

Conceptual Approach of Green Practices in Context of Hotels: Value - Attitude - Behavior

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to develop and test a model that explains the potential influences of: 1) consumers' values, 2) their attitudes toward green practices and/or environmental concerns, and, 3) "green hotel" visit behaviors. In addition, the study will clarify how these variables relate to each other. The findings of this study will further our understanding of what drives green hotel visit behaviors and will provide insights for public policymakers and industry marketers.

Keywords: green hotel, consumers' value, attitude, environmental concern, visit behavior

INTRODUCTION

Increasing public awareness of environmental issues has influenced consumers to become more environmentally responsible and interested in green products. This change also allows many consumers to realize that environment is closely related to their purchasing behaviors and thus change their buying behaviors (Choi & Kim 2005; Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo 2001; Manaktola & Jauhari 2007). As frequent problems raised by environment-related issues make people become more sensitive to business practices in environment parts, consumers prefer businesses which implement eco-friendly policies (Choi & Kim 2005). For this reason, pro-environmental attitude is rising among consumers. For example, some consumers only favor eco-friendly products such as biodegradable paint and unbleached coffee filters and they gladly pay extra money for these products (Laroche et al 2001). Accordingly, marketers are considering green consumers as an

important target segment and developing green products such as recycled paper, plastic goods, and dolphin-safe tuna to capture the green market (Mostafa 2009). In the hospitality industry, however, the response to environmental issues has been relatively slow compared to other industries because the industry is not regarded as the hazardous sector damaging to the environment (Park & Kim 2014). Nevertheless, there has been a remarkable progress of environmental policies in the hospitality industry since the 1990's (Han, Hsu & Lee 2009). The International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI) was established in 1992 and several franchised hotels initiated developing green programs such as a green manual policy for managers, a journal for green hotels, and training support lists. Hotel managers also become aware that green practice is essential for overall hotel operation system to promptly meet the needs of market change (Park & Kim 2014).

The term, "green," is often used interchangeably with "eco-friendly" and "environmental friendly" in

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hotel businesses. Thus, green practice is a general practice to reduce environmental problems in the operational system. Green practice includes responsibilities, procedures, policies, and organizational structure (Mensah 2006). For this reason, "green" hotels mean that they devote their effort in preserving environment and saving energy (Manaktola & Jauhari 2007). As consumers' interest of environment increases, emphasizing the green practices in hotels becomes one of the important marketing strategies to differentiate themselves from non-green hotels. As a result, these "green" practices of hotels not only bring financial gain through competitive advantage against non-green hotels but also strengthen positive corporate images (Kirk 1998; Manaktola & Jauhari 2007).

In recent years, researchers (Han et al 2009; Manaktola & Jauhari 2007) have found the relationship between consumer attitudes and green practices in the hotel industry. Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) state that customers want to see concrete practices of green hotels such as enacting a recycling program for materials in all service sectors of the hotel and providing the linen re-use option to multiple night guests. The result suggests that, to deliver a clear message about their green practices to customers, lodging providers need to show specific pro-environmental practices such as strategic alliances with eco-friendly businesses and active participation in conserving resources.

Han et al (2009) investigated the relationship among attitude toward green behaviors (ATGB), overall image (OI), and behavioral intentions (BI) by focusing on hotel customers' eco-friendly decision-making process. They found the positive relationship between ATGB and OI and OI's significant influence on behavioral intentions (visit intentions, word-of-mouth, and willingness to pay more). Although researchers have conducted some studies on green consumer attitude and behavior (Choi & Kim 2005; Han et al 2009; Laroche et al 2001; Manaktola & Jauhari 2007), relatively little attention has been paid to examining factors that impact consumers' attitudes toward green practices in hotels.

Homer and Kahle (1988) stated that personal values indirectly impact customer behavior, with attitudes working as a mediator. In this line, McCarty

and Shrum (1994) carried out the research to find out antecedents of attitude toward recycling and relationships among values, attitudes, and behaviors related to recycling. They found that consumer attitude toward recycling behaviors was influenced by three values: self gratification, fun/enjoyment, and security. Stern, Dietz and Kalof (1993) also proposed that some values may affect people to have pro-environmental attitude and act eco-friendly. They found that three values (egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric) are related to pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, Nordlund and Garvill (2002) found that general values such as self-transcendence and self-enhancement have impact on individuals' environmental attitudes and behaviors. However, no studies to date have been conducted to find antecedents of the consumer attitudes toward green practices in hotels. Therefore, the purpose of the study presented in this paper is to develop and test a model that explains the potential influences of general values, environmental concern, and attitudes toward green practices on green hotel visit behaviors. Moreover, the study clarifies how these variables relate to each other. The findings of this study further our understanding of what drives green hotel visit behaviors and provide insights for public policy makers and marketers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green Practices in Hotels

The beginning of green practices goes back to the 1950s, when industrialization was damaging the ecosystem and the individuals' welfare. In the early stage, the focus was on pollution-related issues, but was later expanded to sustainable development, encompassing a variety of areas, such as preservation of physical resources, maintenance of biological systems, and protection of cultural heritage (Kirk 1995).

Green practices in hotels include recycling of waste, energy savings, waste management, water conservation, compliance with legislation, purchasing policy, and environmental education (Mensah 2006). These green practices can be categorized into three parts: waste reduction, water saving, and energy conservation (Kirk 1995).

Waste reduction has been a critical issue in the

hotel industry. For example, Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village (KBRV) in Queensland, Australia, separates, packs, and delivers waste to the mainland (Mensah 2006). To reduce the volume and toxicity of the garbage being sent to the landfill, hotels initiated a solid-waste-practice program. They began to change recycling and using nontoxic detergent to replace chemicals in their laundry system. The hotels also began a recycling program to encourage employees to participate in green practices, such as reusing the material where possible and using minimum packaging (Kirk 1995).

Reducing water waste is also important in the hotel industry (Mensah 2006). Hotels faced difficulty in reducing over-consumption of water and in managing its cost. To resolve this issue, hotels have installed devices to reduce the amount of water flowing from a faucet or showerhead (Iwanowski & Rushmore 1994). For example, the Proximity Hotel uses 30 percent less water than hotels of comparable size by installing in the hotel kitchen high water-efficient plumbing and refrigerators that use geothermal energy instead of water-cooled systems (Proximity Hotel 2009).

Energy conservation has brought financial savings to hotels. Simple tactics, such as monitoring temperature and using compact fluorescent bulbs, allow hotels to save costs (Iwanowski & Rushmore 1994). According to Kirk (1995), Inter Continental Hotel at Hyde Park Corner reduced energy consumption from 870 kWh/m²/annum to 575 kWh/m²/annum between 1980 and 1992, resulting in a 34 percent energy saving. The hotel also change lighting, used recovered heat from refrigeration, and continued the campaign to encourage energy conservation among the staff.

Introducing green practices to hotels can produce obvious benefits to hotel management through minimizing waste and maximizing conservation of resources. Also, green practices in hotels are sound and timely strategies considering the increasing number of consumers seeking and demanding green products and services (Patel 2008).

Values-Attitudes-Behaviors

Schwartz (1994) refers to human values as enduring beliefs that guide the actions and judgments of

people across specific situations and stimuli. Values are usually developed as people socialize with others before they reach adulthood and do not easily change according to new information (Stern, Dietz, Kalof & Guagnano 1995). Therefore, as people encounter a new environment, they do not accept it unconditionally. Instead, they judge the environment based on their values and formulate attitudes or opinions (Dietz & Stern 1995). Hence, values function as a framework for formulating doctrine in life and are guidelines for action in unfamiliar conditions (Stern et al 1995). Likewise, in explaining attitudes toward new objects, the relationship between values and attitudes is required because attitudes are established on more consistent and lasting values.

The relationship between values and human behavior has received attention in various fields including marketing (McCarty & Shrum 1994). Researchers have found that values are related to buying organic foods (Grunert & Juhl 1995), recycling behavior (McCarty & Shrum 1994), and shopping behavior (Homer & Kahle 1988). McCarty and Shrum (1994) empirically proved the relationship between attitudes and behaviors toward recycling by arguing that values are important to predict behaviors, but that understanding them in relation to mediating variables, such as attitudes and beliefs, may be meaningful. Homer and Kahle (1998) found that consumers' attitudes toward health foods acted as a mediator between consumer values and purchasing intention, a relationship not addressed in previous studies.

Studies of personal values (Karp 1996; McCarty & Shrum 1994; Nordlund & Garvill 2002) revealed that principles of individuals lead to their behaviors. For example, pro-environmental behaviors, such as participating in protecting rare animals and buying green products, are influenced by personal values.

General Values

In assessing general personal values, Schwartz's general value scale (1994) has been widely accepted (Karp 1996b; Nordlund & Garvill 2002). The purpose of this scale is to measure dimensions of values considered to be universal. Schwartz's value inventory contains 56 value items representing 10 distinct value types: universalism, benevolence, power, achievement, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, tradition,

conformity, and security. These value types can be categorized in two dimensions: openness to change versus conservation and self-transcendence versus self-enhancement. Openness to change is defined by values of self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism. Conservatism is portrayed by values of tradition, conformity, and security. Self-transcendence is described by values of universalism and benevolence. Finally, self-enhancement is characterized by values of power and achievement (Schwartz 1994).

Many studies (Oishi, Schimmack, Diener & Suh 1998; Schwartz & Sagiv 1995; Spini 2003) have employed Schwartz's model of human values to categorize and measure values across different cultures. Schwartz and Sagiv (1995) conducted cross-cultural studies of teachers from 40 countries. To verify applicability of value items across countries, they measured values by asking respondents to rate 56 values "as guiding principles in their life". Despite small deviations in the location of specific values, this study's results demonstrated the similarity of patterns among values across cultures.

The present study will use self-transcendence and self-enhancement as personal values affecting environmental concerns. Self-transcendence represents the collective interest, whereas self-enhancement represents individual interests (Schultz & Zelezny 1999). That is, individuals valuing self-transcendence consider others and the environment when they behave (Nordlund & Garvill 2002). They are interested in taking care of others who are exposed to environmental problems (e.g., air pollution) and also participate in other forms of social welfare by helping minorities and by serving the community (Stern, Dietz & Kalof 1993). Moreover, they are concerned about the environment based on biospheric values and consider other species and the natural environment as part of their lives. Accordingly, they participate in activities (e.g., animal rights movement) supporting the environment (Stern et al 1995). In contrast, individuals valuing self-enhancement give priority to self-interest. Although they participate in voluntary groups, they still want to remain distinct individuals within those groups. Desiring to reach a higher status than others through competition, they also think their achievement should be much greater than their peers (Triandis 1993). Thus, they are

not likely to show environmental friendliness (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo 2001). For example, they may not support nature conservation that would benefit others and nature if it does not directly benefit them (Stern et al 1993).

Previous researchers have demonstrated that individuals valuing collectivism or self-transcendence are more likely to exhibit various forms of altruistic, cooperative, and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors than individuals valuing individual or self-enhancement (Karp 1996b; Nordlund & Garvill 2002; Stern et al 1995).

Nordlund and Garvill (2002), for example, examined a hierarchical model of the effects of general values, environmental values, problem awareness, and personal norms on general pro-environmental behavior. Respondents in this study were asked to indicate how often they engaged in each of 25 different pro-environmental behaviors, such as recycling, energy conservation, and environmentally responsible consumption. The result revealed that people who value self-transcendence were more sensitive to threats to the environment and recognized a stronger moral obligation to behave to conserve the environment than people who value self-enhancement as an important value.

Karp (1996) examined the relationship between values and pro-environmental behaviors. In his study, 16 pro-environmental behaviors were factored into three dimensions: good citizen, activist, and healthy consumer. Good citizens are those who participate in daily pro-environmental activities, buy products made of recycled materials whenever possible, and vote for candidates or referendums that support environmental protection. Activists are those who donate money to environmental groups and write letters about the environment to their congressional representatives. Healthy consumers avoid buying food with chemicals and prefer organically grown produce. The researchers found that valuing self-transcendence is positively related to pro-environmental behavior, whereas valuing self-enhancement is negatively related to pro-environmental behavior. Thus,

Proposition 1: Self-transcendence values will have a positive influence on consumers' en-

vironmental concern.

Proposition 2: Self-enhancement values will have a negative influence on consumers' environmental concern.

Environmental Concern

Since the 1950s, natural scientists have conducted research on human behaviors' impact on the destroying nature. Their studies motivated social scientists to examine the relationship between individuals and the environment (Hawcroft & Milfont 2008). Thus, social scientists began to develop the valid and reliable Environmental Attitude (EA) measurement to grasp why individuals act differently toward the environment (Dunlap, Liere, Mertig & Jones 2000).

The New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) scale is widely used to measure attitudes toward the environment, the ecological worldview, and an individual's environmental concern (Poortinga, Steg & Vlek 2004; Schultz & Zelezny 1999). The NEP's items mainly deal with underlying beliefs toward the nature of the earth and individuals' relationship with it. Thus, the NEP is helpful in revealing people's fundamental beliefs toward the environment that affect attitudes about and beliefs toward more specific environmental issues (Dalton, Gontmacher, Lovrich & Pierce 1999; Dunlap et al 2000). That is, a high score on the NEP scale should be related to pro-environmental beliefs and attitudes on a wide scope of issues (Stern et al 1995). Therefore, the NEP Scale has been used commonly in explaining the relationship between values and specific environmental attitudes and behaviors (Hansla, Gamble, Juliusson & Gärling 2008; Poortinga et al 2004; Stern 2000; Stern, Dietz, Abel, Guagnano & Kalof 1999).

Stern et al (1999), for example, developed the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory accounting for the causal factors of various environmental behaviors. This model was a casual chain among six measurements: personal values, NEP, beliefs about adverse environmental consequences, ascription of responsibility to self, personal norm, and pro-environmental behaviors. In this model, NEP measures general environmental concerns and serves as an antecedent of specific beliefs about adverse environmental consequences.

Rauwald and Moore (2002) conducted a cross-cultural study to determine how people with different cultural backgrounds view the environment and what leads them to become interested in environmental issues. They employed the NEP as an important predictor of environmental-policy support among college students from three different countries and showed that the NEP has a high level of predictability of pro-environmental behavior.

Poortinga et al (2004) investigated the relationship among values, environmental concerns (NEP), specific environmental beliefs (e.g., concern about global warming), and environmental behaviors (e.g., support government regulation controlling environmental problems). They found that values and environmental concerns were related to environmental behaviors. That is, individuals with a higher NEP realized more about global warming's seriousness.

In the hotel industry context, Kang et al (2012) applied the NEP model to identify the relationships between environmental concern measured by NEP and WTP(willingness to pay) among US hotel guests. The results shown that U.S. hotel visitors with higher degrees of environmental concerns is closely related to higher willingness to pay premiums for hotel's green initiatives. Additionally, Millar et al (2012) also conducted green hotel attribute study by using NEP scale and found that specific green attributes are very important factors for both leisure travelers and business travelers.

Based on previous research reviewed above, the NEP not only measures individuals' environmental concerns but also functions as an antecedent of more specific environmental attitudes. That is, people's magnitude of environmental concern is related to their environmental attitude and behaviors. For example, if people see the world ecologically and have a pro-environmental attitude, they will have positive attitude towards pro-environmental efforts of government and businesses. Therefore, it can be assumed that the environmental concern of consumers may impact their attitude toward green practices in hotels.

Thus,

Proposition 3: Consumers' environmental concerns will have a positive influence on their

attitudes toward green practices of hotels.

Attitudes Toward Green Practices of Hotels and Behavioral Intentions

Attitude can be described as "a latent or underlying variable that is assumed to guide or influence behavior" (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, p. 7) and "the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question" (Ajzen 1991, p. 188). Thus, understanding the relationship between attitudes and behaviors is important to grasp how the attitude of individuals toward green practices in hotels leads to their positive behavioral intentions.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen 1991) proves the theoretical framework of the relationship between attitudes and behaviors. The TPB assumes three conceptually independent determinants of behavioral intention: attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. However, the significance of factors influencing behaviors is different according to the situation. For this reason, in some situations, the impact of subjective norm and perceived behavioral control on behaviors is so weak that only attitude can be considered an important behavioral determinant (Ajzen 1991).

The TPB postulates that situations affect individuals' choices of behavior processes, such that individuals think about the results in terms of benefits and cost as they decide whether to perform a specific behavior (Han Hsu & Sheu 2009). If consumers evaluate expected outcomes positively, they are likely to possess a positive attitude and exhibit that specific behavior (Cheng, Lam & C. H. Hsu 2005). For this reason, people who have positive attitudes toward environmental practices are likely to engage in environmentally-friendly behavior (Fielding, McDonald & Louis 2008).

The research on the relationship between attitude and behaviors has been conducted in various environmentally related areas, such as water conservation (Harland, Staats & Wilke 1999), recycling (Cheung, Chan & Wong 1999), environmental activism (Fielding et al 2008), and green electricity (Hansla et al 2008).

Fielding et al (2008), for example, examined factors that explain people's engagement in environ-

mental activities. The majority of individuals in Western societies are aware that they are part of the natural environment. They have expressed their opinions and participated in campaigns to protect the natural environment, paraded through the streets, put bumper stickers on their cars, and sent petitions to the government. The researchers found that attitudes acted as significant positive predictors of individuals' environmental activism. Therefore, people who have positive attitudes toward environmental activities had a strong intention to participate in pro-environmental behavior.

To find determinants of willingness to pay (WTP) for green electricity, Hansla et al (2008) investigated the relationships among value orientation, beliefs, environmental concern, and attitude towards green electricity. The authors have demonstrated that a specific attitude toward green electricity comes from values and beliefs and that a positive attitude toward green electricity is the determinant of WTP for green electricity.

The relationship between attitudes and behaviors, such as customer dissatisfaction responses in restaurants, also have been of interest in the tourism and hospitality industries (Cheng, Lam & Hsu 2005b), tourists' visiting intention (Ryu & Jang 2006), and hotel consumers (Han et al 2009).

Han et al (2009), for example, examined the relationship between three determinant factors (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control) and intention of visiting a green hotel. The result revealed that the attitude toward a visit intention had a higher level of impact on consumer visit intention than subjective norm and perceived behavioral control.

As previous research indicates, consumers behave according to their values and attitudes. They also consider congruency between products and their values as a reason to purchase the products. Therefore, services projecting consumers' values lead consumers to have a positive attitude toward those services and to behave according to their values and attitudes (Faulk & Str 2000). A recent study demonstrated increasing environmental concern and preference for green hotels among business travelers ("AH&LA creates green guidelines for hotels,," 2009). The study reports that 30 percent of respondents

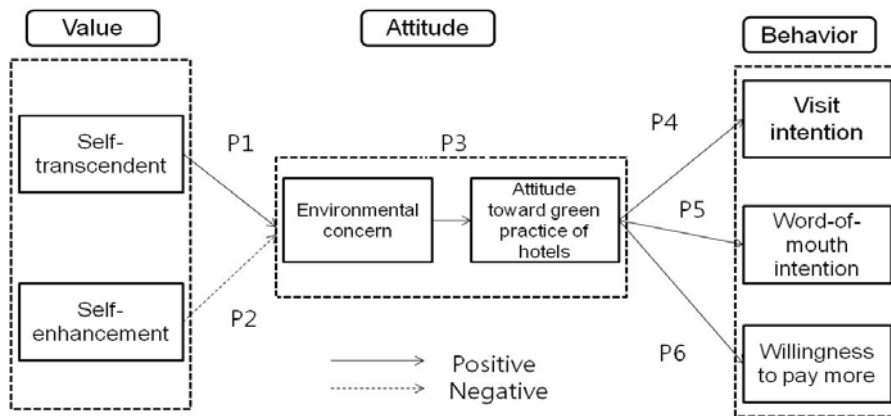


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

look for environmentally friendly hotels and 28 percent are willing to pay up to 10 percent more to stay at a green hotel. These findings imply that pro-environmental consumers desire to stay in green hotels that provide service matching their preferences. In this sense, green practices in hotels function as a competitive advantage, which produce additional benefits for customers and leads them to have positive attitudes towards hotels, thus affecting their behaviors. Therefore, it is posited that if an individual has a positive attitude towards green practices in hotels, he or she is more likely to engage in positive behavioral intentions (i.e., visit intention, word-of-mouth, and willingness to pay more). Thus:

Proposition 4: Consumers' attitudes toward green practices of hotels will have a positive influence on intention to visit green hotels.

Proposition 5: Consumers' attitudes toward green practices of hotels will have a positive influence on word-of-mouth intention.

Proposition 6: Consumers' attitudes toward green practices of hotels will have a positive influence on willingness to pay more for green hotels.

CONTRIBUTIONS

This study will provide both theoretical and managerial contributions for understanding the determinants of behavioral intentions regarding green hotels. First, little study has been conducted on the

relationship among values, environmental concern, specific attitudes, and behavior intention in the hotel industry. To the best of my knowledge, this study will be the first attempt to examine values and attitudes underlying the decisions to visit green hotels, pay extra money, and participate in word-of-mouth referrals. Thus, this study will develop conceptual model of pro-environmental consumer behaviors in service industries and find mediating effects, such as environmental concerns about and attitude toward green practices, between personal values and behaviors. The result of this study can be compared to previous studies which investigated the relationship between personal values and pro-environmental behaviors, such as buying organic foods and paying extra for wild - animal protection. The outcome will provide information about whether consumers' environmental concerns lead to pro-environmental behavior across situations and knowledge about what motivates consumers' preference for green hotels to non-green hotels.

Second, finding the underlying values of consumer behaviors will provide hotel managers with insights in to marketing strategies. For example, if the results show that valuing self-transcendence affects consumer attitudes and behavior intentions, marketers can develop advertisements emphasizing universal values and environmental issues. Such a specific strategy may enable marketers to deliver the message that using a green hotel can have significant impact on the environment's welfare.

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호텔에서 그린 실천에 대한 이론적 접근: 가치-태도-행동을 중심으로

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국문초록

본 연구의 목적은 그린 호텔을 방문하는 고객의 가치와 그들의 태도가 그린 실천이나 환경에 대한 걱정, 그린 호텔의 방문 행동에 어떠한 관계가 있는지 고찰하는 것에 있다. 또한 본 연구에서는 각 요인들이 서로 어떠한 영향을 미치는지 파악함으로써 그린호텔을 방문하는 고객들에 대한 다양한 관점을 이해하는데 유용한 학술적 자료를 제공하였다는데, 다른 의의가 있다. 각 요인들에 대한 심층적인 분석과 그린 호텔에 대한 선행연구를 토대로 가치는 자기초월과 자기고양으로 분류되었고, 태도는 환경에 대한 걱정과 그린 호텔에 대한 심리적 태도의 관계로 설명하였으며, 마지막으로 행동은 방문의도, 구전효과, 그리고 추가지불의도로 분류할 수 있었다. 따라서 본 연구를 토대로 그린 호텔 마케팅이나 정책관련 담당자들은 소비자들의 심도 있는 관점을 이해할 수 있으며, 보다 현실적인 학문적 이해를 할 수 있을 것으로 기대된다.

주제어: 그린 호텔, 고객 가치, 태도, 환경적 걱정, 방문 행동