

INTENTION TO VISIT GREEN HOTEL: A CASE STUDY OF THAI TRAVELERS

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ABSTRACT

With a rising trend of environment and health concern, products and services nowadays are developed to meet consumers' need. This trend also expand in Hospitality industry. An emerging of green hotels with varieties of environmental-friendly and wellness practices has been observed in Thailand, the researcher therefore aimed to study attitude of Thai travelers toward green hotels and to analyze the level of demand for green hotel among Thai travelers.

The result shows that environmental concern, health concern, social concern, perception of hotel's green practice and attitude toward the behavior are positively correlated with the intention to visit green hotels. The significant discovery of this research is perceptions of Thai travelers toward green practices in concerning with: 1) environment, 2) health, and 3) society, highly influence the travelers' intention to stay in green hotels.

These findings can be a guideline for hotel entrepreneurs to develop green activities to meet environmental need of Thai travelers. The hotels can start to use these findings to differentiate themselves from their competitors and to promote their business.

Keywords--Environment Concern Practice, Health Concern, Social Concern, Perception of a hotel's green practice, Attitude toward the behavior

INTRODUCTION

Consumers are more conscious of environmental impact resulting from their consumption, therefore they require businesses to provide transparent information to enable them making right decision about what to buy to create less negative impact on the world. (Baker, 2015) The shift towards more sustainable consumption patterns is required and it is important to increase people's environmental awareness and consciousness. People, as consumers, can reduce their impact on environment and make a positive difference through their purchasing decisions. The belief is that the consumer's proenvironmental concern is one of the determinants of their "green buying" behavior i.e., buying and consuming products that are environmentally beneficial. (Mainieri et al., 1997)

Nowadays, there is an intense competition in the hotel business. In addition to maintaining current customers and increasing new ones, hotels will have to continue making difference in order to make themselves outstanding and convince customers to stay. Regarding to consumer behavior changing above, environment preserving concept affects to ways of consumptions of goods and services. If the entrepreneurs cannot response the needs or following the trend of demanding, they probably not stay competitive in the market. In the case of the hotel industry, consumers choose to stay at a green hotel providing the same services and prices as a non-green hotel. (Diniz, 2012)

Asian Green hotel standard is agreed on physical resources management for beneficial of preserving and maintaining building, well staff training both providing services and promoting the participation of tourism officer and local people in community to conserve environment, job and local product which affects community development, sustainable and customer requirement responding. (Tourism Department, 2012)

The Green Leaf Foundation is a local organization providing knowledge about lodging business to entrepreneur to understand ways of environment conservation and promotion including development hotel business in term of service efficiency and energy saving conforming to tourist demands. (Green Leaf Foundation, 2012) The standard of green hotels in Thailand, as set up by the Green Leaf Foundation, is quite broad. Therefore, this study is aimed to investigate whether a variety of activities organized by hotels made the customers aware that hotels can coexist in the surroundings without creating any negative impact on each other and such awareness will affect the intention to stay of the customers at green hotels.

To date, few research studies are available discussing Thai travelers' perception, understanding, concerns, attitude and willingness to stay at green hotels. This is important to study so hotel business can understand the need of proenvironmental guests and can develop their operations by becoming energy efficient and green. The objectives of this research study were to examine; H1 (+) weather environmental awareness has a positive correlation to the recognition of activities in green hotels; H2 (+) weather awareness of the holistic health has a positive correlation to the recognition of activities in green hotels; H3 (+) weather an awareness of society has a positive correlation to the recognition of activities in green hotels; H4 (+) weather awareness of activities in the green hotels has a positive relationship toward intention to stay in a green hotel; and H5(+) weather environmental awareness has a positive correlation between attitudes on behavior; H6 (+) weather attitudes toward behaviors is correlated positively to the intention to stay in green hotel.

The researcher conducted an in-depth literature review and a quantitative research through questionnaire. A purposive sample group of Thai travelers who had stayed in green hotels were selected. For the purpose of this study, green hotels are defined as those that operate their business in respect to environment, wellbeing of people and surrounding communities. The data collection took place during August 2016 – June 2017. This study will be benefits to lodging business entrepreneur in order to use the data to apply and plan for their business including marketing strategy to create competitive advantages.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative research using questionnaire survey as a tool to collect data. Data collection took place over a period of 10 months from August 2016 – June 2017. The target group was Thai tourists in Bangkok who had stayed in green hotel. This research collected 400 questionnaires, including 52.8% male respondents and 47.3% female respondents. The questionnaire is divided into 3 parts; (Part 1) asking about green hotel's experience using check-list; (Part 2) asking about Thai tourists' opinion toward various green practices of hotels using the Likert Scale Rating from 1-5; and (Part 3) asking personal information of respondents using check-list, dichotomous, multiple and close-ended questions. The questionnaires were distributed to the target group in a person and distributed online through Google doc.

Reliability of research tools

To make the tool as valid and reliable, the researcher has performed the validity and reliability tests. The researcher studied previous research papers relevant to concepts and theories examined in this study for a guideline to create a questionnaire. The 30 questionnaires was tested (Reliability Type Error Test) with a sample group to determine whether respondents understand the meaning of the questions and whether questions were appropriated and suitable. After that, the reliability of the questionnaire which was determined by the Coefficiency Alpha of Cronbach was tested. This method is used to certain questions which their answer is not 0 and 1, but are sorted answer by SPSS for Windows.

Analysis and summary of data

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using the following statistical analysis methods: (1) descriptive statistics describes the general characteristics of the sample using frequency and percentage

distribution; and (2) inferential statistics for analyzing and testing hypotheses as multivariate analysis of multiple variables using multiple regression analysis.

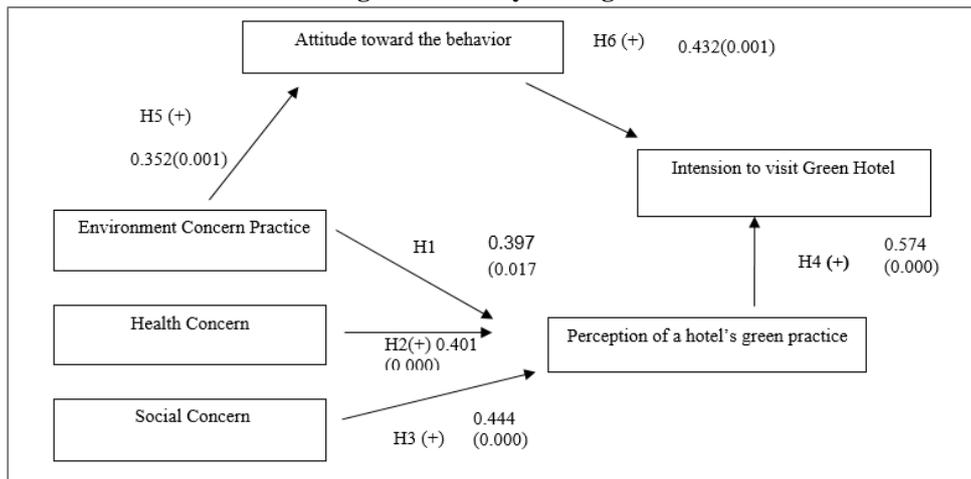
RESULTS

This research aimed to study attitude of Thai travelers toward green hotels and to analyze the level of need for green hotel of Thai travelers. It is also examined customers' perceptions toward a hotel's green practice and their attitudes toward the practice which might affect their intention to stay at green hotels. This research studied dependents and independent variables as found in below table. From Table 1.

Table 1
Variables of the research

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Awareness of Environment	Activities in the context of green hotel
Awareness of Holistic Health	
Awareness of Social	
Awareness of Environment	Attitude toward Behavior
Activities in the context of green hotel	Intention to stay at green hotel
Attitude toward Behavior	

Figure 1
Regression Analysis Diagram



From the above Figure, the first relevance factor, 3 independent variables which are environment concern practice, health concern, and social concern can impact perception of hotel's green practice. The social concern [H3(+)] has highest relevance, following by health concern [H2(+)] and environment concern [H1(+)].

The second relevance factor shows that environment concern practice [H5(+)] can affect the attitude of tourist toward the behavior [H6(+)] causing an intention to visit green hotel.

The third relevance factor shows that attitude toward the behavior [H6(+)] and perception of a hotel's green practice [H4(+)] has impacted to intention to visit green hotel.

Customers can recognize the activities in the context of green hotel practices if those activities concerned environment as supported by the study of Ham & Han, 2012 that environmental-friendly activities of hotel such as recycle practice or waste management activity can enable customers to recognize being in green context. Moreover, activities related to health can also make the same impact as found in the research of Hayes & Ross, 1978 that recognizing the holistic health of consumers will influence consumers to protect their own health. In regard to awareness of social concern, it also results in recognition of the activities in the context

of green hotel, which is supported by a research of Choi & Parsa, 2006. They stated that the action that benefited to society can enable consumers to recognize organization's activities.

Awareness of activities in the context of green hotel affects the willingness to stay at green hotel which is relevant to the past research of Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007 which stated that the activity can be captured with an environmentally friendliness of business hotel and it is important to continue increasing customers' confidence which would result in a direct intention to stay in green hotel.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In summary, five independent variables had relevance to intention to stay in a green hotel by following the hypothesis. The awareness of activities committed by green hotel concerning environment, holistic health, and society are the highly promoting factors for an intention to stay in the green hotel.

The sample was limited to Thai travelers living in Bangkok for the convenience of the research. Living cost in Bangkok is quite high comparing to other province, therefore people tend to have high power of buying.

This paper is an overview of the relationship between the intention of staying in green hotel and attitude toward behavior and to recognize the activities in green hotel only, not an in-depth analysis. Therefore, future research can further examine factors causing willingness to paying higher for staying in green hotel. It is because green hotel requires higher investment more than a non-green hotel. Moreover, it is also interesting to examine frequency and loyalty of customers toward green hotel and whether green hotel's practices impacts their way of living.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for invaluable help throughout this research.

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