

Impact of Green Attributes of Hotels on Re-Visit Intention: Moderating Impact of Customer Environmental Consciousness

UJ Mirando[#] and HC Dassanayake

Department of Decisions Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

[#]uditha.mirando.95@gmail.com

Abstract: Increasing awareness on environmental issues among customers' demands businesses to become more environmentally friendly. Due to dependency on natural environment in service co-creation hotel sector is also influenced by this trend. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of green attributes of hotels on re-visit intention of customers and the role played by customers' environmental consciousness on this relationship. A sample of 271 customers drawn using convenient sampling technique was used in data analysis based on Structural Equation Modelling. It was revealed that green attributes of hotels have a direct positive impact on re-visit intention of customers where this relationship is moderated by customers' environmental consciousness. Accordingly, findings provide valuable input to hotels in designing their service package to retain and attract more customers.

Keywords: Green attributes, Re-visit intention, Customer environmental consciousness

Introduction

Human concern towards environmentally sustainability has initiated subsequent to industrialization as a consequences of discharging harmful effluents to the nature by industrial players (Kirk 1995) and the output of industries, create problems for human health and sustainability (Mensah 2007). Consequently, interest by global community and consumers on these issues at present has led to a green concern among industries (Ramayah *et al.* 2010).

Subsequently, eco-friendly products and services have gained tremendous relevance in response to escalated sensitivity on environmental sustainability (Guptha *et al.* 2019).

Environmental sustainability is a fundamental fact for tourism competitiveness, especially on long-term perspective (Hu and Wall 2005). Tourism is an industry which has been considered as relatively green with the exception of its transportation and land development implications, as a result of this it has only recently become an area of concern (Font and Tribe 2001). Green concern of customers does not only influence manufacturing or construction industry, but also the service industry where the hotel sector occupies a prominent role (Awang *et al.* 2008). Among the various components of tourism industry, hotel sector is the most harmful sector which attribute 75 percent of its environment effect to disproportionate consumption of non-durable goods, water, and energy. At the same time, hotel sector is the potential victim of climate change (Hsiao *et al.* 2014; Kasimu *et al.* 2012).

Consequently, the hotel sector is being pressed by customers, non-profit organizations, and environmental regulators to become more environmentally friendly due to the significant amount of wastage created by daily activities (Lynes and Dregde 2006). Consequent to application of more environmental rules and regulations addition to increase in customer environmental concern, hotel visitors are increasingly looking for eco-friendly hotels

over traditional hotels (Died and Font 2010; Manakotla and Jauhari 2007). Therefore, most of the hotels are attempting to promote and engage environment friendly practices and programs (Karlsson and Dolnicar 2016).

In the similar vein, environmentally friendly activities of the tourists give significant effect on their intention to choose a green hotel. Those who are actively involved in environmentally friendly activities seem to seek deeper interactions with green hotels. (Noor and Kumar 2014). Further, most of the studies have investigated the impact of green attributes of hotels on behavioral intention (Eirini and Antonia 2014; Leaniz *et al.* 2017; Verma *et al.* 2019). However, customer motives, values, attitudes, emotions or sense of responsibility towards the environment influence on customer behavior. If hotels do not value or accept green practices, they will not bother to visit again. Importantly, Leaniz *et al.* (2017) have proposed to investigate, how internal factors like customer motives, values, attitudes, emotions or sense of responsibility towards environment impact the relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customers. Accordingly, based on the extant literature it is apparent that there is a positive impact of green attributes of hotels on customer re-visit intention. However, the role played by environmental consciousness which are internal factors like customer motives, value, attitudes, emotions or sense of responsibility has not been investigated so far. Therefore, the two main research questions of this paper are as follows

RQ1. What is the impact of green attributes of hotels on re-visit intention of customers?

RQ2. Does customer environmental consciousness influence the relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka?

Litreature Review

A. Green Attributes of Hotels

During the last few decades hotels have been making significant amount of investment to identify the concern of visitors towards environment issues (Tang 2015). At the same time, hotel sector is influenced by legitimization to undertake externally different measures, highlighting facing actions, seeking marketing and image benefits from being seen to respond to demand of society (Font *et al.* 2016). For instance, implementation of ISO 14001, eco management, and audit programs are recently adopted by green management approaches (Voracek 2016). Therefore, the management who are in hotel sector have established an aim of building hotels capable of the 3Rs (recycle, reuse, and reduce) with depletion of global resources and increasing concern for environmental issues and ecological conservation (Lee and Cheng 2018). Hotel sector has been applying environmental sustainability practices, starting to consider environmental issues of the service delivery process (Han *et al.* 2018).

Green hotels have applied a number of environmentally friendly programs in several operational areas including food and beverage services, conferences, meeting services, guest rooms, housekeeping, and laundry (Darnall and Sides 2008; Ogbeide 2012). Kim *et al.* (2012) have suggested the removal of unnecessary amenities, water levels adjusted for short loads of laundry, limited water use while cleaning, investigation of the feasibility of reusing water for washing, reduced use of insecticides, and using plants that are locally adapted are the best environmentally friendly practices. In other words, green hotels refer to lodging that offers various environmental friendly principles and programmers such as reducing waste, improving towel use frequency, installing low-flow shower heads, using energy-efficient lights, minimizing energy consumption, and adopting recycling

practices (Yadav *et al.* 2019). There are many new areas which have also emerged recently. Some of them are biodiversity conservation, environmental education, air pollution, eco-friendly design, product innovation and passive design (Jamaludin and Yusof 2013).

B. Re-Visit Intention of Customers

Customer re-visit intention centers around the ability of customers to do a certain activity again or visit certain destination again (Weng *et al.* 2012). It can be defined as the probability and likelihood of a consumer to give priority to green products over conventional products in their purchase decisions (Rashid 2009). Re-visit intention is considered as an extension of customer satisfaction. Re-visit intention can be defined as probability of repeat purchasing and it is viewed as the heart of loyalty (Um *et al.* 2006). Han *et al.* (2010) have defined re-visit intention using three dimensions, willingness of the customer of visiting a green hotel, attempt in positive word of mouth behavior, and likelihood to pay premium for the green products. Customers' ability and willingness to make sacrifices for the environmental sustainability lead to enhance customer intention to re-visit green hotel (Thogerse 2000).

C. Customer Environmental Consciousness

The concept of customer environmental consciousness is a psychological factor which is related to the ability of customers to involve in pro-environmental behaviors (Zelezky and Schultz 2000). Customer environmental consciousness refers to the degree to which consumers are aware about environmental issues, and at the same time they are willing to make an attempt to solve or indicate the likelihood to contribute individually to their solution (e.g. stay in an environmentally certified hotel) (Hu *et al.* 2010). Generally, customer environmental consciousness is customer emotional reactions such as dislikes, uncertainties, and

compassion towards the environmental issues. It is an evaluation of own behavior if individual or behavior of others, attitude toward own behavior of individual or behavior of others with consequences for the environmental (Schlegelmilch *et al.* 1996).

D. Impact of Green Attributes of Hotels on Re-Visit Intention of Customers

Today, many customer realize that purchasing behavior can affect the environmental sustainability directly (Lee *et al.* 2010). Thus, customers intention to visit hotels which compromise green practices can be considered as a behavior that is derived from the intention of customers to protect the nature (Stern 2000). These visitors always would like to prioritize green hotels over conventional hotels (Laroche *et al.* 2001). Han *et al.* (2018) have revealed that there is a positive relationship between green practices implemented by hotels and the behavior intention of customers.

Environmental concern and environmentally friendly attitudes of visitors positively affect consumers' re-visit intention towards green hotels (Manaktola and Jauhari 2007; Han *et al.* 2009). Customers with positive environmental attitudes tend to purchase green products (Mohamed *et al.* 2014). Visitors' attitudes towards the environmental sustainability is certainly influenced by the green programs adopted by hotels (Verma *et al.* 2019). Most of the time, consumers who are concerned about environment and sustainability issues, are always motivated to take steps to minimize those sustainability issues (Leonidou *et al.* 2010). Individuals who are more conscious towards environmental sustainability like to participate in eco-friendly customer behavior. Customers who have a high degree of environmental concern have more favorable attitude towards visiting green hotels (Verma *et al.* 2019). Visitors with positive environmental behavior favorably attempt to visit green hotels. Finally, eco-

friendly attitudes of hotel consumers positively affect their intention to visit green hotels and their likelihood to pay premium for green products (Verma *et al.* 2019).

According to the S-O-R framework, specific environmental signals (Stimuli) directly affect a person's cognitive and affective states (Organism). Based on the S-O-R framework, hotel visitors feel environmental cues which are located at green hotels and visitors consume green attributes which are included in the service package of hotel. Those environmental cues and green attributes can cause a positive attitudes towards green hotels. Subsequently, increased positive behavioral response towards green hotel leading to re-visit intention of customers

Accordingly, based on the empirical findings and S-O-R framework it can be argued that a set of cues in the green environment that create more attention about the green service package proposed by hotels is expected to create re-visit behavior from customers. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis.

H1: There is positive impact of green attributes of hotels on re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka.

E. Moderating Effect of Customer Environment Consciousness

Leaniz *et al.* (2017) have revealed how internal factors like customer motives, values, attitudes, emotions or sense of responsibility that are not already tested, impact proposed relationship. According to the appraisal theory in psychology emotions are extracted from our evaluations of events that cues specific reactions in different people. Essentially, our appraisal of a situation causes an emotional, or affective, response that is going to be based on that appraisal (Leaniz *et al.* 2017).

According to the appraisal theory and environmental consciousness definition it

can be argued that, elements of environmental consciousness are above internal factors like customer motives, value, attitudes, emotions or sense of responsibility.

Therefore, based on the empirical findings and appraisal theory, it can be argued that there is an impact of customer environmental consciousness on the relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customers. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis.

H2: Customer environmental consciousness moderate impact of green attributes of hotel on re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka.

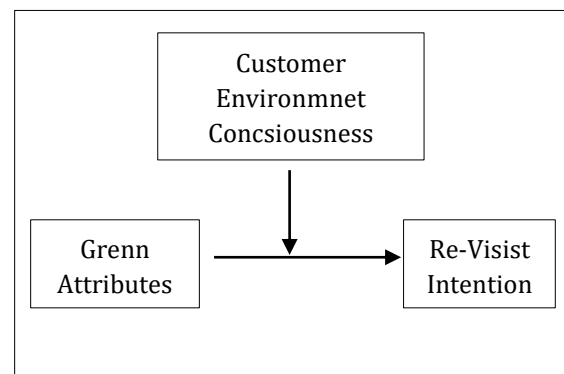


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Methodology

Research design contains objectives derive from research questions, source of collecting data, and ethical issues. It reflects the reason why the researcher is using particular research design and whether he has thought carefully about design (Saunders *et al.* 2011). According to the philosophical stance, this study follows positivism philosophy. As per the classification of the research purpose, this study belongs to the category of explanatory studies. This category establishes causal relationship between variables. Within this study the relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customers is investigated (Saunders *et al.* 2011). This study follows deductive research approach. It is a kind of a

dominant approach for natural sciences and it involves the development of theory which is reasoned to a rigorous test (Saunders *et al.* 2011). This study has carried out as a cross sectional study.

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of green attributes of hotels on the re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka. Therefore, customers who visit star class hotels in Sri Lanka are the members of study population. There is no sample framework because couldn't find exact list of visitors who visits green hotels in Sri Lanka. Therefore, convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique, was adapted. It involves selecting haphazardly cases which are the easiest to get from the sample (Saunders *et al.*, 2011). Strategy of inquiry of this study is survey method. Data collecting instrument is a structured questionnaire which is developed based on a rigorous literature review. The questionnaire distributed through online method to identified individuals who have already visited star class hotels in Sri Lanka. The items were evaluated on 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The unit of analysis of this study is individual consumer who visit green hotels.

Results

Collected data was fed into SPSS 21.0 version for cleaning process. Missing value analysis and outlier detection steps attempted to clean the data set (Hair *et al.* 2009). For this purpose, 271 questionnaires which were obtained from primary screening were used. Within this study, 10 outliers were identified and removed from data set. Remaining 261 usable responses were forwarded to the next step of data analysis process. Data were tested for four parametric assumptions, normally distribution, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. Satisfied four assumptions revealed that data are ready for further analysis (Field 2009).

Reliability can be defined as the degree to which study variables are consistent in what it is intended to measure (Hair *et al.* 2009). Cronbach's alpha is most widely used to measure reliability (Hair *et al.* 2009). The Cronbach's alpha of the measures were all comfortably above lower limits of acceptability that is greater than 0.6 (Sekaran and Bougie 2014). In this study, all measures were above 0.6, thus ensured that they are highly reliable. Next exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to investigate the underlying dimensions of the green attributes of hotels, customer re-visit intention and customer environmental consciousness and thereby ensured unidimensionality.

Two step approach of Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was adopted to develop the measurement and structural models using AMOS software. First, measurement model was examined using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to investigate adequacy. Consequently, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was developed to measure model fitness and to test hypotheses.

Once the measurement model is correctly established, structural equation model is estimated to provide a vital understanding towards empirical measures of the relationship between variables and constructs which have already represent by the measurement model (Hair *et al.*, 2009). Table 1 displays model fit indices

Table 1. Goodness of fit indicates of the structural equation model

Absolute	Incremental Parsimony						
CIMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI	PRATIO
1.42	0.82	0.72	0.04	0.92	0.91	0.92	0.89
	2	2		2	1	2	

Table 2. Results of the hypotheses testing on direct paths

Hypotheses	β	P	Result on Hypotheses
H1: There is positive impact of green attributes of hotels on re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka.	0.62	0.000	Supported

The results of structured equation modeling showed green attributes of hotels had a significant influence on customer re-visit intention and hence H1 was supported.

Table 3. Results of the hypotheses testing on moderation effect

Hypotheses	Result on Moderation	Result on Hypotheses
H2: Customer environmental consciousness moderate impact of green attributes of hotel on re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka.	Significant	Supported

The results of structured equation modeling showed customer environmental consciousness had a significant influence on the relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka and hence H2 was also supported.

Discussion and Conclusion

A. Discussion

Visitors' perception towards green practices play a main role in terms of choosing hotel. Further, it is confirmed that eco-friendly practices are powerful elements as other main hotel factors, such as quality of service package, infrastructure (Leaniz *et al.* 2017). Noor and Kumar (2014) have revealed that

there is a positive relationship between hotels' green practices and behavioral intention. Eco-friendly attributes of hotels positively impact perceived values and attitudes of visitors and that significantly affects visitor intention to visit green hotels again (Trang *et al.* 2019). Attitudes of consumers towards enhancing environmental sustainability impact hotels by including two types of consumer behaviors which are purchasing and revisit intention (Kwok *et al.* 2016). Accordingly, based on the empirical findings and findings in previous section it can be argued that green attributes of hotels create more attention about the green service package which proposed by hotels. It will lead to create re-visit behavior from customers. Therefore, these findings answer first research question.

This study extend the green hotel literature by opening a new path because this study revealed that customer environmental consciousness had significant influence on the relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka. In other words, customer motives, values, attitudes, emotions or sense of responsibility towards environmental issues, impact on the relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customers. Therefore, these findings answer second research question.

B. Managerial Implications

The proposed framework concedes with managerial implications. There is a positive relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customer within the literature. However, there is no attempt to investigate the impact of customer environmental consciousness. Therefore, the proposed framework contributes to fill the empirical gap which already exists. Findings of this study indicate that customer environmental consciousness had a significant influence on the

relationship between green attributes of hotels and re-visit intention of customers in Sri Lanka. Consequently, hotel managers should try to indicate their green attributes, green practices and green programs more through hotel web site or social media. It will create awareness about the sustainability practices of the hotel among environmental conscious customers. Top managers and owners of the Sri Lankan hotel industry can implement strategies to increase re-visit intention of the customers by identifying which green attributes are more powerful.

C. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has some limitations which suggest direction for future research. It focused only on hotels in the Sri Lankan context. There is a need for future research to empirically observe the effects of green attributes on re-visit intention of customers in other services to improve generalizability. In this study, only guests of five-star and four-star hotels in Sri Lanka are chosen as the target population. It is suggested that various segments of hotels in Sri Lanka should be included to get more accurate results in terms of investigating green hotel attributes in the Sri Lankan context. There is no attempt to investigate influence of green certificates as an independent variable on consumer decision making patterns and customer re-visit intention. Thereby, it is suggested to investigate the role of green certificates.

D. Conclusion

Modern customers are more concerned about environmental sustainability within their purchasing decisions. It has been empirically validated that there is a positive relationship between green attributes of hotels and customer re-visit intention. At the same time, there is an empirically gap which as to how customer environmental consciousness intensifies the above established relationship. This paper

proposed a conceptual framework to identify what role customer environmental consciousness plays as a moderator. Findings of this framework provide important contribution to hotel managers in designing the service package of their hotel.

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Author Biographies



Uditha Mirando completed his first degree from University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. This paper is based on the thesis of Uditha Mirando.



Ms. H. D. H. C. Dassanayake (BSc in Operations & Technology Management (USJ); MBA (Colombo); CIMA-Passed Finalist) is a Lecturer attached to the Department of Decision Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. She is currently reading for PhD in Operations and Supply Chain Management in University of South Australia, Australia.