Hotel Guests’ Perceptions of Green Technology Applications, and Practices in the Hotel Industry

Faranak Memarzadeh, San Jose State University, San Jose, USA
Sulekha Anand, San Jose State University, San Jose, USA

ABSTRACT

Although sustainability and technology are two major concerns in the lodging industry, sustainability applications and practices are quite new and in need of more research. This study was conducted to examine and understand hotel guests’ perceptions of green technology applications and practices. Data were collected in 2018 from 210 respondents via an online survey. The Technology Acceptance Model was applied to examine how ease of use and usefulness of green technology applications and practices can influence guests’ booking decisions. The results showed significant positive correlations between behavioral belief and usefulness and between usefulness and intention to use green technology applications and practices. However, behavioral belief and ease of use were not correlated, nor were ease of use and intention to adopt green technology. These results demonstrate that guests do believe in the important role of green technology in sustainability and they intend to book hotels that adopt this technology.

KEYWORDS
Ease Of Use, Green Technology, Hotel Guests, Perception, Usefulness

INTRODUCTION

Promoting specific forms of tourism, influencing tourists’ behavior, and supporting tourist-related products (such as hotels) are some of the principal objectives of sustainable tourism that can be achieved with sustainable technology practices (Ali and Frew, 2014). Recent research has emphasized the importance of two significant subjects in the hospitality industry, technology and sustainability. For example, Law, Buhalis and Cobanoglu (2014) discuss how the rapid development of technology provides extraordinary opportunities for hospitality businesses and Neuhofer, Buhalis, and Ladkin (2015) explain how progress in innovative technology creates opportunities for the service industry to offer optimal service. In the highly competitive service industry, technology can enhance the quality of offered services and provide more personalized experiences for service users (Neuhofer et al., 2015).

Recent studies indicate a growing awareness of the importance of sustainability in the service industry. Jones, Hillier, and Comfort (2016) highlight increasing interest in supporting sustainability by both hotel owners and hotel guests. Green technology, which is the combination of technology and sustainability, is a new concept in the hotel industry that could satisfy both guests’ and services’ providers’ desires for sustainability. The environmental impact of a product is a primary focus of green technology (Billatos, 1997). According to Dedrick (2010), the main reason for providers to adopt green technology is to decrease operating costs while minimizing the environmental impacts.
of running a business. From the users’ standpoint, on the other hand, studies indicate that hotel customers have become more conscious about their environmental responsibilities when it comes to making decisions about purchasing certain products or services (Ramayah, Lee, & Mohamad, 2010). However, no study has examined hotel guests’ perceptions of green technology and their ratings of the efficiency and utility of these applications or practices. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to understand hotel guests’ perceptions about green technology in the hotel industry using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a framework. According to this model, consumers’ choice of whether to use a particular technology depends on its usefulness, defined as the efficiency of a certain practice, and its ease of use, defined as the user-friendliness of the technology (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Importance of Sustainability in Economic Development

Sustainability is defined as humans’ approach towards nature, and their feeling of obligation towards each other and towards future generations (Baumgärtner and Quaas, 2010). In other words, sustainability can be defined as the relationship between humans and nature. Sustainability is a global concern that requires serious consideration especially from a business point of view (Legrand, Chen, & Sloan, 2013). According to Elkington (1998), sustainability can be assessed at three different levels, economic, environmental, and social. In order to promote sustainability at the economic level, long-term regulations need to be imposed so that businesses protect the environment (Costanza, 1992). At the social and environmental levels, on the other hand, the production of a variety of environmentally friendly products enhances consumers’ awareness about their impact on the environment (Theotokis & Manganari, 2015).

Green hotel practices

Green hotel practices have been discussed from the points of view of both service providers (i.e., hoteliers) and consumers (i.e., hotel guests). The hotel industry has adopted various policies to support sustainability (Berezan, Millar, & Raab, 2014). For instance, sustainability is being implemented by hotel operators at all different levels, from a fundamental level such as recycling waste to an advanced level such as obtaining sustainability certifications (Berezan et al., 2014). Berezan et al. (2014) found that recycling is rated by guests as the most important green practice in hotels, but the idea of not having the bed sheets changed on a daily basis is less favored by guests.

According to Zengeni, Zengeni, & Muzambi (2013), there are several reasons for hotels to “go green;” one reason is government rules to adopt sustainability and another motive is the financial benefits of green practices. Green hotel practices can reduce costs, which eventually leads to greater financial benefits (Zengeni et al., 2013). For instance, strategies such as reducing energy and water use, replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy systems, and controlling food waste could increase hotel revenue. Mihalić, Žabkar, & Cvelbar (2012) report that hoteliers and business owners confirm the profitability and cost-effectiveness of sustainability practices, so adopting sustainable practices can be considered a long-term financial investment (Berezan et al., 2014). Developing a positive public image can be another incentive for hotels to implement sustainable practices (Tzschentke, Kirk, & Lynch, 2004).

Green Technology Applications in the Hotel Industry

Technology not only has a direct influence on promoting greener businesses (Bartlett & Trifilova, 2010), but it also provides indirect benefits such as improving employee morale (Olson, 2008) and creating a positive corporate image (del Rio Gonzalez, 2005). Neuhofer et al. (2015) argue that business owners have two principal motives for considering green technology in particular. First,
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Siti Radhiah Omar, Shahrin Ab Karim, Siti Suriawati Isa and Siti Nazirah Omar
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