

EXAMINING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN HOTELS IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract

International organizations, including the United Nations and European Union member countries, emphasize promoting green consumerism in different industries, including the hotel industry. The same patterns are now observed in Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian States. This article examines consumer behavior when accessing and using green hotel services based on the theory of planned behavior. Depending on the degree of knowledge of consumers, the characteristics of their behavior in relation to the activities of the green hotel are discussed.

This study provides for the study of the possibility of applying the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in the hotel business of the Republic of Kazakhstan and was developed by conducting a survey among customers of 3, 4, 5-star hotels in Almaty. The study involved 50 respondents from 3 hotels. The questionnaire was chosen as the inquiry tool. Questionnaire questions were designed to determine the interest of hotel guests in buying environmentally friendly hotel products.

The results of the study showed that in general, there was a positive attitude of consumers to the use of green products.

Keywords: *Theory of planned behaviour, consumer purchase intention, sustainable products.*

Introduction

Following the state program for the development of the tourism industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan during the period 2019-2025, it is planned to create a favorable tourist climate and popularize Kazakhstan's tourist potential in the domestic and international markets, improve the quality and competitiveness of tourist products. The tourism industry is a profitable business in the world, the development of the industry contributes to solving social problems in the country and serves as the basis for improving the quality of life. Environmentally friendly products will increase the company's market share and reduce environmental pollution indicators. According to UNWTO forecasts, ecotourism is expected to develop at a high rate in the coming years.

Recently, the peculiarities of the behavior of consumers of tourist products are developing in connection with environmental awareness, and therefore the demand for flexible tourist products is increasing. Consumers and parties in the tourism sector are interested in green business, as a strategic focus on green innovations creates competitive advantages for tourist products.

Since tourist accommodation is an important element of tourism, this study evaluated the behaviour of consumers toward the development of green hotels based using the theory of planned behavior.

Literature review

Sustainable development requires maintaining a balance between the environment, society and the economy (Romagosa, 2020). The post-pandemic tourism crisis requires the professionalism of planning policy improvement and management. Since society is increasingly concerned about environmental issues, Green management is a strategic tool that increases the tourism sector's competitiveness. On the one hand, the state seeks economic development at the national and local levels, on the other hand, environmental protection issues arise, the desire of society as a consumer of tourist products for Sustainable Development or an indifferent attitude requires an analysis of their behavioral characteristics.

With the growth of environmental awareness, the value of environmental issues has also increased. (Chen, 2010). Many studies of consumer behavior have focused on the environmental problems of hotels (de Grosbois 2012; Goldstein et al., 2008; Han and Kim, 2010; Lee et al., 2010). Many scientists have also studied the behavior of consumers in the field of Tourism. The green behavior of a tourist is determined by the presentation of green tourist products. Environmental issues have become increasingly important in the hotel business, as a large amount of Water Resources and detergents are spent on washing and ironing essential items such as towels, bed linen.

These trends increase hotel costs. Many hotels hang an ad urging you to reuse the towel and protect the environment (Krakovsky, 2008).

Mishulina S.I. (2017) identified the factors of the development of the green economy. She is believed that it is necessary to have an ecological culture and education that will transform environmentally-oriented behavior into a traditional system.

Environmentally safe consumer behavior is associated with the consumption of environmentally useful, harmless products. (Mostafa, 2007; Lee, 2009; Huang et al., 2014). As a result of the Pandemic, there was an excessive increase in plastic substances and medical waste (Klemeš et al., 2020). In the hotel industry it is important to create positive customer intentions, as a result of which they make plans to visit the hotel again or offer it to other people (Namkung and Jang, 2007; Han and Back, 2008; Choi et al., 2015).

The human behavior is a solution to environmental problems in the hotel business. An individual consumer norms and environmental consumer behavior are linked to the desire to protect the environment (Jang et al., 2014). It is possible to influence the consumer's desire to use the services of an environmentally responsible hotel, thereby allowing the buyer to change consumer behavior. (Yadav and Pathak, 2017). Many researchers have extensively studied the theory of planned behavior and tried to identify indicators of consumer behavior. For example, Chen and Tung (2014) and Choi et al. (2015) correlated people's personal norms with consumer self-assessment and the moral feelings of environmentally conscious consumers. To assess

the desire of consumers to use the service of a green hotel, it is established that a person who has no moral responsibility for Environmental Protection, based on subjective norms, does not purchase the service of a green hotel.

To determine consumer behavior, it is necessary to conduct a holistic study that includes individual norms and environmental awareness. As a result, the expansion of the theory of planned behavior opens up, expanding the provision of hotel services based on the individual norms of the target consumer. Also, the awareness of people regarding the development of green hotels makes it possible to develop environmental marketing strategies.

Materials and methods.

Human behavior is defined by three different characteristics: behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs. Behavioral beliefs create a positive or unfavorable attitude to a particular situation, normative beliefs lead to subjective norms, and control beliefs are subject to perception by controlling behavior. TPB was originally used as a tool for understanding how people's behavior changes (Ajzen, 1991). This becomes important for understanding pre-planned behavior. TPB replaced the theory of conscious action (TRA), based on a specific study of human behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977). Based on TRV (theory of planned behavior), human behavior can be considered from the point of view of three characteristics: relationships, subjective norms, and behavior control (Figure 1).

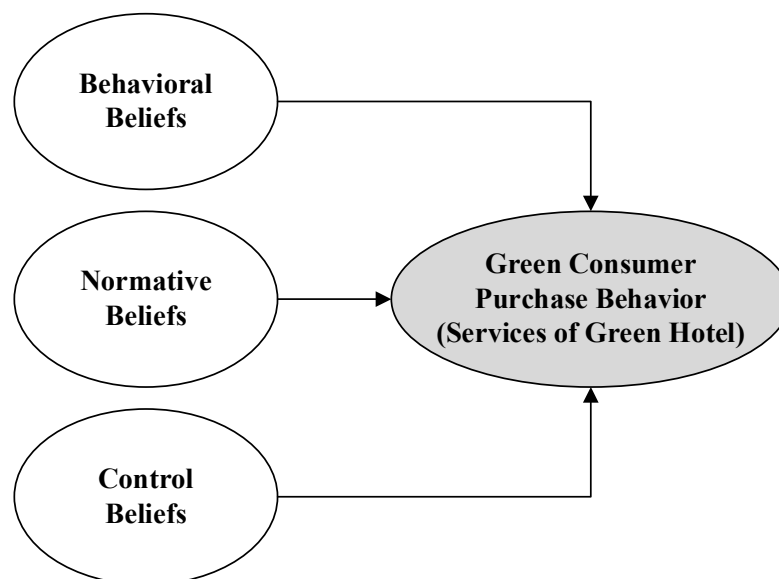


Figure 1 – Theoretical model of planned behavior theory

Relationships include all the beliefs that can affect a person’s behavioral intentions (Adams and De Kock, 2015), and consumer behavior can be shaped by developing positive or negative intentions. Subjective norms are social pressures that force individuals to engage in certain activities, such as behavior formed as a result of the influence of parents, friends, colleagues, and public opinion (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Consumers choose a rational option for making

a decision when purchasing a product or service and can change their behavior based on regulatory beliefs. Behavior observation shows a person’s perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a particular task, as well as the presence or absence of the resources, opportunities necessary to perform a particular action (Ajzen, 1991). The main requirements for green hotels can be seen in Figure 2.

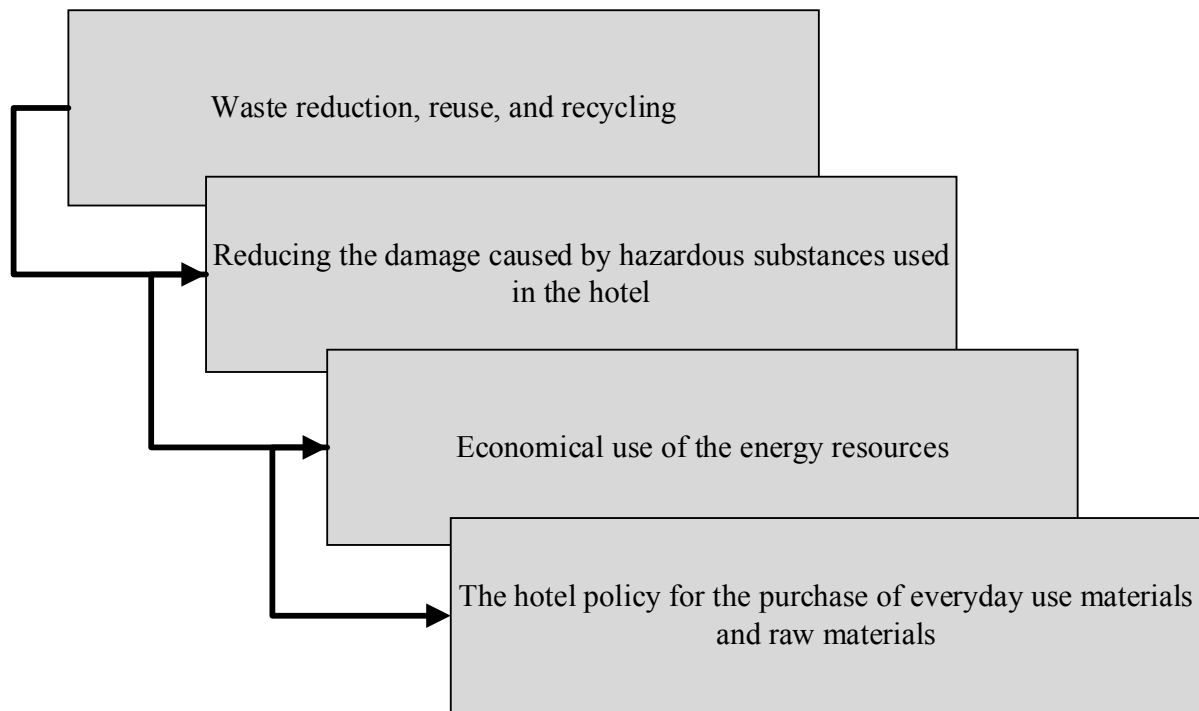


Figure 2 – Conditions for the formation of green hotels

This study, based on the above conditions, investigates the possibility of applying the theory of predicted behavior (TPB) in the hotel business of the Republic of Kazakhstan and is developed by conducting a survey among customers of 3, 4, 5-star hotels in Almaty. 50 respondents from 3 hotels participated in the study. The questionnaire was selected as a query tool. The questionnaire questions were designed to determine the interest of hotel guests in purchasing green hotel products. The first part of the questionnaire contains general information (age, education). The second section contains questions

that include consumer attitudes to buying green hotel products, subjective norms, and behavioral control.

Measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 is not important, 5 is important). The obtained data is systematized, entered into the table and analyzed. The average value, standard deviation, and ANOVA were used to analyze the data. The analysis was performed using EXCEL.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. 20% of respondents are aged 21-30 years, 50% are aged 31-40 years and 24% are aged 41-50 years, 6% are aged 51-60 years. The proportion of women who participated in the survey is 60%.

Table 1 – Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics		%
Age	21-30	20
	31-40	50
	41-50	24
	Over 50	6

Gender	Woman	60
	Male	40
Education level	Higher education	50
	Master's degree	20
	Other	30
Hotel category	3 stars	30
	4 stars	50
	5 stars	20

The attitude of hotel guests about green hotel products is shown in the table below.

Table 2. Attitude of consumers of hotel services about the use of green products in Almaty

Indicators	Average value
Consumer Attitude	
It is profitable for me to buy the services of a green hotel.	4,2
It is useful for me to buy the services of a green hotel	4,5
It gives me pleasure to buy the services of a green hotel	4,1
Subjective norms	
Most of the people who are important to me believe that I should use the services of a green hotel	3,7
Most of the people who are important to me expect me to buy the services of a green hotel	2,3
Most people whose opinion I value would approve of buying organic products.	3,7
Most of the people whose opinion I value believe that I should buy the services of a green hotel	3,6
Behavior control	
If I want, I can buy the services of a green hotel	4,8
It is important for me to buy the services of a green hotel	4,5
I am sure that I could use the services of the green hotel if it depended only on me.	4,76
I am sure I will be able to buy the services of a green hotel	4,9
For the most part, it depends on me to buy the services of a green hotel or not	4,3
I have personal control over the purchase of green hotel services	3,6
I have full control over the purchase of green hotel services	3,7

Further, the attitude of consumers of hotel services about environmentally friendly products, depending on the age and category of hotels, is classified. It is planned to determine how many indicators differ in accordance with the age characteristics of consumers

and the category of hotels. To do this, we use a single-factor variance analysis. To evaluate the indicators of green hotel preference according to the level of knowledge of hotel service consumers, we Group the results of the study into the table below.

Table 3 - Results of a single-factor variance analysis

Groups	Number	Amount	Average	Variance
Higher education	14	56,7	4,05	0,647308
Master's degree	14	56,5	4,035714	0,553242
Other	14	55,6	3,971429	0,382198
Dispersion analysis				

Scattering source	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F-critical
Intergroup	0,049048	2	0,024524	0,046483	0,954633238	3,238096135
Intra-group	20,57571	39	0,527582			
Total	20,62476	41				

The results of the calculation show that $F < F_{critic}$ ($0,046 < 3,238$), respectively, there are no differences in the attitude of consumers of different degrees of knowledge about the use of a green hotel product. At the same time, the p-value (the probability of validity of the zero hypothesis of equality of mean values) is higher than 0.05, that is, it is not excluded.

Conclusion

The results of the study showed that in general, there was a positive attitude of consumers about the use of green products. Environmental aspects of the hotel business include such services as reducing the consumption of bath water, soap, separate waste collection, recycling, consumption of disposable products, the use of environmentally friendly detergents, and the transfer of outdated furniture to charity. Since these norms do not contradict the individual behavioral

characteristics of all consumers, the vast majority of them expressed interest in the consumption of green products.

The Kazakhstan Tourism Association, the Kazakhstan Association of hotels and restaurants, EKOTEK (Spain), ECEAT (Netherlands) are implementing a project to introduce sustainable development of the tourism sector in Kazakhstan. Free training on sustainable accommodation management is being conducted, which means that the management of hotels is also interested in the development of green hotels. This research was limited to the study of consumer behavior due to time constraints. The subsequent study could be on the topic of sensitivity of green product prices and motivational aspects of the orientation of hotel management to green products, the possibilities of applying the theory of planned behavior in the management of green hotel development projects.

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