

The Impact of Attitude, Subjective Norm and Environmental Concern on Tourists' Willingness to Pay Premium in Sustainable Hotels

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Abstract

This study investigated the factors that influence tourists' willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotels. The researchers conducted a survey with 432 participants and analyzed the data using regression analysis. The study tested hypotheses between attitudes, subjective norm and environmental concerns were positively associated with willingness to pay premium. The previously mentioned results highlight the importance of targeted marketing approaches and the potential for sustainable hotels to draw in certain target audiences and those who have strong environmental beliefs. The study's conclusions demonstrate how attitudes, arbitrary conventions, and environmental concerns all have a significant impact on consumers' willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotel accommodations. These findings underscore the potential for targeted marketing strategies to appeal to eco-conscious consumers and suggest that environmental values are increasingly influencing purchasing decisions in the hospitality sector. This study also actively informs the development of targeted strategies for hoteliers to attract eco-conscious consumers, by highlighting the significance of demographic and psychosocial factors, the research helps create more effective marketing campaigns and business models that align with environmental values. It may drive increased patronage and foster loyalty among sustainability-minded guests. This is the groundwork for further research and practical applications that advance the industry's move towards greater environmental responsibility.

Keywords: Willingness to pay premium, Attitude, Subjective norm, Environmental concern and Sustainable hotels



Introduction

Many businesses are seeing changes in their purchasing habits as a result of consumers' growing knowledge of environmental issues, especially those pertaining to tourism. Due to this tendency, sustainable hotels a crucial part of environmentally friendly travel are in greater demand (Kalafatis et al., 1999; Laroche et al., 2001). These days, there is a huge surge in eco-awareness, which is completely changing people's shopping habits. Businesses are under pressure to act more morally and are rushing to perform that (Kumar et al., 2022). Businesses are beginning to realize that adopting an environmentally friendly marketing strategy is essential to their survival and ability to attract and retain clients. (Awan, 2011; Amoako et al., 2020). According to Jian et al. (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered the public's perception of environmentally friendly hotels. It's time to shift the public's perception of sustainability, as more people are expected to travel to places including Thailand. Environmental considerations now play a major role in people's purchasing and behaviour decisions since the outbreak. This study examines the relationships between people's attitudes towards sustainable hotels, their willingness to pay premium for a sustainable hotel in Thailand, and the social pressure to be environmentally conscious (subjective norm). It does this by applying the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Research backgrounds

In the travel industry, particularly the sustainable hotel sector, there has been a significant shift in consumer behavior towards sustainable alternatives in recent years, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Dwivedi et al., 2022). Research into sustainable hotels and consumer preferences is a productive field of academic study (Acampora et al., 2022; TM et al., 2021). However, the pandemic has caused unprecedented changes in consumer behavior (Jian et al., 2020). Liew (2020) highlighted the rapid and severe decline in tourism during the peak of the pandemic. The services industry is affected by this, especially on eco-friendly lodgings. Jian et al. (2020) observed a significant shift in customers' perspectives. Since the epidemic, worries about the environment, hygiene, and health have increased. As a result, there is greater interest from customers in sustainable hotels. Sharma and Chen (2023) noted that sustainable hotels are increasingly viewed as essential to protecting the environment and reducing health risks. Their research aims to explore how these eco-hotels are developed, marketed and accepted by guests. This goes beyond previous research that has focused primarily on environmental knowledge and attitudes to predict visit intentions. Additionally, climate change with rising sea levels, melting ice caps, and disrupted ecosystems is pushing the tourism industry and travelers to support stronger environmental protections. Sustainable hotels are actively leading the way in reducing energy, water, and waste (Lo et al., 2013). There is even research on consumer behavior and sustainable hotels but there are still important gaps in understanding these dynamics in the context of global warming. Especially



with rising environmental concerns. This study is therefore rooted in this intersection. Growing environmental concerns indicate that findings from previous studies, even in similar contexts of other countries, may no longer be directly applicable (Dwivedi et al., 2022).

This study in the context of sustainable hotels is essential as it reveals how attitudes, societal influences, and environmental concerns drive tourists' willingness to pay premium. Understanding these dynamics helps hotels develop targeted marketing strategies, improve eco-friendly practices, and align their offerings with the values of eco-conscious consumers, ultimately fostering customer loyalty and promoting environmental sustainability in the hospitality industry. Overall, this study underscores the importance of integrating environmental values into the hospitality industry, promoting greater sustainability and consumer satisfaction.

Objective of the study

1. To analyze the relationships between tourists' attitudes, subjective norms, and environmental concerns and their willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotel services.
2. Enhance hoteliers' understanding of consumer behavior related to sustainable practices.

Benefits of the study

1. The study provides insights into effective marketing approaches, helping sustainable hotels attract and engage eco-conscious consumers. By understanding what influences tourists' willingness to pay premium, hoteliers can develop

business models that align with environmental values and appeal to sustainability-minded guests.

2. Highlighting the importance of environmental concerns, the study helps hotels foster loyalty among guests who prioritize sustainability. This focus on eco-friendly practices encourages repeat business and long-term relationships with environmentally conscious customers.
3. The study establishes a foundation for future research on sustainable tourism, promoting continued exploration and innovation in environmentally responsible hospitality practices. This groundwork encourages further studies that advance sustainable practices in the hospitality sector.

Literature review and hypothesis formulation

Attitude

Attitude is the extent to which a person holds a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question. (Ajzen, 1991). The concept of attitudes, pivotal in understanding consumer behavior, traces its origins to social psychology, emphasizing the role of attitudes in decision-making processes (Ajzen, 1991; Schiffman et al., 2013). These attitudes, shaped by theories of persuasion and social influence, are crucial in models like the expectancy-value model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977), theory of reasoned action (Fishbein, 1979), theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985), and value-attitude-behavior model (Homer & Kahle, 1988). Studies highlight the impact of consumer attitudes on environmental behaviors and purchasing



decisions, linking positive attitudes towards eco-friendly products with higher green purchase intentions (Rahman & Reynolds, 2019; Verma et al., 2019; Romeo-Arroyo et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2020; Costa et al., 2021; Sukhu et al., 2019; Liao et al., 2020; Riskos et al., 2021). For example, a study highlighted the effect of attitudes on the purchase of eco-friendly packaged products (Prakash & Pathak, 2017), underscoring the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards sustainable behaviors and products. Attitude is key predictor of behavior, and this extends to consumer behavior in the context of sustainability (Ajzen, 1991). A positive attitude towards sustainability can significantly influence a consumer's willingness to engage in eco-friendly practices, such as choosing sustainable hotels. Studies have shown that tourists with favorable attitudes towards sustainability are more likely to pay a premium for accommodations that demonstrate environmental responsibility (Han et al., 2010).

Subjective norm

Subjective norm is referred to as the perceived social pressure to engage in or abstain from a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm, a key concept from the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), reflects the perceived social pressure to perform or avoid certain behaviors, illustrating the influence of social expectations on individual actions. Initially part of the theory of reasoned action, it has been expanded in the theory of planned behavior (Madden et al., 1992) and applied in diverse fields such as health, technology adoption, and green consumer behavior. It highlights how individuals perceive the need to conform

to the behaviors approved by their social circles, including family, friends, and broader society, especially in contexts of uncertainty like eco-friendly purchases (De Vries et al., 1988; Rhodes & Courneya, 2003; Yadav et al., 2019; Van Tonder et al., 2023; Roh et al., 2022).

Recent studies by Roh et al. (2022) and Liu et al. (2021) have further explored the impact of subjective norms on consumer behaviors, particularly in the realm of ethical and green purchasing. Roh et al. demonstrated that subjective norms positively influence purchase intentions, linking consumer trust in a brand to shared societal backgrounds and purchasing behaviors. Liu et al. focused on the effect of subjective norms on Chinese consumers' intentions to buy ethical fashion, finding that brand trust and ethical standards significantly affect consumer support and peer influence. These findings emphasize the role of social pressures, trust, and ethical considerations in shaping consumer decisions towards sustainable and ethical purchases.

Environmental concern

Environmental concern, reflecting an individual's awareness and anxiety towards environmental issues, is a critical factor in promoting pro-environmental behavior (Fransson & Gärling, 1999; Cruz & Manata, 2020). Originating from the environmental movement of the early 1970s, this concern has escalated with increasing awareness of climate change and its consequences (Dunlap & Mertig, 1991; Helm et al., 2018). It significantly influences actions such as recycling, energy conservation, and the purchase of eco-friendly products (Wang, 2022).



Research, including studies by Mostafa (2007) and Wang et al. (2019), demonstrates a direct correlation between environmental concern and green consumer behaviors in various cultural contexts.

The marketing industry also leverages environmental concern, targeting consumers inclined towards sustainability (Yue et al., 2020; Chou et al., 2020). Such consumers are more receptive to advertisements emphasizing a product's environmental benefits (Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015). However, the pathway from concern to behavior is complex, moderated by factors like perceived effectiveness, environmental knowledge, and social norms (Rusyani et al., 2021). Recognizing these influences is essential for crafting strategies to enhance environmental concern's effect on sustainable behaviors.

Willingness to pay premium

Willingness to pay premium reflects the maximum price consumers are willing to spend on products or services, particularly for environmentally friendly goods (Gomes et al., 2023; Katt & Meixner, 2020). This concept is crucial in the hospitality sector, where rising environmental concerns increase demand for sustainable options (Nelson et al., 2021). It indicates consumer commitment to sustainability, often linked to internalized moral norms (Berger, 2019; Nicolau et al., 2020). Research shows a strong correlation between personal environmental norms and a higher willingness to pay for green products (Chaudhary, 2018; Han, 2015; Katt & Meixner, 2020). Factors such as income, perceived value, and personal

environmental beliefs significantly influence this readiness (Biswas & Roy, 2016). Businesses can use this insight to promote environmentally friendly behaviors and align their branding with consumer values (Kang et al., 2012; Higgins, 2020). Understanding willingness to pay provides a nuanced view of the financial sacrifices consumers are willing to make for sustainability, offering a roadmap for balancing profitability with sustainable practices (Konuk, 2019). Post-COVID-19, the level of environmental concern among hotel guests influences their willingness to pay premium for eco-friendly hotels (Dwivedi et al., 2022). This trend highlights the growing environmental consciousness and trust in brands promoting environmental responsibility, further enhancing green trust and encouraging premium payments for sustainable services (Tang & Lam, 2017).

Sustainable hotel

Sustainable hospitality has become a mainstream concept, evolving beyond a niche trend (Tzschenk et al., 2004; Jinzhao et al., 2009; Legrand et al., 2022). The roots of hotel sustainability trace back to the 1960s, highlighting increased focus on the environmental and social impacts stemming from hotel operations and development (Shanti, 2016). Over the past 50 years, numerous definitions have emerged to describe sustainable hotels. For instance, a sustainable hotel is characterized by its integration of various socio-economic and environmental management practices (Council, 2013). By embracing the principles of sustainable buildings, these hotels offer consumers eco-friendly products and



services. Sustainable hotels reflect the preferences and expectations of both current and prospective guests (Wang et al., 2013).

This research builds upon a thorough review of existing literature to develop a conceptual model. The model investigates how these factors influence a consumer's willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotel accommodations. By visually representing these hypotheses within the model, the research facilitates empirical testing to assess their impact on eco-friendly consumer behavior.

Hypotheses formulation

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) explains how attitudes shape intentions towards certain behaviors (Armitage & Conner, 2001). While TPB focuses on belief-based evaluations of a behavior's benefits and costs, it has been criticized for neglecting the affective aspects of attitude. Attitudes involve both emotions (affective components) and evaluations of outcomes (cognitive components) (French et al., 2005). Research indicates that emotions indirectly influence decisions through cognition and directly impact final choices (Slovic et al., 2004). Studies by Ajzen and Driver (1992) and Dolnicar and Leisch (2008) show that positive affect and moral satisfaction are strong predictors of environmentally friendly behavior and willingness to pay (WTP) for sustainable tourism. Therefore, a positive attitude is positively associated with the willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotel experiences. Collectively, the below hypothesis is derived based on the above review:

H1: Attitude positively associated with willingness to pay premium.

Subjective norm refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or refrain from a specific action (Ajzen, 1991). It is a crucial factor in understanding eco-friendly behavior, as it involves normative considerations (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Eco-friendly norms encompass the perception and acceptance of others' opinions about eco-friendliness in individual actions, and the willingness to align with collective opinions formed by reference groups (Ajzen & Sheikh, 2013; Heyvaert, 2013). Numerous studies have shown that eco-friendly norms significantly influence consumers' eco-friendly behaviors (Heberlein, 2012). These norms operate because individuals' judgments about the rightness or wrongness of their behavior are influenced by those around them (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Bamberg et al., 2007). People adhere to eco-friendly norms to gain approval from their reference groups or others important to them (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Keizer & Schultz, 2018). If individuals believe that eco-friendly norms guide behaviors and agree that these behaviors are valued by society, they are likely to engage in eco-friendly actions due to social pressure (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Keizer et al., 2008). Additionally, many studies have confirmed that norms directly impact behavior or intentions (Bamberg et al., 2007; Hunecke et al., 2001). The below hypothesis is derived based on the above review:

H2: Subjective norm positively associated with willingness to pay premium.

Environmental concern, defined as awareness and interest in environmental issues, characterizes green consumers

who form a growing market segment (Laroche et al., 2001; Falk and Hagsten, 2019). These consumers are willing to visit, pay premium for, and recommend eco-friendly hotels (Kim and Han, 2010; Tang and Lam, 2017). Environmentally friendly practices enhance a firm's image, trust, and customer loyalty (Fu et al., 2014; Kucukusta et al., 2013). However, the relationship between environmental concern and willingness to pay premium remains underexplored (Chou and Chen, 2014; Kang et al., 2012). Using value-

belief-norm theory, this study posits that environmental concern positively influences consumers' willingness to pay premium for eco-friendly products or services. It can be hypothesized that environmental concern is positively associated with willingness to pay premium as follows:

H3: Environmental concern positively associated with willingness to pay premium.

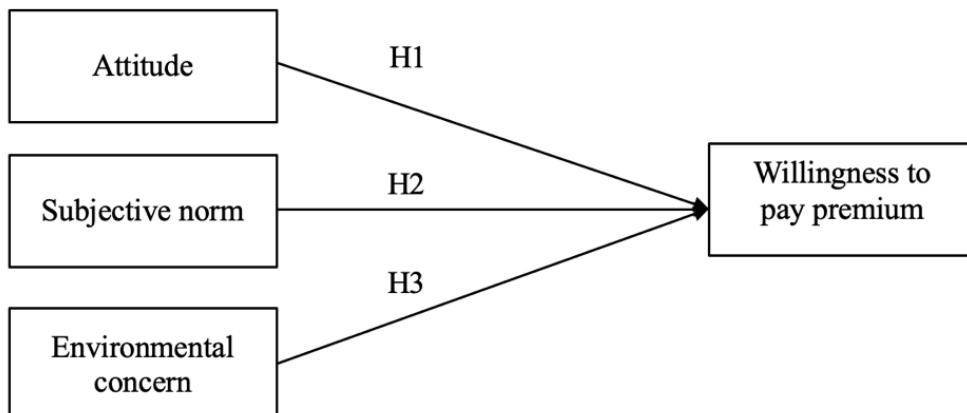


Figure 1 A conceptual model

Research methodologies

This study employed a simple random sample approach for data collection within a particular group. The participants were still in charge of selecting and reserving their own lodging in Thailand. Participants were selected based on

specific criteria to ensure the quality and relevance of the responses. Firstly, they had to be primarily responsible for deciding where to stay during their travels. Additionally, they needed to be the ones primarily responsible for paying for their hotel stays. Lastly, it was essential that participants were familiar with the sustainable practices of hotels, ensuring that the responses came from



individuals who were aware of and understood the sustainability efforts being made by these establishments. The population for this study consists of the number of foreign tourists. During the first six months of 2024 (from January 1 to June 30), a total of 17,501,283 foreign tourists visited Thailand (The Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2024). Using Taro Yamane's table for sample size determination with a 5% margin of error, the sample group is calculated to be 400 tourists. These tourists must meet the specified criteria outlined in the screening questions above. Initially, 500 responses were obtained. After a screening process, the final dataset for the study consisted of 432 replies.

Data collection process, questionnaires were used in this study's quantitative research design to gather data. After a comprehensive review of the literature, the questionnaire was developed. to ensure that the questions were grounded in recognized theories and incorporated important findings from past research on consumer behavior, sustainability, and the hotel industry. The research employed a 5-point Likert scale (Zikmund et al. 2009). This scale allows participants to express their level of agreement with a series of statements ranging from strongly disagree

to strongly agree. Using a Google Form questionnaire, randomly collected from tourists in hotels in Bangkok.

The questionnaire has two sections. Part 1 focused on gathering demographic information about the respondents. Part 2 focused on the core constructs of the study, which include willingness to pay premium, attitude, subjective norm and environmental concern. This study utilized regression analysis, a cornerstone statistical method, to analyze the collected data (Gujarati & Porter, 2009). In this context, the researchers investigated how factors hypothesized to influence consumer willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotels. The analysis employed a 95% confidence level, a common standard practice in regression analysis.

The measurement model from the pilot test, which involved 30 participants, showed high reliability across most variables. Willingness to pay premium scored 0.943, while attitude had a reliability score of 0.918. Subjective norm had the highest reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.961. Environmental concern had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.782, which is acceptable. Finally, behavioral intention achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.912, indicating high reliability.

**Table 1** The item and reference of each construct

Construct
Willingness to pay premium (Werenbroch & Skiera, 2002)
It is acceptable for me to pay more for a sustainable hotel.
I am willing to pay more for a sustainable hotel.
I am willing to spend an extra amount of money in order to stay at a sustainable hotel.
Attitude (Han et al., 2010)
For me staying at a sustainable hotel while traveling is extremely good.
For me staying at a sustainable hotel while traveling is extremely desirable.
For me staying at a sustainable hotel while traveling is extremely pleasant.
For me staying at a sustainable hotel while traveling is extremely wise.
For me staying at a sustainable hotel while traveling is extremely favourable.
For me staying at a sustainable hotel while traveling is extremely enjoyable.
For me staying at a sustainable hotel while traveling is extremely positive.
Subjective norm (Han et al., 2010)
Most people who are important to me think I should stay at a sustainable hotel when traveling.
Most people who are important to me would want me to stay at a sustainable hotel when traveling.
People whose opinions I value would prefer that I stay at a sustainable hotel when traveling.
Behavioral intention (Chan & Tung, 2014)
I am willing to stay at a sustainable hotel while traveling.
I will make an effort to stay at a sustainable hotel when traveling.
I plan to stay at a sustainable hotel for my next vacation.
Environmental concern (Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008)
I am very concerned about the environment.
I would be willing to reduce my consumption to help protect the environment.
Major social changes are necessary to protect the natural environment.
Anti-pollution laws should be enforced more strongly.

Data analysis and results

Data analysis

The analysis of demographic variables, including gender, age, income, highest

level of education, occupation, and region of origin, employed a combination of frequency and percentage analysis. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the sample's composition. By analyzing both the frequency and percentage of each demographic category.

**Table 2** The demographics (n = 432)

Demographic	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	203	47.00
Female	197	45.60
Other	32	7.40
Age		
Less than 25 Years old	58	13.40
25 – 34 Years old	172	39.80
35 – 44 Years old	130	30.10
45 – 54 Years old	39	9.00
55 Years old and above	33	7.60
Income		
Less than 10,001 USD	106	24.50
10,001 – 20,000 USD	129	29.90
20,001 – 50,000 USD	143	33.10
50,001 – 75,000 USD	39	9.00
75,001 – 100,000 USD	12	2.80
More than 100,000 USD	3	0.70
Highest education		
Highschool	35	8.10
Diploma	41	9.50
Bachelors	207	47.90
Masters	116	26.90
Doctorate	10	2.30
Other	23	5.30
Occupation		
Managerial levels	87	20.10
Operational levels	163	37.70
Business owner	57	13.20
Investor	10	2.30
Retried	32	7.40
Other	83	19.20
Region origin		
Asia	124	28.70
Europe	195	45.10
Australia	33	7.60
North America	67	15.50
South America	3	0.70
Africa	10	2.30

The sample of gender consisted of 47% males (n = 203), 45.6% females (n = 197), and 7.4% individuals identifying as other (n = 32). The largest age group comprised individuals between 25 - 34 years old (n = 172; 39.80%). The 35 - 44

years old category followed with 30.10% (n = 130), while those under 25 years old represented 13.40% (n = 58) of the sample. The majority of participants income (n = 143; 33.10%) reported an annual income between USD 20,001 and



USD 50,000. The second-largest income bracket was USD 10,001–USD 20,000 (n = 129; 29.90%). Those earning less than USD 10,001 constituted 24.50% (n = 106) of the sample. Nearly half (n = 207; 47.90%) of the participants held a bachelor's degree. Master's degrees were reported by 26.90% (n = 116), while diplomas were the qualification for 9.50% (n = 41) of the sample. The largest

occupational category was operational level positions (n = 163; 37.70%). Managerial positions were held by 20.10% (n = 87) of the participants, with the remaining 19.20% (n = 83) falling into the other category. The majority of participants originated from Europe (n = 195; 45.10%), followed by Asia (n = 124; 28.70%) and North America (n = 67; 15.50%).

Quantitative analysis

Correlation analysis

Table 3 The correlation analysis

	Attitude	Subjective norm	Environment concern	Willingness to pay premium
Attitude	1.000			
Subjective norm	0.421	1.000		
Environment concern	0.462	0.263	1.000	
Willingness to pay premium	0.587	0.396	0.370	1.000

The correlation analysis indicates that attitude, subjective norm, and environmental concern are all positively associated with willingness to pay premium, with sufficient strength to warrant further investigation. None of the correlations between the independent variables (ATT, SN, EC) exceed 0.7, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern. This ensures that each variable

can independently contribute to the regression model without causing instability in the estimates.

Regression analysis

Analyze the impact of attitude, subjective norm, and environmental concern on the willingness to pay premium by conducting a regression analysis.

Table 4 Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.607	0.368	0.364	0.63481



The R value is 0.607, indicating a moderate to strong positive correlation. The R square value is 0.368, meaning that approximately 36.8% of the variance in the willingness to pay premium can be explained by the combined effects of attitude, subjective norm, and environmental concern. The adjusted R square is 0.364, which is very close to the R square, indicating that the independent variables provide a good fit and the model

doesn't include too many extraneous predictors. This is a measure of the standard deviation of the errors in the prediction, which is 0.63481, which suggests that on average, the actual values of willingness to pay premium deviate from the predicted values by approximately 0.63481 units. The lower this value, the better the model's predictions are fitting the actual data.

Table 5 ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	100.479	3	33.493	83.113	0.001
Residual	172.477	428	0.403		
Total	272.956	431			

In the table, the sum of squares due to regression is 100.479, which represents the variance explained by the independent variables. The residual sum of squares is 172.477, which represents the variance unexplained by the model. The total sum of squares is 272.956, representing the total variance in the willingness to pay premium.

There are 3 degrees of freedom for the regression, corresponding to the three independent variables. The residual degrees of freedom are 428, which is the number of observations minus the number of estimated parameters. The total degrees of freedom for the model are 431.

The mean square for regression is 33.493, calculated by dividing the regression sum

of squares by its degrees of freedom. For the residuals, the mean square is 0.403, calculated by dividing the residual sum of squares by its degrees of freedom.

The F-statistic is 83.113, which is a measure of how much the model improves the prediction of the dependent variable compared to the variance within the data. This high F-value indicates the model is a good fit.

Finally, the significance value is 0.001, which is extremely low, indicating a very high level of statistical significance. This suggests that the regression model, with the independent variables included, provides a statistically significant prediction of the willingness to pay premium.

Hypothesis testing

Table 6 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.068	0.260		0.262	0.794
Attitude	0.576	0.060	0.441	9.543	0.001
Subjective norm	0.172	0.040	0.184	4.317	0.001
Environmental concern	0.168	0.062	0.117	2.693	0.007

Constant: The unstandardized coefficient (B) for the constant is 0.0068, but it is not statistically significant ($p = 0.794$), suggesting that when all independent variables are zero, the behavioral intention score is not significantly different from zero.

H1: Attitude positively associated with willingness to pay premium.

For hypothesis 1 (H1), the attitude shows a strong positive association with the willingness to pay more, as indicated by a B value of 0.576. This suggests that for every one-unit increase in the measured attitude, there is an expected increase of 0.576 units in the willingness to pay premium, assuming other variables are held constant. This result is highly statistically significant, with a p-value 0.001, providing robust support for H1.

H2: Subjective norm positively associated with willingness to pay premium.

For hypothesis 2 (H2), the subjective norm is also positively associated with the willingness to pay premium. The B value here is 0.172, indicating that a one-unit increase in the subjective norm is expected to result in a 0.172-unit increase in the willingness to pay premium. This effect is significant with a p-value 0.001, thus supporting H2.

H3: Environmental concern positively associated with willingness to pay premium.

Finally, hypothesis 3 (H3) examines the association between environmental concern and the willingness to pay premium. The B value for environmental concern is 0.168. This implies that an increase by one unit in environmental concern is expected to lead to a 0.168-unit increase in the willingness to pay premium, holding other factors constant. The association is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.007, thereby providing evidence in favor of H3.

Research results

This study examined the factors influencing foreign tourists' willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotels in Thailand, focusing on attitudes, subjective norms, and environmental concern. The findings revealed significant positive correlations between all three factors and the willingness to pay more for eco-friendly hotels.

Attitudes: A strong link was found between positive attitudes and increased willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotels. A one-unit increase in positive attitude resulted in a 0.576-unit increase in willingness to pay premium



(p-value = 0.001), indicating that favorable views on green branding lead to higher spending on environmentally aligned accommodations.

Subjective Norm: The study showed that perceived social pressure to engage in eco-friendly behaviors significantly predicts willingness to pay premium. A one-unit increase in subjective norms led to a 0.172-unit increase in willingness to pay premium (p-value = 0.001), highlighting the impact of social influence on consumer decisions.

Environmental Concern: The research found that higher environmental concern also boosts willingness to pay premium. A one-unit increase in environmental concern resulted in a 0.168-unit increase in willingness to pay premium (p-value = 0.007), suggesting that those more concerned about environmental issues are more likely to choose sustainable hotel options.

In summary, positive attitudes, subjective norms, and environmental concern significantly influence tourists' willingness to pay premium for sustainable hotels in Thailand.

Discussion

This section discusses the study's findings in light of contemporary ideas of social psychology and consumer behavior. These theories provide a framework for understanding how consumer attitudes, societal norms, and environmental concern affect their willingness to pay premium for them. Sustainable hotels are a prominent trend in the hospitality business.

The study's findings showed a strong positive association between consumers'

willingness to pay more for lodging places that adhere to environmental standards and their good opinions of green branding. This is in line with the expectancy-value model and the theory of planned behavior, which emphasize the impact of positive attitudes on consumer preferences and purchase intentions. People who support green branding are also more willing to financially support sustainable hotels, according to the report. According to other research, this is the case (Yadav et al., 2019; Prakash & Pathak, 2017). Studies show that consumer attitudes and trust in environmentally responsible businesses help consumers adopt sustainable shopping habits. This illustrates how hotels may improve their reputation in the market and draw in more business by providing a detailed description of their environmental policies and initiatives to the general public.

Similarly, the positive relationship between subjective norms and willingness to pay premium highlights the influence of social expectations on consumer behavior. This finding aligns with the theory of planned behavior, suggesting that individuals are more likely to pay more for sustainable hotels if they believe it is socially approved or expected. The impact of social norms on consumer decisions, particularly regarding ethical and sustainable purchasing, emphasizes the role of social influences. Sustainable hotels can leverage this by aligning themselves with broader societal values and norms to attract consumers willing to pay premium.

The positive association between environmental concern and willingness to pay premium reinforces the idea that heightened environmental awareness



translates into supportive consumer behaviors towards sustainable hotels. This relationship is especially important in the post-COVID-19 era, where environmental consciousness has become more pronounced. The finding suggests that consumers who are highly concerned about the environment are not only aware of but also willing to financially support businesses that align with their environmental values. This highlights the growing importance of environmental ethics in consumer decision-making processes and the potential for hotels to capitalize on this trend by emphasizing their commitment to environmental sustainability.

Implications for practice

The hospitality industry, particularly sustainable hotels, can benefit from consumers' willingness to pay premium for eco-friendly operations. Strategic branding is essential, as there is a direct link between positive opinions of green branding and consumers' willingness to pay more. Marketing campaigns should emphasize the environmental benefits of eco-friendly accommodations and their impact on regional and global sustainability. Engaging stories that resonate with environmentally conscious consumers can enhance brand perception and loyalty.

Social proof and community involvement are crucial for marketing eco-friendly hotels. By leveraging influencer collaborations, social media, and customer feedback, hotels can increase perceived social support for their sustainability efforts. Integrating into sustainability-focused communities helps encourage eco-friendly purchasing

behaviors, making customers more likely to choose and pay premium for green accommodations.

Targeting environmentally conscious consumers through tailored marketing efforts is also important. Hotels should demonstrate genuine dedication to environmental stewardship by transparently disclosing sustainability achievements, obtaining certifications, and continuing environmental impact reduction projects. Providing educational experiences about sustainability can align guests' values with those of the hotel, reinforcing their commitment to eco-friendly choices. Finally, sustainable hotels must back their sustainability claims with quantifiable outcomes. This involves participating in local conservation initiatives, supporting community projects, and integrating sustainable practices throughout operations. Demonstrating tangible results builds customer trust and justifies premium pricing for eco-friendly accommodations. To succeed, eco-friendly hotels need a comprehensive approach that includes societal influence, strong green branding, environmental awareness, and genuine sustainability commitments. This strategy will attract customers willing to pay more for environmentally friendly options and promote sustainable travel behaviors.

Limitations

This study offered insightful information about how consumers determine how much more they are willing to spend for environmentally friendly lodging. It's important to take into account the study's shortcomings though. The fact that the study relied on participants self-reporting their attitudes and level of environmental concern is one possible problem. It is



possible that individuals will assert to be prepared to spend more than they actually would. Furthermore, the study only examined travelers in one particular area. This implies that visitors from other countries who have diverse cultures and environmental perspectives may not be able to apply the findings.

These limitations might be removed by looking at actual visitor behavior in the future, comprising favored hotel choices and shopping patterns. Many nations may carry out research to examine the potential impacts of cultural diversity. It might also look into other aspects that might affect how visitors behave, possibly how comfortable they are and how much control they feel over their interactions with the surroundings.

Future research implications

From a theoretical perspective, future studies should employ more objective metrics to overcome the limitations of self-reported data. This could include analyzing real hotel booking data or conducting controlled experiments that mimic real-world purchase events, providing a clearer depiction of actual consumer behavior. Additionally, researching consumer behavior across diverse cultural and geographic contexts is essential. Understanding how different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds influence perceptions and behaviors towards sustainable hotels can offer universally applicable insights and targeted strategies for specific market segments.

Practically, the study highlights the importance of understanding the influence of social media and digital marketing on consumer decisions and perceptions

regarding sustainability. In the digital age, online content significantly shapes consumer behavior. Grasping these influences can help sustainable hotels craft more effective marketing strategies. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in environmental concern and sustainable consumption over time, especially in response to global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, can provide insights into the evolving preferences of eco-conscious travelers. These studies can guide hotels in adapting their operations and communication strategies to better meet the needs of environmentally conscious consumers.

Future research should focus on utilizing objective metrics such as real booking data or controlled experiments to gain a more accurate understanding of consumer actions. Investigating the impact of diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds on consumer perceptions and behaviors towards sustainable hotels can yield both universally applicable results and specialized market insights. Exploring the role of digital marketing and social media in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions about sustainability can help sustainable hotels develop more effective online marketing strategies. Additionally, examining psychological factors like perceived behavioral control and environmental awareness can deepen our understanding of eco-friendly travel behavior. Conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in environmental concern and sustainable consumption over time can offer valuable insights into the evolving preferences of eco-conscious consumers.



Conclusion

This study examined the factors that affect consumers' willingness to pay premium for environmentally friendly hotels. Three primary elements were discovered, including attitudes, subjective norms, and environmental concerns. The study integrated theories from consumer behavior and social psychology to demonstrate that a consumer's decision to support sustainable hotels financially is significantly influenced by their positive attitudes toward sustainable initiatives, social pressure to be environmentally

conscious, and increased concern for the environment. These results emphasize how crucial good communication is for environmentally friendly hotels. The hotel may foster good attitudes towards sustainable projects and help consumers comprehend the beneficial effects of their environmental commitments and practices by effectively communicating them. In addition, hotels must make sure that their operations respect the environment and wider societal norms. Hotels that respond to the growing demand for sustainable tourist choices by aligning with these ideals will see more success.

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