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## Green Hotels – Exception or Norm?

**Abstract:** The paper aims at presenting the broad literature report on green hotels. Development of the “green hotels” concept and its implementation are relatively new initiatives in hospitality sector. They can be seen as the elements of the growing general global environmental awareness. Hospitality industry is one of the most rapidly expanding sector worldwide. It is strongly associated with tourism. However, with the growing palette of services offered currently by the hotels they tend to play various socio-economical roles. In many locations hotels function as a driving force for socio-economic development, serving as employers for the local population, but also providing the forum for meetings, conferences, private/family events and ceremonies. Unfortunately, hospitality is also recognised as an industry characterised by the consumption of significant amount of resources. In particular, this concerns energy and water consumption but also waste generation. Based on literature reports the paper presents impact of dynamically growing hotel industry on the environment. The evolution in customers’ preferences towards green hotels is discussed in terms of their growing environmental awareness and the level of their satisfaction. The willingness of customers to financially support green hotel practices is discussed. The theoretical background of marketing strategies is discussed. The role of communication between various players involved in hotel operations is underlined.

**Keywords:** development of marketing strategies; financial aspects; green hotels; pro-ecological consumers’ attitudes

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the biggest industries worldwide in terms of the number of employees. Hospitality industry is a leading player within this sector. In many locations it serves as a driving force for socio-economic development. Unfortunately, it is also recognised as an industry characterised by the consumption of significant amount of resources (e.g. Gössling et al., 2005; Gössling, 2015). In particular, this concerns energy

and water consumption, but also waste generation. The estimated average energy use per guest night for various types of accommodation categories reaches 98 megajoules (MJ) (Gössling, 2002) and the average global direct water consumption per night spent by a guest in an accommodation building reaches 350 litres (Gössling, 2015). These are considerably higher than the average energy consumption per person which varies between 12 MJ/day for developing countries and 87 MJ/day for OECD countries (data for 2004) (Human Development Report, 2007/2008), and domestic water consumption which is about 160 litres per person per day (Gössling and Hall, 2005). In addition, the hotel industry generates large volumes of waste. A typical tourist generates at least 1 kilogram of solid waste per day (Davies & Cahill, 2000) and a tourist from developed countries generates up to 2 kg per day in the United States (UNEP, 2003). Additionally, it is estimated that tourist sector contributes significantly to the climate change as it is responsible for about 5% of global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, coming mainly from transport (Gössling, 2002). The Green Seal (2012) observed that the average hotel purchases more products in one week than one hundred families buy usually in a year. This boosts the cost of hotel operation. Thus, it is believed that the water and energy-saving, proper disposal of solid waste strategies are adopted by hoteliers primarily to reduce the functioning costs (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007; Erdogan & Baris, 2007). However, these actions have also the pro-ecological dimension and result in a sustainable environment. Thus the "green strategy" is also catching the interest of hotel owners as they observe ecological awareness of growing number of customers and because it is seen as a tool for positioning their hotels as "green hotels" differently in the competitive area of hospitality (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007; Holjevac, 2003). Green Hotels Association (GHA) defined green hotel as "environmentally-friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programs that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste – while saving money – to help protect our one and only Earth" (2007). There are attributes of green hotels proposed by various researchers. The twelve environmentally friendly attributes proposed by Gustin and Weaver (1996), the International Tourism Partnership include: 1) use of energy saving light bulbs in the sleeping area of the room, 2) use of energy saving light bulbs in the guest bathroom, 3) use of low flow toilets in the room, 4) use of low flow faucets in the room, 5) use of low flow showerheads in the room, 6) use of refillable soap dispensers instead of bars of soap, 7) use of refillable shampoo dispensers instead of individual bottles, 8) introduction of a towel re-use program, 9) introduction of "sheets changed only if requested" (for stays up to three nights), 10) placement of recycling bins in the guest room, 11) installation of occupancy sensors used to control lighting in the room, 12) use of a key cards that turn power in the room on and off.

That list should serve as the core for green hotels services. It is continuously being expanded and more attributes are included as technology development allows for the modification and improvement of traditional hotel services.

Considering the need for urgent pro-ecological actions in hotel industry the paper aims at presenting the literature report on the customers' and managers' attitude towards green hotels and the theoretical background of marketing strategies development. It is believed that such an analysis could be useful for hoteliers in developing effective pro-ecological strategies and for customers to increase involvement in environmentally friendly practices while using hotel services.

## CUSTOMERS' INTENTION TO VISIT GREEN HOTELS

To make the “green hotels” a norm rather than exception, joint efforts of many players – starting from regulators, public bodies, hotel owners/managers and consumers (guests) – are necessary. Although the consumers are at the end of this list, in reality they are major players, as they not only buy the services but they also can influence the opinion and attitude of law-makers and service providers (hoteliers) (Tsaour & Tzeng, 1995). Changes in the hotel selection and attributes that are important to travellers can be illustrated by a comparison of the outcomes of several studies carried out by Barsky & Labagh (1992), Cadotte & Turgeon (1988), Dube & Renaghan (1999), Dolnicar (2002), Dolnicar & Otter (2003), Lockyer (2005), and Vora (2007). The early studies ignored the attributes related to pro-ecological aspects of hotel services. A meta-analysis of hotel attributes performed by Dolnicar & Otter (2003) can serve as a good example. The authors indicated that among the hotel attributes studied, the cleanliness was the top priority, followed by hotel location. Lockyer (2005) identified 173 attributes important to customers. They were related to image, price/value, and service but none of them was related to environmental attributes of a hotel. Interestingly, studies conducted by Vora (2007) indicated that only a few years later, 43 million US travellers have expressed their worries for the environment and considered to accept the environmental policies of the hoteliers. Among them, water conservation and waste reduction were considered to be the major aspects of environmentally responsible management in hotels (Singh et al. 2014; Wyngaard & de Lange 2013; Han et al. 2018). Recent qualitative studies (word association test) carried out by Verma and Chandra (2018) on a sample of 168 hotel customers allowed to identify that customers perceive energy conservation, recycling, and greenscaping as key sustainable practices pertaining to the hotel industry. In practical terms, the towel reuse policy is one the most effective and widely used green hotel practice.

However, when one analyses the customers' preferences regarding the choice of green hotel, the issues related to their quality are quite often discussed. As was recently observed by Lee & Cheng (2018), because of the special nature of services offered by green hotels, the existing hotel service quality scale is not sufficient to measure the service quality performance of green hotels. To eliminate that problem they proposed to measure the service quality performance of green hotels by constructing the Green Lodging Service Quality scale (GLSERV scale). The GLSERV scale included parameters such as: reliability, empathy, environmental communication, green energy saving, assurance.

Studies on a customer intention to consider accommodation in green rather than in regular hotels originated from the reflection that although there is a growing number of customers seeking accommodation in green hotels, they still constitute a small fraction of all hotel visitors (Watkins, 1994). However, while analysing the literature one can see that there has been a considerable change in the customers' approach to the eco-friendly lodging in the last decade. That is related to the fact that societies are becoming more environmentally aware. It is, however, very difficult to translate that into practical terms. It is difficult to determine whether the environmental consciousness, which is a psychological state, effects the practical consumer's purchasing decision, which sometimes brings about the higher costs of the goods/services.

Miao and Wei (2013) made a comparison of the pro-environmental behaviour of people in their household and in hotels. The self-addressed mail questionnaires were sent to randomly selected 5000 employees of the Midwestern University in the United States. The analysis of 1185 completed replies have demonstrated behavioural inconsistency in these two settings. Participants indicated considerably higher level of pro-environmental behaviour in a household than in hotels. That was explained considering the contextual nature of pro-environmental behaviour which may differ across settings. While the normative motives such as altruism, concern for family, friends and environment are the dominant determinant of pro-ecological behaviour in a household, the hedonic motives such as seeking direct pleasure, personal comfort or excitement (Lindenberg and Steg, 2007) are the strongest predictor of the behaviour in a hotel environment. The results of these studies support the Goal-Framing Theory (Lindenberg and Steg, 2007) which assumed the existence of three major motives related to pro-environmental behaviour: normative, hedonic, and gain. The normative motives are driven by the feeling that one is morally obligated to behave pro-environmentally and contribute to a better environment or show good example – just to “act appropriately”. A person with hedonic approach concentrates on the improvement of personal enjoyment and comfort – eliminating pro-environmental behaviour that is not pleasurable. As was shown in many studies the consumer satisfaction with green hotels is a key parameter determining the decision on using these hotels more often. Satisfaction is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, in which the cognition and affect are important determinants of consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1993). For hotel guests, social services such as interaction with employees and physical services, such as e.g. the quality of the infrastructure, building, interior facilities, location or landscape affect their satisfaction (Bitner, 1992). Green schemes can satisfy consumers’ psychological and emotional needs (Singh, 1991; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kang et al., 2012). Gao & Mattila (2014) carried out online consumer satisfaction studies in a context of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Studies were performed with 183 participants and 158 completed the survey (45% were female, 88% were aged 20–59, 80% were Caucasian, 85% held a degree higher than high school, 66% had household incomes more than \$30,000, and 68% stayed at hotels more than once a year). The analysis of obtained material indicated that when service delivery is successful, consumer satisfaction is higher for green (vs. non-green) hotels, but when the service fails, the advantage for green hotels disappears. They have also observed that consumer satisfaction with green hotels is higher when the hotel’s green initiatives have a public-serving (vs. self-serving) nature. The results have shown that the perceived warmth and competence influence the relationship between service outcomes and consumer satisfaction. That observation is in line with earlier findings by Hartline & Jones (1996). Considering the fact that sometimes in human perception green hotels are seen as they may compromise the guest’s comfort with eco-friendly practices, Chan (2015) decided to study the joined effect of technologies, innovations and sustainability on the guest’s decision to book the same hotel/hotel brand for the next visit. This study aimed at finding whether the hotel facilities and sustainability attempts have an impact on consumer purchasing behaviours and intention to revisit that hotel. The on-site surveys were performed to obtain data from guests of hotels located in six states of the South-Eastern United States. For that purpose 1200 hotel guests were randomly selected, from which 600 were interviewed on-site, while the remaining 600 were given a self-administrated

survey. The analysis of the results have shown that technology-related factors (such as high speed Wi-Fi and easy-to-operate remote eco-self-climate control) influence hotel selection. On the other hand, the most important factors considered in the selection of eco-friendly hotel include: the levels of implementation of a recycle program, locally grown food options, eco-friendly cleaning supplies, energy-efficient lighting, water-saving plumbing system, and the use of recycled materials.

Huang et al. (2014) examined whether the motivation crowding effect occurs during the process in which the hotel consumers try to be environmentally-friendly. The motivation crowding effect was studied by Frey (1997), Frey & Oberholzer-Gee (1997) and Frey & Jegen (2001). They suggested that external cash interventions lower the levels of intrinsic motivation. The incentives crowd out the original drive to action. Huang et al. (2014) carried out a questionnaire survey based on a delivery and collection (some were returned later by email) forms. The studies were directed at business customers of selected 40 large-scale five star hotels in Shanghai. The incomplete answers were eliminated and 458 valid questionnaires were analysed. The subjects' sample were as follows: 61.57% males and 38.43% females, 34.28% were senior high school or below and 65.72% were university graduates or above, 12.45% were 20–30 years old, 18.78% were 31–40, 38.21% were 41–50, 11.79% were 51–60, and 18.77% were older than 61. The majority of responders were representative of business customers, males aged 30–50. The results have shown that the consciousness of the need for environmental protection positively influences the green consumer behaviour. On the other hand, cash discount incentives do not have any effect on the hotel guests to adopt pro-ecological behaviour such as to reuse their bed sheets or towels. That is still seen by clients as an action aimed rather on saving money by the hotel than a pro-ecological activity. However, environmental protective alternatives are interesting incentives for hotel guests to ensure their environmentally-friendly behaviour. Female and younger guests are more interested in being environmentally-friendly. These findings have proven the existence of motivation crowding phenomenon among hotel guests which should be taken into account by hotel managers when introducing the environmentally-friendly strategies. Interesting observations were reported by Millar and Baloglu (2008). They collected 165 complete surveys from attendees of a hotel developer's conference organised in Las Vegas, Nevada in 2008. The conference was devoted to the greening of the hospitality industry. The quantitative data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 16.0). Surprisingly, not all participants had a positive view on green hotels, but the younger ones seemed to be more in favour of some environmental attributes than the more mature respondents (60 years old and older). That was explained considering the fact that the hotels' impact on the environment has only recently become an important issue.

Berezan et al. (2013) tried to identify how sustainable hotel practices affect the satisfaction and intention to return to the same lodging of hotel guests of various nationalities. This was especially interesting in the context of a general view that a majority of American travellers consider themselves to be "environmentally conscious" (U.S. Travel Association, 2009) and that they feel that hotel companies should undertake sustainability actions (Weissenberg et al. 2008). That growing customers' awareness of sustainable practices is seen as a possibly important factor in choosing a hotel (Tzschentkea, 2008). For their analysis they used 329 surveys (in English and Spanish) completed by hotel guests in San Miguel de Allende a popular upscale tourist destination in Mexico.

That location was chosen as it attracts tourists from all over the world. Results of this study indicated that the green practices positively affect the guests' satisfaction levels and their intention to return, independently of the subject's nationality. There are differences in relative satisfaction levels generated by hotel sustainable practices between nationality groups. Generally, Mexicans were much more satisfied with these policies than the Americans and guests of other nationalities. The relative importance of some ecological practices (such as light bulb, occupensor, keycard, water-saving in public space, dispenser, and towel policy) was perceived differently by the guests of different nationalities. On the other hand, green practices such as: water-saving in guest rooms, local supplier, recycle and eco-supply did not observe any differentiation in perceptions by various nationalities.

Yu et al. also studied guests' experiences at green hotels and the effect on customer satisfaction. The studies involved 727 reviews (downloaded from TripAdvisor) on customers experience gathered while staying in the top 10 green hotels in the US. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and logistic regressions. Customers reported on both positive and negative experiences at green hotels. The studies allowed to identify the contribution of various types of green practices to customer satisfaction. Different practices impact customer satisfaction in different ways, thus hoteliers should refine their green strategies when implementing these green practices.

Dalton et al. (2008) studied the attitudes of Australian tourists towards micro-generation renewable energy supply (RES) for hotel accommodation. Direct interview method was supplemented with questionnaire survey. The results indicated that 50% of tourists participating in studies perceived RES to be reliable and that they would be willing to stay in hotels with such an energy supply accepting possible inconveniences. The Australians had generally a more positive approach to RES than overseas visitors, including the Japanese and the Americans. There was no statistically significant variation when gender was taken into account. Older guests had a more positive attitude than the younger ones. As far as the type of RES is concerned, there was no opposition against photovoltaic or onshore wind farms located nearby hotels. Offshore wind farm locations were far less accepted.

## FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF CHOOSING ACCOMMODATION IN GREEN HOTELS

It has been recognised that implementation of some pro-ecological strategies in hotels may result in increasing their operational costs while compromising on quality. The researchers studied whether customers are willing to pay extra for such services. The results differ considerably but they suggest that over time more responders, driven by the ecological awareness, are willing to participate financially in functioning the green hotels. Early studies by Watkins (1994) indicated that frequent US travellers would consider to stay in hotels with pro-ecological strategies, but they were not willing to pay a premium for those rooms. Bamberg et al., (2003) have shown that people are interested in environmentally-friendly behaviour when it provides sufficient benefits, such as financial savings. Studies by Dalton et al. (2008) also have shown that even though 50% of the Australian respondents participating in surveys accepted the replacement of the conventional energy sources by micro-generation renewable energy supply (RES), only half of those 50% would be willing to pay extra for that energy, yet no more than 1–5%. Kang et al. (2012) examined the willingness of US hotel guests to pay more for

staying in hotels introducing environmentally-friendly and sustainable practices. They used the New Ecological Paradigm Scale (NEP) proposed by Dunlap et al. (1978, 2000), to measure the levels of guests' environmental concerns. The study's methodology involved an online survey (9000 email invitations were sent and 455 valid responses were obtained). The subjects were selected from the group of people who requested tourist information from visitor bureaus located in Arizona, Florida, and Texas. It was found that customers with higher degrees of environmental concern declare a higher willingness to pay extra for the hotel's ecological sustainability. That finding was considered as supporting the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and the means-end theory (Gutman, 1982). Interestingly, it has been also observed that there is a negative relationship between personal income and willingness to pay premium for hotel's green initiatives. That was explained considering that low-income people are more sensitive to environmental issues than the high-income ones because they are expected to benefit from pro-environmental activities as the quality of their life is more influenced by environmental problems (Power & Elster, 2005). Kostakis and Sardianou (2012) presented data on the determinants of tourists' intention to pay a premium for accommodation in green hotel. The empirical analysis was based on a survey of 400 foreign tourists during their summer holidays in Crete in 2009 carried out using the random stratified sampling method. The questionnaires were distributed among the guests of randomly chosen hotels in each of the four prefectures of the island (Chania, Rethymno, Heraklion and Lasithi) – 100 of them on each island. The participants were over 18 years old and they had their individual incomes. The survey was performed using a structured questionnaire and personal interviews. The response rate was 80% and the survey resulted in a data set of 320 tourists. The results suggest that middle-aged people and men rather than women are more willing to pay premium for their stay in a green hotel. It was found that the marital status and educational level did not affect the willingness to pay more. Environmentally-conscious and properly informed tourists are more willing to pay extra for renewable energy than others. Dimara (2017) carried a survey of 1304 Greek and foreign hotel customers in Greece and revealed that 72% of hotel customers are willing to adopt a towel reuse program and 44.1% are ready to pay extra 2.15 Euros per day (on average) to support that policy. The customers that stay at high-priced hotels or for a longer period of time are more willing than an average customer to pay extra for towel reuse programs. Similar observations were presented by Song et al. (2018). They investigated the differences in customers' green reviews between resort/luxury hotels and business/economy hotels using TripAdvisor list of top ten green hotels. They found that resort/luxury hotel guests are more eager than business/economy hotel guests to evaluate the hotel's green practices. They commented on the specific issues such as, e.g. energy saving, waste management, education and innovation. The customers staying in business and economy hotels address the general green practices such as: towel and linen reuse, recycling, guest instructing and water saving. Studies (Teng-Yuan, 2014; Wang, 2018) suggested that if the decision on purchasing and booking lodgings at green hotels is driven by environmental awareness of customers, they are willing to pay a premium price for accommodation at locations that practice environmental protection even if that entails some inconvenience and lower quality.

## THEORETICAL APPROACH TO MARKETING STRATEGIES

To develop good marketing strategies one should understand the customers' attitude towards green hotels but also design effective communication strategies. Both of these issues have been taken into account by Han et al. (2010). They suggested that in order to develop the marketing strategy one should concentrate on studies of customers' decision-making process when they select a green hotel and also take into account the social and non-volitional factors. To explain the formulation of customers' intentions to visit a green hotel they proposed to use the Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model. TPB is an extension of Theory of a Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). In both of these theories the customer intention plays a central role (Ajzen, 1985). Intention is described as "an individual's motivation in his/her cognizant plan/decision to exert an effort in performing a specific behaviour". TRA assumes that behavioural intention is a function of two factors – the attitude toward performing the behaviour and subjective norm (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). TPB incorporates additional factors which concerns the possession of adequate resources and opportunities to perform a specific behaviour (Madden et al., 1992). It allows to take into account various non-volitional factors that can affect the decision-making process. It provides better explanation why customers who have a positive attitude towards green hotels do not stay at that kind of a hotel as they cannot afford the price or the hotel has inconvenient location. Han et al. (2011) tested TPB strategy using literature data and results of discussion with the members of focus group which consisted of hotel managers, hospitality academics (faculty members and students) and hotel customers. Rahman & Rynolds (2017) developed a model of consumers' behavioural decisions regarding choosing green hotels by employing environmental values supported by interdependence theory and the commitment model. Based on 375 completed responses to a survey they analysed the relation between consumers' environmental values, their willingness to sacrifice for saving the environment, and their behavioural intentions for or against staying at green hotels. The studies indicated that environmental values influenced consumers' willingness to sacrifice for the biosphere, which then affected their green hotel visit intentions, their willingness to compromise to stay at a green hotel, and their willingness to pay more for such an accommodation. Nimri et al. (2017) reported on similar findings. The results of their qualitative studies aimed at understanding the beliefs of travellers in the South East region of Australia, carried out on focus groups using open-ended questionnaires, led to the conclusion that "environmental beliefs" of customers are more important than their personal benefits. They pointed out that the marketing should highlight the importance of environmental protection to increase the interest in the selection of green hotels services.

Verma & Chandra (2018) used the TBT extended by including moral reflectiveness and conscientiousness as the additional constructs for the prediction of the young Indian consumers' intention to visit green hotels. The studies involved an analysis of data collected from self-administered questionnaires obtained from 295 consumers. Liu et al. (2018) constructed the extended TPB model by including "environmental concern and perceived moral obligation to predict consumers' intention to visit green hotels" and used it for predicting the consumers' intention to visit green hotels. The model was verified using data obtained from the questionnaire. Chen & Tung (2014) developed the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour model to predict the consumers' intention



to visit green hotels. The empirical results of structural equation modelling (SEM) performed using responses of 559 respondents collected in Taiwan indicated that consumers' environmental concern and perceived moral obligation had indeed a positive influence on their attitude toward green hotels.

Extensive studies by Han et al. (2010) on the level of eco-friendly attitudes of general hotel customers resulted in interesting observations. Using an online market research company's survey program they have sent electronically questionnaires to 3000 randomly selected common US hotel patrons. A total of 422 (206 filed by males and 216 filed by females) usable questionnaires were used for the analysis. The mean age of responders was 44.5 years with a median of 41 years. Among the participants, 55.7% held an undergraduate or postgraduate degree, and 44.3% had less than an undergraduate college degree. As far as previous experience with green hotel was concern, 58 respondents reported that they had a previous experience staying at a green hotel, 237 stated that they had never stayed at a green hotel and 127 respondents were not sure whether they had stayed at a green hotel. It was found that female customers are more willing to choose a green lodging and to pay more for an eco-friendly hotel. That observation corroborates earlier findings by McCleary et al. (1994) and it was explained based on theories related to sex-dependent human behaviours (i.e., social role theory and evolutionary psychology). Interesting differences were observed comparing respondents who have stayed at a green hotel with those who have never stayed at such premises. The first group of customers indicated that they have high intentions to visit green hotels and to pay premium. Therefore, the hotel managers should strengthen their customer retention strategies. It is expected that once hotel customers experience the green functioning of a hotel they are likely to establish a positive attitude toward green lodging. There were no significant differences in hotel customers' intentions across age, level of education, and level of household income. The results of similar studies, but taking into account more variables, were performed and published recently by Han and Yoon (2015). The studies concentrated on the formation of hotel guests' intention when selecting an environmentally responsible hotel. A Web-based survey via the online marketing research company system was carried out. E-mail invitations were sent to 3500 randomly chosen general US lodging customers. The customers with a low visit frequency were excluded from the studies. Only those customers who stayed at a hotel at least once a year were allowed to participate in the survey. A total of 384 returned questionnaires were used for data analysis. They were sent by participants from which 50.3% were males and 49.7% were females with an average age of 43.6 years. The largest group (48.1%) was Caucasian/White, then Hispanic (19.1%), African American (18.9%), Asian (12.9%), and other (1.0%). When the annual household income was queried, 36.7% reported incomes between \$40,000 and \$69,999 while a nearly similar-sized group (32.3%) reported incomes under \$39,999. In addition, 31.0% stated that their annual incomes are over \$70,000. The majority were college graduates (65.2%); the minorities were holders of graduate degrees (24.5%) and high-school graduates (10.3%). About 66.5% had experience in staying at an eco-hotel; 12.8% had not yet stayed and 20.7% were not sure. The largest fraction of the respondents informed that they stayed at a conventional hotel at least 2–5 times a year (49.7%); 18.0% indicated staying at a hotel about 6–10 times a year; 18.1% noted staying at a hotel more than 10 times a year or more, and 14.2% reported once a year. The results of these studies were consistent with the previous ones and confirmed the applicability of

socio-psychological theories built based on the assumption that individuals' intentions eventually result in actual behaviour such as TPB, TRA, and MGB. (e.g. Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein, 2000; Han et al., 2010). It was recently suggested (Nimri, 2017) that although the theoretical foundation of the TPB theory could be used to analyse the consumers' purchasing decisions related to the green hotel accommodation in Australia, the model needs extension to account for the "Green Hotel Knowledge".

Chena and Tung (2014) adopted the Ajzen' TPB model to study the consumer's intention to visit green hotels in Taiwan. The results of empirical studies carried out in the form of online survey questionnaire (559 valid surveys returned – 60% of them were students, aged 20–29), have shown that, as expected, the consumer's attitude toward green hotels, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control have a positive influence on the consumer's intention to visit green hotels. These results are in agreement with those presented earlier (Han and Kim, 2010; Han et al., 2010). It was also confirmed that the consumers' environmental concern and their moral obligation positively correlate with the attitude of individuals toward visiting green hotels.

There is a considerable body of literature dealing with the applicability of Model of Goal-Directed Behaviour (MGB) to studies of customers' pro-environmental intentions. That approach assumes that people with a favourable intention for a particular behaviour are likely to perform the behaviour in a rational manner (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; Poels & Dewitte, 2008). In a variety of contexts, particularly in the domain of pro-environmental behavioural intentions, numerous researchers have employed one of such socio-psychological theories with self-interest motives as a theoretical basis (Bamberg et al., 2001; Bamberg et al., 2003; Chen & Tung, 2014; Han et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2016). Major contributions from these studies enhance our understanding of individuals' pro-environmental decision-making processes and increase the prediction power for their intentions. This research empirically verified the integration of some critical environment concepts into the goal-directed decision-making framework. It is also essential for reaching the understanding of pro-environmental decision formation process regarding the selection of lodging product.

Practically, these studies informed hotel operators on the key driving forces of positive behavioural intentions for their eco-friendly lodging properties. A marketing strategy should induce in customers a desire for an eco-product and an eco-friendly reputation for the products offered. The increasing guests' desire and eco-friendly reputation of the firm can be most effective in growing their pro-environmental intention that ultimately leads to actual purchases of an environmentally-responsible hotel product. Allocating more resources for the desire for an eco-friendly reputation enhancement would be appropriate.

Han and Yoon (2015) extended the Model of Goal-Directed Behaviour (MGB) by integrating several variables such as: environmental awareness, perceived effectiveness, and eco-friendly behaviour and reputation, to explain the customers' eco-friendly behaviour. That extended model was empirically verified by a Web-based survey. Out of the 3500 randomly selected US lodging customers who were invited to participate in studies using the online marketing research company's database about 11.1% (384 people) responded. Interestingly, it has been shown that the desire is the most important variable influencing hotel guests' intentions.

Verma & Chandra (2018) proposed a different approach. They developed a structural model and performed a statistical analysis (software SPSS V.20 & AMOS V.21)

of 285 Indian hotel managers. Based on these they concluded that the customers' attitude and environmental concern positively and significantly influence the intention of managers to implement green hotel practices. These studies confirmed that apart from economic issues, the behavioural factors such as customers' attitude and employees' environmental concern are also critical in increasing the interest in green hotel development.

Just recently, Chen et al. (2019) developed a structural model of trust and behavioural intentions based on Attribution Theory and Trust-Based Marketing Theory. The model considers that there is a link between perceived green washing, green trust, intention to revisit, intention to participate, and intention to spread negative word of mouth. It was tested by an analysis of self-report survey performed utilising two real green hotel practices: towel reuse and energy saving. The results obtained indicated that "the perceived green washing had a significant negative influence on green trust, which in turn was positively associated with revisit intention and intention to participate in the green practice and negatively associated with negative word of mouth". Interestingly, the consumers with prior experience with green hotels were more opened on the towel reuse practice.

Rahman & Reynolds (2017) developed a model to conceptualise the consumer behavioural intentions regarding green hotels. Their approach adopted the Schwartz's values theory coupled with value-attitude-hierarchy, ecocentric and anthropocentric ethic, and green signalling theory. They identified sets of biospheric, altruistic, and egoistic values and attitudes (ecocentric and anthropocentric) which influence intentions of consumers to choose green hotel accommodation and willingness to sacrifice and pay more.

These studies stressed the importance of consumer social-altruistic perspective in the decision-making process regarding the green hotel preference.

While discussing marketing strategies one should pay special attention to the group of younger customers (Dimara et al., 2017), especially the Millennials, which is a large and influential generation born in the 1980s and 1990s (Wang et al., 2018). They should be treated as one of target consumer groups in marketing campaigns as they are more concerned about the environmental issues than the earlier generations (Muralidharan et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2016) while they have substantial purchasing power and influence the purchase decision of their families and, using the social media, also the decisions of their friends (Parment, 2016).

## THE ROLE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGY FOR GREEN HOTELS

The analysis of the literature related to the problems of green hotels leads to the conclusion that low efficiency of green hotel marketing strategy is caused by the existence of communication barriers between the researchers and practitioners (hotel managers) and between the hotel managers and customers. Based on the systematic literature review, Tölkes (2018) concluded that both the researchers and practitioners have to gain a better theoretical and practical understanding of effective communication. The author observed that the research has focused on the marketing of green hotels and environmental sustainability while there is a lack of knowledge on personal communication channels and message formulation leading to positive consumer reactions. Hotel managers have to truly understand the needs and wants of potential guests and

identify the specific factors important to them when selecting a hotel (Lockyer, 2002, 2005). It was recommended that future research should consider to develop a more holistic approach to sustainability communication and provide support for practitioners. Gil-Sato et al. (2019) analysed the guests' perceptions of hotels' environmental practices expressed through social media. The authors observed that even though the customers notice green efforts of hotels, they have difficulties with evaluating the level of their environmental commitment. The guests' opinions on hotel involvement in environmentally-friendly practices are similar and they do not differ considerably for customers with various travel experience. The results of that analysis indicated that there is a need for better communication about environmentally-friendly practices. The method of communication should be redesigned and intensified by hotel managers in order to benefit from the environmental efforts undertaken. Gupta (2019) elaborated on the special role of the communication of the green hotel's initiatives between employees and the customers. These schemes have to be made effortless for the guests to participate. Communication can occur during the check-in procedure when the guests can be informed about the eco-friendly policy of the hotel and the sources of the information available.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the literature analysis one can conclude that over the last few decades, in parallel to the increase of the public concerns related to the environment, green hotel strategies and practices have also progressively developed. Increasing numbers of customers select green lodging because of their pro-ecological approaches. However, for the majority of customers the hotel location, the price, quality of service and convenience in selecting a hotel are more important than the green practices. There is a relatively small fraction of customers who are willing to pay more for pro-ecological hotel services. Some of them declare the increased willingness to participate in environmental programs when hotels offer incentives, such as loyalty program points for participating in such practices. Although some studies indicated that environmental sustainability programs do not diminish guest satisfaction there are no reports showing that their improved customer satisfaction. It was reported that although various hotels introduce different sets of pro-environmental services, certain sustainability practices are considered nearly universal across the lodging industry. In almost all hotels green practices involve water saving appliances, towel and linen-reuse programs. The decision of hoteliers regarding the implementation of various eco-friendly practices and marketing strategies should rest on cost-benefit analysis. Considering the impact of lodging industry on the environment and the growing number of customers visiting hotels while travelling as tourists or on business trips, there is no escape from the necessity of implementing green practices in hotel industry. Green hotels should be a norm rather than an exception. To introduce such program there is a need for legal regulatory actions, as well as better communication between hoteliers and customers.

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