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A Study in Green Hotels in the Klang Area: The Mediation Effect of Satisfaction between Green Marketing Practices and Hotel Revisit Intention

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Abstract

As sustainability gains prominence in the hospitality industry, the concept of green marketing has emerged as a strategic tool for hotels to differentiate themselves and attract environmentally conscious guests. Although in recent years, green practices have received considerable interest in the tourism industry, there is a lack of studies that explore satisfaction as a mediator in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory. The Klang area has won two international awards for its green initiatives. Hence, this conceptual paper explores the mediation effect of satisfaction between green marketing practices and hotel revisit intention in green hotels located in the Klang area. Drawing upon the S-O-R theory, this study aims to enhance our knowledge of how green marketing practices influence customer behavior, and ultimately their intention to revisit a sustainable hotel. By examining the mediating role of satisfaction, this paper contributes to the existing literature on green marketing and sustainable hospitality, providing practical insights for hotel managers and marketers seeking to enhance customer satisfaction and encourage hotel revisit intention.

Keywords:

Green Marketing Practice, Satisfaction, Hotel Revisit Intention, Stimulus-Organism-Response, Green Hotel, Sustainable

1 Introduction

In recent years, the tourism industry has seen greater expansion and diversity, and it is currently one of the financial industries that is expanding at one of the quickest rates worldwide. It is beyond dispute that the tourist sector has undeniably increased its economic impact and has the potential to be exploited as a development tool. Various industries, including the hospitality sector, are actively pursuing sustainability as a top priority because it is a crucial issue for industry development (Shen et al., 2020). Alarming environmental problems and growing ecological concerns have gradually altered people's lifestyles all around the world, changing consumer purchasing behavior and raising society's awareness of this environmental issue (Sultana et al., 2022; Abdou et al., 2020).

Due to these environmental challenges, major companies are willing to accept environmental responsibilities (Debora Indriani et al., 2019). Additionally, Ouyang et al. (2020) suggested that the right environmental standards or laws can encourage green ideas that save costs, boost productivity, and increase competitive advantage. According to researchers, people and communities worldwide are becoming more aware of the importance of environmental sustainability, ecological harmony, and green conduct (Wang et al., 2018). As a result, demand for environmentally friendly goods and services is increasing, potentially making it one of the most desirable and important business strategies for most corporations (Sultana et al., 2022). The public has begun to develop a more favorable mindset toward purchasing products and services from businesses that are committed to implementing green practices in their operations (Ogiemwonyi, 2022). Previous research by Gupta et al., (2023) demonstrated that consumers are environmentally concerned and prepared to pay more to "go green."

Growing demand from environmentally conscious customers has forced businesses to evaluate the implications of their actions on the environment and take practical steps to mitigate such effects (Hameed et al., 2021). The hotel industry is not an exception to the trend of businesses being compelled by customers and environmental awareness to adopt green practices. Hotels today are becoming increasingly involved in green innovation and green marketing practices (Hameed et al., 2021). Furthermore, customers are increasingly opting for eco-friendly hotels as a result of their increased awareness of the environmental issues that hotel operations contribute to. In the hotel industry, green marketing practices can be seen as an opportunity and a smart marketing plan that can give hotels a competitive edge, especially if they have a beneficial effect on customer satisfaction (Asriah Immawati & Arissetyanto Nugroho, 2020). Given this trend, customers are putting pressure on the tourism and hospitality sectors to implement environmentally friendly company practices that are able to fulfill their needs and expectations (Moise et al., 2021). Customers are increasingly interested in staying at ecologically friendly hotels that have less impact on the environment (Lee et al., 2018).

The literature on green marketing in the hospitality industry demonstrates a growing interest in sustainability and its impact on consumer behavior, organizational performance, and environmental conservation (Ho et al., 2021; Shabbir et al., 2020; Yousaf et al., 2021). However, there are emerging research gaps in the existing body of knowledge. First, the literature review on green marketing in the hospitality industry has been dominantly focused on developed countries rather than developing countries (Hasan et al., 2019; Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020). Due to the different cultural and economic factors between developing and developed countries, customer attitudes and behavior may differ depending on countries (Peña-García et al., 2020; Singjai et al., 2018). Additionally, little is known about the green hotel context in a developing country such as Malaysia (Ahn & Kwon, 2019; Yusof & Jamaludin, 2018). Second, although there have been significant research studies on customer satisfaction, little has been explored regarding green marketing practices and their impact on the hotel industry (Hameed et al., 2021). This research intends to identify the driving forces that influence customers' hotel revisit intentions to green hotels. Finally, limited research has been done to examine the sequential relationship by applying theories such as Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) in the green hotel context. Hence, this study is proposed to identify the effects of green marketing practice on hotel revisit intention with the mediating impact of customer satisfaction. The results of this study will provide better insights on green tourism strategies, which may boost overall business strategies on green marketing practices, enhance customer knowledge on environmental awareness, and help boost customer retention.

2   Literature Review

Each research construct is explained in detail in the literature review section: Stimulus-Organism-Response, green marketing practice, hotel revisit intention, and the relationship between variables.

2.1 Theory Grounding of the Study: Stimulus-Organism-Response

This study's theoretical approach is based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model proposed by Mehrabian and Russell in 1974. According to the S-O-R framework, consumers' emotional states are thought to be affected by stimuli (as antecedents), and their responses can be seen in their behaviors, such as their conduct in the environment (Ho et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2018). According to the model, consumers' emotional states are influenced by stimuli, and the result can be seen in their behaviors, such as their commitment to the environment. The model aids in revealing the reasons for a person's actions in a certain circumstance (Hameed et al., 2021). Additionally, based on the S-O-R framework, people respond to their surroundings in three steps: after being exposed to an external stimulus (S), they develop internal states and verdicts (O), which subsequently leads to response (R). The relationship between the stimuli (S) that individuals experience and their responses (R) can be mediated by internal states and opinions (O) (Zhu et al., 2020). The model primarily addresses the human mental, emotional, sensory, and psychological

processes. This model states that consumer response, including particular attitudes, and psychological or behavioral responses, lead to the company's ultimate decision or result (Hameed et al., 2021).

The connection between the green marketing practice of green hotels and consumer intention to promote the green hotel to important persons in their lives is a new area of study in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, many academics and professionals perceive satisfaction as consumer emotional state variables and have incorporated it in the S-O-R model (Zhu et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2020; Dhir et al., 2021). This study outlines the processes for examining the hotel sector from multiple viewpoints in the context of green commercialism and green marketing strategies used by hotels. Using the S-O-R framework, this study also unveils the affiliation between green marketing practices and customer satisfaction.

2.2 Stimuli: Green Marketing Practices

The hotel industry is one of several tourism sectors whose operations seriously endanger the environment due to their extensive use of resources such as water, energy, and non-durable products, as well as the significant amounts of raw and solid waste they emit into the ecosystem (Sarigiannidis et al., 2021). The hotel business is not an exception to the trend of corporations being forced to adopt green practices by consumers and environmental awareness (Hameed et al., 2021). Abdou et al. (2020) define "green practices" as programs that encourage hoteliers to minimize their usage of water, energy, and solid waste in order to save money and safeguard the environment. According to Amoako et al. (2020), green marketing is defined as all activities designed to develop and encourage any exchanges meant to satisfy human needs or wants in a way that has the least possible negative effects on the environment. Green marketing entails, creating and promoting goods and services that satisfy customer demands for quality, effectiveness, affordable price, and convenience without having a negative impact on the environment (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020; Nguyen & Bui, 2021; Borah et al., 2021).

Green marketing has changed throughout the years. According to Onditi (2016), there are three stages in the development of green marketing. The first stage was known as "Ecological" green marketing, and all marketing operations during this time were focused on addressing environmental issues and offering solutions. The second phase, known as "Environmental" green marketing, was centred on clean technology and featured the creation of novel new goods that addressed challenges of waste and pollution. "Sustainable" green marketing was the third phase. In the latter half of the 1990s and early 2000s, it gained popularity. By adopting green marketing practices, hotels not only contribute to environmental preservation but also appeal to a growing segment of environmentally conscious travellers who prefer eco-friendly accommodations (Shanti & Joshi, 2021).

2.3   Organism: Satisfaction

Despite great interest in the topic among practitioners and experts, satisfaction continues to be one of the many marketing notions that defy a single definition. It is crucial to a company's existence and expansion (Kim et al., 2020). Customers now have more options to consider due to the growth of service delivery options, advancements in technology, and commoditization of approaches. This suggests that customers will favor businesses that prioritize their satisfaction above all else. The definition of satisfaction is "the consumer's response to the assessment of the apparent disparity between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product as viewed after consumption" (Ugwuanyi et al., 2021). Similarly, Moise and Gil-Saura (2020), emphasize that when a consumer makes a purchase, satisfaction is the cognitive gap between what was expected and what was delivered. Devi and Yasa (2021) believe that consumer satisfaction represents a comparison between the sacrifice made (cost) and the benefits believed to have been received during the purchasing and consumption process. Cakici et al., (2019) describe consumer satisfaction as a measurement of an equivalent assessment between the pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase outputs. Consumers will continue their decision-making process after the consuming phase. Consumers will evaluate their consumption. This is referred to as a post-purchase or post-consumption alternative appraisal. The outcome of the post-consumption evaluation procedure is satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the consumption of a finished product or brand (Devi & Yasa, 2021).

2.4   Response: Hotel Revisit Intention

The recurring purchase of a specific good or service from the same company organization is known as a revisit intention (Chaturvedi et al., 2022). It is also linked with the visitor's assessment of whether they intend to return to the same location or not. Due to the fact that attracting new clients costs seven times more than keeping existing ones satisfied (Arslan, 2020), and because improving client retention would result in better revenues, hoteliers typically are committed to improving guest revisit intention (Wang et al., 2021). Retaining clients or enticing them to return is increasingly crucial, especially in today's fiercely competitive economy. It is more efficient in terms of both cost and time to retain existing customers or increase the likelihood that they will return than to attract new customers (Mohd Don Basari & Shamsudin, 2020). As a result, customer revisits are crucial for businesses' earnings (Scarpi et al., 2019). Various scholars concur that repeat visitors typically spend more time at a location, engage in more intensive consumer behavior, are satisfied, and promote the location more enthusiastically than first timers while requiring far less marketing spending (Zhang et al., 2018). Relationship between green marketing practice with hotel revisit intention

To lessen the detrimental effects of hotel activities on the social and natural environment, the hotel industry has been heavily encouraged to adopt environmentally friendly practices (Hameed et al., 2021). The hospitality industry has been taking environmental measures over the past few decades that can be viewed as green marketing practices. These measures have not only helped customers develop a positive

impression of hotels, but they have also significantly boosted guest retention, which encourages guest intention to revisit and promotes a green environmental drive (Moise et al., 2020). While maintaining customers is critical for many businesses, the hotel industry, whose economic cycle is maturing, is particularly dependent on it (Han & Hyun, 2017). Due to this, numerous studies have been conducted to find ways to encourage hotel customers to return, and numerous predictors of revisit have been found. Implementing and promoting green marketing practices benefits the hospitality industry in a variety of ways, including a positive impact on corporate image, which in turn influences consumers' intentions to revisit hotels, increased hotel profits, improved operational efficiency, and competitive advantage and differentiation (Topcuoglu et al., 2021; Kuo et al., 2021; Jegatheesan et al., 2021). From the above discussion, it is proposed that:

H1: There is a significant relationship between green marketing practices and hotel revisit intentions.

2.5 Relationship between green marketing practice and satisfaction

Customers are more satisfied with green hotels when they receive successful service compared to non-green hotels, and this is especially true when green hotels implement green initiatives for the benefit of the community rather than for their own financial gain (Yu et al., 2017). According to Soni et al. (2022), guests view green practices as "fundamental" rather than "extra." When guests view green practices favorably, they only slightly boost customer satisfaction; nevertheless, when guests view them negatively, they significantly decrease customer satisfaction (Yu et al., 2017). Green practices are a crucial component of hotel service. If guests believe that they are lacking, they will be dissatisfied (Arici et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2017). Various researchers concur that the increased environmental consciousness has led to a high level of customer involvement in environmental concerns. Studies have shown a significant influence of green marketing practices on consumer satisfaction (Gelderman et al., 2021). Additionally, businesses that promote their "green product" through advertising, or production processes have satisfied customers (Amoako et al., 2020). Based on the aforementioned, the proposition is as follows:

H2: There is a significant relationship between green marketing practice and satisfaction.

2.6 Relationship between satisfaction and hotel revisit intention

Customers' tendency to return to a hotel depends on the perspective they have developed as a result of their prior encounters. Given that satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluation, it is anticipated that good revisit intentions will emerge if this evaluation process is successful (Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020). Satisfaction has been one of the main concepts in not only academic fields, but also in practice because it has been found to be a significant determinant of revisit intention. Since satisfaction has been demonstrated to be a strong predictor of intention to revisit, it has become one of the most important terms in both academic and practical fields (Abbasi et al., 2021).

Numerous studies support the satisfaction-repurchase intention path (Kim, Lee, et al., 2020; Ugwuanyi et al., 2021). Customer satisfaction is essential for a hotel's long-term survival since it may have an impact on revenue and hotel revisit intention (An et al., 2019). For instance, prior research has shown that consumer purchase intentions and repeat buying behavior are both influenced by customer satisfaction (Kumar & Ayodeji, 2020). Nguyen Viet et al., (2020) assert that the desire to return is seen as an extension of satisfaction. When visitors experience a tourist destination positively, they are more likely to be satisfied with it and have a greater desire to return. Additionally, a great experience changes the customer's degree of satisfaction, which has an impact on their intention to return (Chaturvedi et al., 2022). Customer repurchase intention can be seen as a broad result of customer satisfaction (Sari, 2020). According to the studies mentioned above, satisfaction and the intention to revisit are positively and significantly correlated. Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: Satisfied customers are more inclined to revisit a hotel.

2.7 Mediating effect of satisfaction towards green marketing practices on hotel revisit intention

According to Alkitbi et al. (2020), satisfaction is the key point of customer retention. When a given product or service meets the needs, wants, and expectations of customers, they are more likely to repeat their purchase intention. The determination of customer satisfaction and the likelihood that they would stay at the same hotel will be influenced by the customer's perception of value (Liu et al., 2021). One of the ways that hotels may encourage hotel revisit intention is by adopting green marketing practices. López-Gamero et al. (2022) imply that a hotel can boost its competitiveness by differentiating itself in the market by promoting its green initiatives. Research by Moise et al. (2018) demonstrated a positive influence of green marketing practices on satisfaction and the results highlighted the importance of adopting green practices in hotels. Research conducted in Sri Lanka that examined green marketing practices yielded empirical findings which demonstrated a favorable relationship between consumer satisfaction and intention to revisit (Lee et al., 2018). Thus, this study proposes that:

H4: Satisfaction plays an important role in hotel revisit intention and becomes one of the outcomes of green marketing practices.

Based on literature findings, Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework of the relationship between green marketing practice and hotel revisit intention, with satisfaction as a mediator.

Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework

3   Methodology

The research methodology section explains the research design, population and sample, sample size and sampling technique, data collection, questionnaire development, and data analysis procedure.

3.1 Population and Sample

The sample population of this study will consist of guests that stayed at certified green hotels in the Klang area, Selangor, Malaysia. The hotels which are being considered are Wyndham Acmar Klang, Premier Hotel, and Crystal Crown Hotel Harbour View, Port Klang. This study will select this population for several reasons: (1) Klang is looking forward for a greener environment as they have won two international awards for its green initiatives. (2) The number of green hotels is on the rise as businesses opt to maintain sustainability.

3.2   Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size of this study targeted 300 respondents comprising both males and females, who are either local or foreign tourists and are between the ages of 20 and 30. In order to validate the relationship of variables, this research will use questionnaires that consist of two sections to gather the data from respondents. The calculated number of respondents will be 278 based on the total number of rooms divided by the average occupancy rates of hotels as indicated by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) because the size of the targeted population might be deemed exceptionally large, with N > 1 million. The sampling technique that will be adopted in this study is the homogenous purposive sampling technique. Homogenous sampling is a purposive sampling techniques which aims to achieve a homogenous sample in which the units (persons, cases, etc.) have the same characteristics or traits (Douglas, 2022).

3.3 Data Collection Method

The data collection method of this study will focus on individuals who have visited a certified green hotel in Klang. Individuals must have internet access to participate, as data collection will be done through Google Form, a web-based questionnaire tool with a structured questionnaire design.

3.4 Questionnaire Development

The survey instrument will incorporate an item that has been adopted and adapted from previous researchers. By employing these techniques of adoption and adaptation, the questionnaire's reliability and validity can be ensured while saving time and effort (Dash & Paul, 2021). The questionnaire of this study will be divided into two parts which are demographic part and measurement items for the variable in the conceptual model framework, which will be measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The demographic part will consist of gender, age scale, level of education, and annual income levels. The most common measurement method, the Likert scale, provides scaling options to evaluate a survey item. The questions must be rated on a five-level Likert scale by the respondents. By assigning a score from 1 to 5 on the five-level Likert scale, which includes strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree determines the degree of agreement or relatability. The questionnaire requires the respondents to evaluate the green marketing practices, which comprises nine items adapted from Moise et al., (2018) and García-Salirrosas and Rondon-Eusebio (2022). The next section contains questions related to customer satisfaction and hotel revisit intention. Satisfaction as mediating variable will be measured using a total of five items adapted from Merli et al. (2019) and Chan (2018). Hotel revisit intention as a response with five items will be adapted from Moise et al. (2018) and Chan (2018).

3.5 Data Analysis

PLS-SEM and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0 will be used to analyze the data in this study. The descriptive analysis will be used to examine the respondents' demographic information using SPSS. The use of PLS-SEM is intentional because it estimates multiple and related dependencies in a single analysis and allows for a check of construct, convergent, and discriminant validity. Additionally, it is also used for analyzing complex relationships between variables in a structural equation model. It is particularly useful when dealing with data that might not adhere to the assumptions of conventional linear modeling approaches, such as small sample sizes, non-normal distributions, or strongly correlated variables.

4   Conclusion

This paper presents a research proposal with regard to the mediation effect of satisfaction between green marketing practices and hotel revisit intention using S-O-R theory. As customer satisfaction is driven by green marketing practices, it will help to further explain the results of this study. This study highlights the relationship of the variables; specifically, it provides a better knowledge of what the relationship is and how green marketing practices affect hotel revisit intention through satisfaction. Additionally, the findings of this study will contribute to a further understanding of the mediation effect of customer satisfaction, hotel revisit intention, and the exploration of research potential.

5   About the author

Shahir Fadzil is a postgraduate student of Hotel Management, in the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA. He graduated from UiTM Dungun with a Bachelor of Science (Hons.) in Hotel Management. He is currently enrolled in UiTM Puncak Alam for his Master's Degree in Hotel Management. His research interests include sustainability in the hotel industry and green marketing practices.

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