding the modalities of tourism practiced in rural areas, Campanhola and Graziano^[16] report that the most accentuated modalities of rural tourism that stand out in the following are:

- a) Agritourism: activities internal to the property, which generate occupations complementary to agricultural activities. Examples: hotel farm, fish-pay, game farm, inn, typical restaurant, direct sales from the producer, handicrafts, home industrialization and other leisure activities linked to the daily life of rural residents.
- b) Ecotourism: activity carried out in natural areas that are preserved, with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying flora and fauna, as well as any cultural manifestation (past or present) that occurs in these areas.

Rural tourism resources can be passive, where the tourist is a mere spectator, or active, where the tourist can participate by carrying out activities because the infrastructure or the environment allows it^[19]. Among the passive resources would be natural resources, historical and artistic heritage, and cultural manifestations. Active resources include sports and socio-cultural activities and participation in the usual tasks of the countryside^[19].

Over the years, the motivational factors of people who live in large cities have changed as they are in search of other realities different from their daily lives, such as resting in quiet places, having contact with nature, and experiencing the habits and customs of people living in rural areas^[20]. It is understood that the new behavior and needs of the urban consumer are linked to the search for new experiences, different from what the market has been presenting, such as sun and beach^[21].

Tourists can be divided into allocentric and psychocentric. Allocentric is characterized by the search for “new tourist spaces, a propensity for new experiences and the discovery of new attractions, intense activities, spaces at medium and long distance from the everyday environment, personalized reception (p.97)”^[22]. The allocentric characteristic of the profile of the rural tourist determines the search for a distance from everyday procedures and routines, as well as the intention to find new attractions and personalized service, in contrast to the tourist from more massified areas, who seek traditional tourist spaces and a more impersonal relationship with receptive agents. On the other hand, the group is characterized by the search for “traditional tourist spaces, preference for the sun, banal amusements and relaxation, relatively close spaces, impersonal relationship with the means and agents of tourist reception and reception (p. 98)”^[22].

The knowledge of the tourist’s profile is the first step to segmenting the tourist market and has as its purpose the strategic projection of the planning of the tourism product^[21]. Ignarra^[23] establishes the profile of tourists in a general way, using a reference to their motivations:

- a) Existential: they seek spiritual peace to break the routine.
- b) Experimental: they want to know and experience a different way of life.
- c) Diversionary: they usually seek organized leisure and recreation in groups.
- d) Recreationists seek leisure and relaxation for physical and mental recovery.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Tourism^[20] outlined the following profile of tourists who seek rural tourism given the national scenario:

- a) they live in large urban centers.
- b) are between 25 and 50 years old and couples with children.
- c) have higher education, and most have a postgraduate degree.
- d) are middle to upper middle class.
- e) use their car or vans.
- f) generally, move within a radius of up to 150 km from the emitting core.
- g) make short-term trips—weekends and holidays.
- h) they are lovers of typical regional cuisine.
- i) have a high level of awareness regarding environmental issues.
- j) value authentic and handmade products.

Although the relationship between environmentally responsible consumption behavior and rural tourism has not been found in the literature, this relationship can be identified by the values and meanings this type of consumer yearns for. For example, these consumers are concerned with environmental preservation^[7] because ecological consumer behavior can originate from values, beliefs, and ideologies and include various ways of

expressing oneself^[24]. This behavior is related to specific activities or issues that involve the environment^[25], which can be rural tourism.

Consumers willing to pay more for green products often consider the environment when buying and believe that today's ecological problems are severe and that corporations do not act responsibly on the environment. Thus, they think that behaving ecologically is important and not inconvenient^[26].

It should be noted that environmentally significant behavior can be classified as intention-oriented or impact-oriented. Impact-oriented behavior is defined by actual impacts, such as energy use, water use, and garbage production, among others, and can be determined by sociodemographic variables. However, variables such as education, income, and gender are limited in explaining the variation in pro-environmental behavior^[12]. Intention-oriented behavior is defined by the actor's motivations, even if it is not always effective. It is this type of behavior that also influences political action, as in the case of environmental activism or rural tourism. Thus, it is noted that measures of pro-environmental intent were significantly related to the dimensions of environmental concern^[12,27].

3. Methodology

The present research is classified as descriptive and quantitative. The survey strategy was used for data collection, presented as a questionnaire composed of structured and closed questions that follow a pre-established sequence.

For data collection, a structured questionnaire consisting of 27 questions (Appendix) on environmentally responsible consumption and tourism, constructed from the literature, was used as a research instrument. The questions were measured with a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. In addition, the questionnaire has questions related to the interviewee's profile, where questions about age, profession, marital status, income, and education were addressed.

Data collection took place online, with the help of the digital platform Google Forms, between 26 November 2020, and 13 March 2021, totaling 103 questionnaires. To find the respondents, the researchers sent a digital questionnaire to the clients of the tourism company owned by one of the researchers in Rio Grande do Sul. This tourism company has in its portfolio several rural tourism itineraries. Rio Grande do Sul is the southernmost state of Brazil and borders Argentina and Uruguay. **Figure 1** shows the location of the state.



Figure 1. Map of Brazil with the location of the State of Rio Grande do Sul.

Source: Pinterest (2023).

In this study, statistical procedures were used with relative and absolute frequency, as well as mean and standard deviation after data analysis.

4. Findings

This section presents the characterization of rural tourists and analyzes the environmentally responsible consumption practices carried out by these tourists. The data collection totaled 103 respondents, and the results, with the tourists' opinions, will be presented below.

4.1. Demographic aspects

Of the 103 respondents, there is a predominance of female tourists, with 88 respondents representing 85.4% of the total sample, while 15 (14.6%) are male. Regarding age, most of the sample is composed of older respondents: 46% of rural tourists are 51 to 60 years old, and 26% are 61 to 70 years old. In addition, 12% are between 41 and 50 years old, 8% are between 31 and 40, and 8% are between 18 and 30. As for income, it was distributed homogeneously: 16% have up to R\$1500.00; 27% have between R\$1501.00 and R\$3000.00; 27% have between R\$3001.00 and R\$5000.00; and 30% have more than R\$5000.00. Regarding schooling, there was a predominance of respondents who had completed high school to graduate school (94%). Specifically, 29% have a postgraduate degree, 27% have completed higher education, 18% have incomplete higher education, and 20% completed high school. In addition, 5% have completed elementary school, and 1% have not completed elementary school. Regarding the profession, retirees stand out, representing 23.3% of the total sample. Still, teachers correspond to 11.65% of the sample, as well as tour guides.

Regarding the frequency of rural tourism, there was a predominance of tourists who reported that they do it up to once a year (35%) and do it 2 to 6 times a year (35%). The rest of the tourists reported doing it all month (20%) or all week (10%).

According to Ottman^[7], 58 tourists (56%) identify themselves as true green, i.e., they have a strong environmental belief effectively, avoid consuming from a company with a questionable environmental reputation, choose ecologically correct products and services, and believe that they can personally make a difference in solving environmental problems. In addition, 29 tourists (28%) identify as quasi-green, who want more pro-environmental legislation but believe they can do little to exert a positive environmental impact and wish to pay less for pro-environmental products.

On the other hand, 9% identified themselves as grumbling, who are those who take few environmental actions, believe that other consumers are not doing their part either, think that companies should solve problems, do not believe that green products work as well, feel confused and uninformed about environmental issues. Still, 5% consider themselves monetary green, which is those who support environmentalism, whether with donations of money, time, or action, but feel too busy to change their lifestyles, and 2% consider themselves basic brown, as they are those least involved with environmentalism, they are indifferent, as they believe that there is not much that individuals can accomplish to make a difference.

4.2. Areas of influence on environmentally responsible behavior

The research also addressed the domains of influence on environmentally responsible behavior (personal, behavioral, and contextual). Regarding the personal domain, six questions were asked. The highest averages were question C5 (I have behavior that does not affect the environment even if other people do not), with an average of 4.20, and question C6 (I have behavior that does not affect the environment regardless of where I am), with an average of 4.15. The lowest average was in question C3 (I am an activist because I work in the

fight for the environment), with an average of 3.06. The standard deviation is close to 1, except for C3, which had a value of 1.34.

Questions C1 and C2 corresponded to the personal domain. As previously presented, question C1, which dealt with responsibility for environmental consequences that threaten the interests of tourists, had a higher incidence of affirmative answers: 47% of tourists strongly agreed, 26% partially agreed, 19% neither agreed nor disagreed, 4% partially disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. This position is highlighted by Dias and Moura^[28], whose study mentioned that, from the 90s onwards, there was an increase in the environmental awareness of the individual as a consumer and, above all, as a citizen.

Question C2 sought to identify the responsibility for correcting environmental consequences to reduce threats, and most rural tourists reported that they agree or strongly agree (25% and 49%, respectively). In addition, 18% neither agree nor disagree, 5% strongly disagree, and 3% somewhat disagree.

The results corroborate Dias^[29], who mentioned that the number of consumers who reject products that may harm the environment has been growing with the increase in environmental awareness. In addition, it is noted that measures of pro-environmental intent were significantly related to the dimensions of environmental concern^[12,27].

Questions C3 and C4 addressed the behavioral domain. Question C3 aimed to verify whether rural tourists were active in the struggle for the environment, i.e., whether they were activists. The answers were homogeneous, and the answers that neither agreed nor disagreed (38%) predominated. This same perception is noted in the other answers, as 33% agreed partially or totally, and 30% disagreed partially or totally. Regarding these findings, Stern^[12] points out that intention-oriented behavior is defined by the actor's motivations, even if it is not always effective. It is this type of behavior that also influences political action, as in the case of environmental activism or rural tourism.

Question C4 sought to identify whether rural tourists buy products that do not harm the environment. On this question, 34% agree in part, 30% do not agree or disagree, 26% strongly agree, 9% disagree in part, and 1% strongly disagree. The findings show the dilemma experienced by individuals: to stop satisfying their desires and needs through consumption, which is characteristic of modern society, or to reduce consumption to preserve the planet^[11]. Thus, it is observed that the respondents do not have sustainable behavior in all actions, as they do not allow themselves to buy products that harm the environment in general.

Questions 5 and 6 corresponded to the contextual domain. Question C5 aimed to verify whether the tourist's behavior does not affect the environment, even if other people do not. The responses show that most tourists strongly agree (52%). Still, 24% agree in part, 18% neither disagree nor agree, 5% disagree in part, and 1% strongly disagree.

Question C6 dealt with pro-environmental behavior regardless of where the rural tourist is, resulting in 49% total agreement and 28% partial agreement. On the other hand, 13% neither agreed nor disagreed, 7% somewhat disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed.

4.3. Altruistic view of environmentally responsible behavior

The research also sought to identify the altruistic view of environmentally responsible behavior and the behaviors described by Ottman^[7] of Green Consumer Psychology and Purchasing Strategies. According to the author, the behaviors are information (the one who reads labels and observes actions that provide him with information to be an environmentally responsible consumer), preventive measures (those who take preventive measures to control the effects of consumerism on the environment); behavior to make a difference (one that

changes brand, product, and behavior to benefit the environment); and lifestyle behavior (one who has an environmentally responsible lifestyle).

From these questions, the highest average was question C7 (I care about other people's well-being), with an average of 4.74. Question C16 (I give things I do not need or use to other people), with an average of 4.67, and question C13 (I avoid unnecessary consumption), with an average of 4.63. The lowest average was in question C10 (I buy natural cleaning products or organic food, free of pesticides), with an average of 3.66. As for the standard deviation, questions C7, C16 and C13 with values of 0.54, 0.60 and 0.63, respectively.

Questions C7 and C8 sought to identify the altruistic view of environmentally responsible behavior. Question C7, concerning people's well-being, had 79% total agreement and 16% partial agreement. There were also 5% of tourists who neither agreed nor disagreed. However, no disagreement responses were identified. Just as the results show that 95% are altruistic, Peixoto and Pereira^[13] describe that this view contributes to the emergence of feelings such as powerlessness by emphasizing sacrifices instead of providing solutions that reflect on a better quality of life. In addition, this behavior is based on concern for the well-being of other people. It causes individuals to renounce or sacrifice their interests for the greater good^[13].

Question C8 aimed to verify whether rural tourists renounce or sacrifice their interests for the greater good. On this, 39% partially agreed, 29% strongly agreed, and 25% neither disagreed nor agreed. However, 6% partially disagreed, and 1% strongly agreed. This finding was also evidenced by De Deus et al.^[11], who mentioned that changing attitudes, with a view to greater environmental awareness, can positively impact the individual's decisions and posture as consumers and citizens, creating an environmentally conscious behavior.

4.4. Information behavior

Question C9 addressed information behavior, whether rural tourists bought products with eco-labels, symbols, certifications, and classifications. Most tourists reported that they somewhat or totally agreed (40% and 26%, respectively), and 24% neither disagreed nor agreed. Additionally, 7% somewhat disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed.

4.5. The behavior of preventive measures

Question C10 addressed the behavior of preventive measures, i.e., whether rural tourists bought natural cleaning products or organic food free of pesticides. On this, 34% neither agreed nor agreed, 30% partially agreed, and 26% strongly agreed. Otherwise, 7% strongly disagreed, and 3% somewhat disagreed.

4.6. Behavior to make a difference

Questions C11 and C12 sought to identify the behavior to make a difference. According to the results, question C11 had 42% of tourists strongly agreed and 31% partially agreed, while 14% neither agreed nor disagreed, 11% disagreed in part, and 2% strongly disagreed.

Question C12 aimed to verify whether rural tourists change products if they harm the environment. In this sense, 42% strongly agree, 32% partially agree, 17% neither disagree nor agree, 7% disagree in part, and 2% strongly disagree. This behavior change is commented on by Nogami^[30] when he reports that although consumers express their environmental concerns individually, green consumers are motivated by universal or global needs.

4.7. Lifestyle behavior

Questions C13 to C16 refer to lifestyle behavior. Question C13 aimed to identify whether rural tourists avoid unnecessary consumption, and the majority reported that they totally or partially agree (70% and 24%, respectively). Still, 5% neither disagree nor agree, and 1% disagree in part.

Question C14 sought to verify whether rural tourists use things completely to ensure zero waste, and the majority totally or partially agree (57% and 30%, respectively). On the other hand, 12% neither disagree nor agree, and 1% disagree in part. The result corroborates Godecke et al.^[8], who points out that people have started to emphasize recycling, the use of clean technologies, the reduction of waste and the emergence of a green market. In addition, the authors point out that aspects such as the reduction of consumption, disposal, planned obsolescence, and the inequality of access to material goods have also increased environmentally responsible consumption.

Question C15 aimed to identify whether rural tourists sought to avoid discarding things that could be repaired. On this, 51% of tourists reported that they strongly agree, 35% partially agree, 10% neither disagree nor agree, 1% partly disagree, and 3% strongly disagree.

Question C16 sought to verify whether rural tourists gave away the things they did not need, and there was an affirmative predominance (73% totally agreed and 22% partially agreed). On the other hand, 4% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 1% somewhat disagreed.

4.8. Rural tourist profile

Questions C17 to C21 address the profile of rural tourists, as established by Ignarra^[23], which are existential, diversionary, and recreational. From these questions, the highest average was from question C21 (I do rural tourism to look for leisure and relaxation for physical and mental recovery), with an average of 4.62. The lowest averages were noted in questions C19 (I do rural tourism to get to know and experience a different way of living a different way), with an average of 4.12, and C20 (I do rural tourism to practice organized leisure and recreation, usually in groups). Regarding the standard deviation, question C21 had the lowest value, 0.70, showing greater cohesion in the answers, while the other questions were around 1.

Question C18 sought to identify the existential profile, asking the tourist if he carried out rural tourism to seek spiritual peace to break the routine. On this question, 56% strongly agreed, 23% partially agreed, 14% neither disagreed nor agreed, 6% somewhat disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

Question C19 sought to identify the profile of experiential tourism, and 53% reported that they strongly agreed, 20% partially agreed, 14% neither disagreed nor agreed, 10% partially disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed. Question C20 addressed the profile of a diversionary tourist, and 57% strongly agreed, 17% partially agreed, 13% neither disagreed nor agreed, 9% somewhat disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. Question C21 aimed to identify the profile of recreational tourists. In this context, 72% strongly agreed, and 21% partially agreed. On the other hand, 4% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 3% somewhat disagreed.

4.9. Rural tourism resources

Questions C22 to C27 addressed rural tourism's passive and active resources, classified according to Pizam and Fleischer^[19] to identify what rural tourists were looking for with this activity. Passive resources are those in which the tourist is a spectator, while active resources are those in which tourists can participate in tourism by carrying out activities.

Based on the results, question C22 (I seek rural tourism because of natural resources, such as landscapes, climate, natural parks, hiking, trails, flora, and fauna) has the highest mean (4.69), as well as the lowest standard deviation, which evidences the proximity of the answers. The lowest averages were questions C27 (the activities I look for in rural tourism are rural space, such as agricultural activities, livestock, manufacture of rural products) and C26 (the activities I look for in rural tourism are socio-cultural, such as handicrafts, the study of flora, fauna, and environment), with values of 3.40 and 3.57, respectively.

Question C22 sought to identify whether rural tourists sought this type of tourism because of the natural resources that the destination provided, such as landscapes, climate, natural parks, hiking trails, flora, and fauna (passive activities). There was a predominance of tourists who totally and partially agreed, representing 79% and 13% of the total sample, respectively. Still, 6% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 2% partially disagreed. These resources are highlighted by Sabbag et al.^[31], as they highlight that tourists are looking for a different concept of tourism linked to quality, immediacy to natural resources, in search of intrinsic cultures, activities close to natural spaces, factors in abundance in rural spaces, and where some traditional rural activities have been maintained.

Question C23 aimed to verify whether rural tourists sought this tourism due to the historical and artistic heritage of the destination, such as monuments, popular architecture, sculpture, and handicrafts. Regarding this passive activity, 45% strongly agreed, 26% partially agreed, 16% neither disagreed nor agreed, 8% partially disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed.

The C24 question investigated whether rural tourists sought this type of tourism due to the cultural manifestations, such as folklore, gastronomy, festivities, customs, and popular traditions, which can be provided with the rural destination. Most respondents to this passive activity reported that they fully or partially agreed (39% and 27%, respectively). On the other hand, 24% neither disagreed nor agreed, 5% partially disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed. This result corroborates with Carvalho et al.^[32] when they report that the experience should convey the authenticity of the places, the products, and the identity the tourist takes with him when purchasing endogenous products such as wine or cheese.

Question C25 sought to identify whether rural tourists sought this type of tourism because of sports/recreational activities, such as hiking and horseback riding (active activities). There was a predominance of tourists who totally or partially agreed, representing 61% and 17% of the total respondents, respectively. The remaining tourists reported that they did not disagree or agree (16%), partially disagreed (5%) or strongly disagreed (1%).

Question C26 aimed to verify whether rural tourists sought this type of tourism due to socio-cultural activities, such as handicrafts study of flora, fauna, and environment), which are active. This question presented a different result from the previous ones, as 32% strongly agreed, 26% neither disagreed nor agreed, 20% partially agreed, 16% partially disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed. These activities are considered motivational factors for people who live in large cities, as they are in search of other realities different from their daily lives, such as resting in quiet places, having contact with nature, and experiencing the habits and customs of people living in rural areas^[20].

Question C27 investigated whether rural tourists sought such activity due to activities carried out in rural areas, such as agricultural activities, livestock, and the manufacture of rural products (active activities). The answers were homogeneous, as 31% strongly agreed, 16% partially agreed, 25% neither disagreed nor agreed, 18% partially disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed. These are activities outlined by Silva and Almeida^[33], who describe rural tourism as a more restricted modality than tourism in rural areas, as it would be reserved only for cases in which traditional rural activities (agriculture, extractives, and fishing) play some role in the visit.

5. Discussion

From the results found in this research, it is possible to highlight and identify the main results with the literature. First, the sample surveyed is predominantly female (85%), aged 51 to 70 years (72%) and has completed undergraduate or graduate studies (56%). Income was diversified, and, as the results have little

amplitude identified in the standard deviations of the answers, it can be inferred that income does not influence the way tourists answered the questionnaire. The Ministry of Tourism^[20] also corroborates part of this profile when it mentions that the profile of tourists who seek rural tourism have higher education. Most of them have a postgraduate degree. However, there is a great difference regarding age since the government identified that this type of tourist is between 25 and 50 years old, as opposed to the sample investigated.

Regarding the behavior of sustainable practices, 56% consider themselves true green. That is, they have a strong environmental belief effectively experienced, avoid consuming from a company with a questionable environmental reputation, choose ecologically correct products and services, and believe that they can personally make a difference in solving environmental problems^[7]. This high level of awareness regarding environmental issues was also identified in the profile of rural tourists by the Ministry of Tourism.

As for the domains of influence on environmentally responsible behavior (personal, behavioral, and contextual) by Stern^[12], the personal domain presented 73% and 74% agreement, demonstrating that the researched sample has basic values of the individual and his perception as an integral part of the ecosystem. Regarding the behavioral domain, 70% buy products that do not harm the environment, but the respondents do not consider themselves activists. These people have behaviors aimed directly or indirectly at altering the environment, such as green consumption, but are not engaged in political action, as in the case of environmental activism^[12,27]. The contextual domain presented 76% and 77% agreement in the questions, which shows that these people seek not to affect the environment regardless of the context in which they are inserted.

Regarding the altruistic view of tourists, 95% care about the well-being of other people, but not all (68%) renounce or sacrifice their interests in pursuit of the greater good. This result is divergent from what Peixoto and Pereira^[13] believe when they mention that the altruistic view contributes to the emergence of feelings such as powerlessness by emphasizing sacrifices instead of providing solutions that reflect a better quality of life.

As for the Green Consumer Psychology and Purchasing Strategies described by Ottman^[7], 66% buy products with ecological labels, symbols, certifications, and classifications, 56% buy natural cleaning products or organic foods free of pesticides, 73% change brands if they have attitudes against the environment and 76% change products if they harm the environment. Thus, what is observed is that tourists buy products with pesticides but do not realize that these products harm the environment since they would change brands and products if this happened. On this point, De Deus et al.^[11] point out that environmentally conscious behavior is generated from greater environmental awareness, which positively impacts the individual's decisions and posture as a consumer and citizen. In this study, this awareness is not clear to the tourists in this sample.

Environmentally responsible lifestyle behavior can be stated that the investigated sample has this lifestyle described by Ottman^[7], as 94% avoid unnecessary consumption, 87% use things completely to ensure zero waste, 86% avoid discarding things that can be repaired, and 95% donate things that I do not need or use to other people. This concern with the consequences of lifestyle formed the basis for the emergence of environmentally responsible consumption, in which consumers began to emphasize recycling, the use of clean technologies, the reduction of waste, reduction of consumption, disposal and planned obsolescence, in addition to inequality of access to material goods^[8].

The study also investigated aspects of rural tourism, such as the profile of rural tourists, as established by Ignarra^[23]. In this regard, 79% seek spiritual peace to break the existential routine (existential), 73% want to know and experience a different way of life (experimental), 74% seek organized leisure and recreation, usually in groups (diversionary) and 93% seek leisure and relaxation for physical and mental recovery (recreational).

The last part of the study sought to identify rural tourism's passive and active resources. Natural passive resources are the highlight, with 92% agreement among tourists, as they seek this type to contemplate landscapes, climate, natural parks, hiking trails, flora, and fauna. Still, in passive resources, 71% seek rural tourism because of the historical-artistic heritage (moments, popular architecture, sculpture, handicrafts), and 66% seek it because of cultural manifestations (folklore, gastronomy, festivities, customs, and popular traditions). These last two resources were also identified in the profile of the Brazilian rural tourist by the Ministry of Tourism when they highlighted that these tourists are appreciators of typical regional gastronomy and value authentic and artisanal products. However, the natural resources stand out among tourists, as described by Silva et al.^[18]. For the authors, the appreciation of the rural environment and the local culture are often some of its main attractions.

Among the active resources, sports/recreational activities stand out, such as hiking, hiking, and horseback riding, which 78% of the respondents preferred. Socio-cultural activities, such as handicrafts study of flora, fauna and environment, correspond to 52% of the tourists, and activities in rural areas, such as agricultural activities, livestock, and manufacture of rural products, correspond to 47% of the total sample. These findings make it clear that tourists seek ecotourism, with activities carried out in natural areas that are preserved, with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying flora and fauna, as well as any cultural manifestation (past or present) that occurs in these areas^[16].

Given the representativeness of the concordance of passive resources with active ones, there is a preference for rural tourists for passive resources, especially natural resources. In other words, tourists prefer to observe the phenomenon and may be casual observers or connoisseurs^[34]. The authors comment that these tourists prefer to relax and are conditioned to the itinerary stipulated by the travel promoter, opting for contemplation.

According to Dallen and Boyd^[35], passive tourists are those for whom the visit serves only to do something, to pass the time, or to observe a monument as a secondary attraction. They corroborate Pereira and Carvalho^[34] when they comment that this type of tourist is limited to seeing monuments that appear in the tourist promotion, demonstrating that they are conditioned to the previous itinerary stipulated by the tourism agency. Given this, rural tourists prefer passive resources to active ones, as they prefer to contemplate and relax and, therefore, prefer to condition themselves to the itinerary pre-established by the tourism agency.

In addition, this study identified that rural tourists have recreational motivations^[23], as 93% agreed that they were encouraged to practice tourism by recreational motivations such as leisure and relaxation for physical and mental recovery. Thus, this study presents the first proposition:

P1: Rural tourists prefer passive resources and are motivated by recreation as they prefer moments of contemplation and relaxation for physical and mental recovery.

Regarding the altruistic view of tourists, 95% care about the well-being of other people. However, when observing consumption practices, 56% consider themselves true green, as classified by Ottman^[7]. People have a strong environmental belief that is effectively experienced, avoid consuming from a company with a questionable environmental reputation, choose environmentally friendly products and services, and believe that they can personally make a difference in solving environmental problems^[7]. Allied to this, 68% renounce or sacrifice their interests to pursue a greater good.

These findings are controversial, as they show that the investigated sample cares about the well-being of others. However, not all have sustainable behaviors or sacrifice their interests for the greater good. In other words, the tourists surveyed must realize that sustainable consumption practices are important and promote care for future generations. Today's society has the obligation and responsibility to consider the environmental

consequences of its actions, which may impact the standard of living of future generations^[36]. Thus, as much as it is expected that an altruistic view is based on concern for the well-being of other people and makes the individual renounce or sacrifice their interests in search of a greater good^[13], this behavior was not identified in this research. Therefore, the second proposition is:

P2: Altruistic rural tourists do not necessarily behave sustainably.

After presenting the quantitative analyses, through the questionnaires, on the environmentally responsible behavior and the profile of rural tourists, their relationship with the theoretical framework of the present research and the two propositions, the objectives of this research will be resumed, and the main final considerations of the study will be presented.

6. Final considerations

This study aimed to analyze the environmentally responsible consumption practices carried out by rural tourists. To achieve the overall objective, four specific objectives were outlined—the first specific objective sought to identify the characteristics of environmentally responsible consumption. The characteristics identified were the domains of influence on environmentally responsible behavior, altruistic vision, types of environmentally responsible consumers, information behavior, preventive measures to make a difference and lifestyle. These aspects were used to compose the questionnaire applied in the research.

The second specific objective was to describe rural tourism. The concept of rural tourism, its history, its classifications, and active and passive resources were identified. The latter (resources) were also present in the questionnaire applied.

The third specific objective was to identify the profile of rural tourists. There is a predominance of women (85%) aged 51 to 70 years (72%) who have completed undergraduate or postgraduate degrees (56%) with varied incomes.

The fourth specific objective sought to identify rural tourists' environmentally responsible consumption practices. The sample has sustainable consumption practices, with information behavior, preventive measures, and a sustainable lifestyle, in addition to being altruistic. As for the domains of influence on environmentally responsible behavior, tourists generally have all three domains (personal, behavioral, and contextual).

However, an important aspect of the survey is that 68% would renounce or sacrifice their interests to pursue the greater good. This behavior is divergent from the altruistic perception they declare since they care about the well-being of others. Therefore, this study shows that the concern and care for future generations arising from sustainable thinking needs to be fully reflected in the consumption practices of tourists.

Finally, the research has limitations because it was applied to a specific sample of tourists, and, therefore, the study cannot be generalized. For future studies, it is suggested to apply the questionnaire to other samples of tourists to compare with the findings of this research. In addition, new studies may bring a qualitative approach to understanding when the sacrifices and renunciations of consumption occur.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, LI; methodology, LI; validation, LI, LMdS and PMdS; formal analysis, LI; investigation, LI; resources, LI, LMdS and PMdS; data curation, LI, LMdS and PMdS; writing—original draft preparation, LI, LMdS and PMdS; writing—review and editing, LMdS and PMdS; visualization, LI, LMdS and PMdS; supervision, LMdS; project administration, LI, LMdS and PMdS; funding acquisition, LI, LMdS and PMdS. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

Table A1. Interview script.

Variables	Theory	Issues
Areas of influence on environmentally responsible behavior	<p>Personal: represents the basic values of the individual, his/her perception as an integral part of the ecosystem, i.e., the relationship between man and the environment, the environmental consequences that threaten his/her interests, and his/her responsibility to correct these consequences in order to reduce the threats^[12].</p> <p>Behavioral: These are behaviors aimed directly or indirectly at altering the environment. They are activism (acting in environmental movements), citizen behavior (voting in elections, approval of environmental standards, willingness to pay higher taxes for environmental protection, support for environmental policies), and behaviors in the private or individual sphere (green consumption)^[12].</p> <p>Contextual: includes attributes of man from birth (religion, social class, culture), individual capacities (education and specific skills), the immediate situation of the individual (type of residence where he lives and whether he is owner or tenant, climatic conditions where he lives), constraints and opportunities arising from public policies (public transport, taxes) economic situation (income, price of products and services, ease of credit)^[12].</p>	<p>C1. I am responsible for the environmental consequences that threaten my interests.</p> <p>C2. I am responsible for correcting environmental consequences in order to reduce threats.</p> <p>C3. I am an activist because I work in the fight for the environment.</p> <p>C4. I buy products that don't harm the environment.</p> <p>C5. I possess behavior that does not affect the environment, even if other people do not.</p> <p>C6. I have behavior that does not affect the environment, regardless of where I am.</p>
Altruistic view of environmentally responsible behavior	The altruistic view contributes to the emergence of feelings such as powerlessness by emphasizing sacrifices instead of providing solutions that reflect a better quality of life. This behavior is based on concern for the well-being of other people and causes the individual to renounce or sacrifice their own interests in search of a greater good ^[13] .	<p>C7. I care about other people's well-being.</p> <p>C8. I renounce or sacrifice my own interests in pursuit of a greater good.</p>
Information behavior	This consumer reads labels, observes advertising campaigns, and checks on employees, among other actions that provide information to be an environmentally responsible consumer ^[7] .	C9. I buy products with eco-labels, symbols, certifications, ratings, etc.
The behavior of preventive measures	It has control of the effects of consumerism that will affect the environment, and, therefore, consumers take preventive measures, such as the purchase of natural cleaning products or organic food free of pesticides ^[7] .	C10. I buy natural cleaning products or organic food, free of pesticides.
Behavior to make a difference	Change brand, change product, change behavior ^[7] .	<p>C11. I change brands if it has attitudes against the environment.</p> <p>C12. I change products if they harm the environment.</p>
Lifestyle behavior	To be an environmentally responsible consumer while maintaining their lifestyle ^[7] .	<p>C13. I avoid unnecessary consumption.</p> <p>C14. I use things thoroughly to ensure zero waste.</p> <p>C15. I avoid discarding things that can be repaired.</p> <p>C16. I give things I do not need or use to other people.</p>

Table A1. (Continued).

Variables	Theory	Issues
Types of environmentally responsible consumers	<p>a) True Greens: individuals with strong environmental beliefs that are effectively experienced. They avoid consuming from a company with a questionable environmental reputation and choose environmentally friendly products and services. They believe they can personally make a difference in solving environmental problems;</p> <p>b) Money Greens: they support environmentalism by donating money and very little with the donation of time or action. They feel too busy to change their lifestyles. However, they are happy and can express their beliefs with wallets and checkbooks;</p> <p>c) Quasi-greens: they want more pro-environmental legislation, but they do not believe they can do much to have a positive environmental impact themselves. They do not want to pay more for pro-environmental products. They are still determining when forced to choose between the environment and the economy. This is the group of freedom of action and vagueness, which can go from one side to the other on any environmental issue;</p> <p>d) Grumbling: they take few environmental actions but believe that other consumers are not doing their part either. They think that the company should solve the problems and that, in addition to costing much more than their non-green counterparts, green products don't work as well. They feel confused and uninformed about environmental issues, thinking that the whole thing is someone else's problem and that a third party should solve it;</p> <p>e) Basic Browns: this is the least involved with environmentalism. They basically believe that there is not much that individuals can do to make a difference—they are the indifferent ones^[7].</p>	C17. I identify as a consumer.
Rural tourist profile	Ignarra ^[23] establishes the profile of tourists in a general way, using in reference to their motivations: a) existential: they seek spiritual peace to break the routine; b) experimental: they want to know and experience a different way of life; c) diversionary: they seek organized leisure and recreation, usually in groups; d) recreationists: seek leisure and relaxation for physical and mental recovery.	<p>C18. I carry out rural tourism to seek spiritual peace to break the routine.</p> <p>C19. I carry out rural tourism to get to know and experience a different way of living a different way.</p> <p>C20. I carry out rural tourism to practice organized leisure and recreation, usually in groups.</p> <p>C21. I carry out rural tourism to seek leisure and relaxation for physical and mental recovery.</p>
Rural tourism resources	Pizam and Fleischer ^[19] addressed the resources of rural tourism, which can be passive, where the tourist is a mere spectator, or active, where the tourist can participate by performing activities because the infrastructure or the environment allows it. Among the passive resources would be natural resources, historical and artistic heritage, and cultural manifestations.	<p>C22. I pursue rural tourism because of the natural resources (landscapes, climate, natural parks, hikes, trails, flora and fauna).</p> <p>C23. I look for rural tourism because of the historical-artistic heritage (moments, popular architecture, sculpture, handicrafts).</p> <p>C24. I look for rural tourism because of the cultural manifestations (folklore, gastronomy, festivities, customs and popular traditions).</p>

Table A1. (Continued).

Variables	Theory	Issues
Active resources of rural tourism	Active resources include sports and socio-cultural activities, participation in the usual tasks of the rural area, etc. ^[19] .	<p>C25. The activities I look for in rural tourism are sports/recreation (hiking, hiking, horseback riding).</p> <p>C26. The activities I seek in rural tourism are socio-cultural (handicrafts, study of flora, fauna and environment).</p> <p>C27. The activities I look for in rural tourism are rural space (agricultural activities, livestock, manufacture of rural products).</p>
Demographic	Awareness of environmental consumption can derive from several aspects, including cultural, social, occupational, way of life, financial and emotional situation, and age ^[14] . Carrete et al. ^[15] point out that understanding the drivers and inhibitors of green consumer behavior is a prerequisite for formulating and designing incentives and stimuli that can effectively transform this behavior. For the authors, the factors that have been shown to exert influence on the ecological behavior of individuals are generally classified as external, related to education, media, family or culture; internal, supported by knowledge, attitudes, awareness or involvement; and situational, associated with economic rewards and legislation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender (Sex) 2. Age 3. Profession 4. Schooling 5. Marital status 6. Indicate the gross personal income (monthly average, considering salary, commissions, odd jobs, internships, rent receipts, retirement, etc.). 7. How often do you carry out rural tourism?