

THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY ON TOURISTS' INTENTION TO VISIT GREEN HOTEL: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ATTITUDE

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Abstract: Although the hospitality and tourism industries contribute considerably to every country's economy, at the same time, it has negative effects on the climate. Hotel industry operations consume enormous amounts of energy which eventually contribute to environmental degradation. Hotel operations do not only cause environmental issues, but customers also play a significant role in creating these issues. Scholars, mainly in this field, have investigated the causes of environmental degradation from the perspective of hotel operations rather than customers. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of perceived environmental responsibility on tourists' attitude and intention to visit green hotels in Malaysia. It further examined the mediating role of attitude in between perceived environmental responsibility and intention. The study used a quantitative research design and interviewed 393 international tourists in Malaysia using systematic random sampling. For analysis techniques, the study used Structural Equation Modelling by PLS-SEM. The study found that consumers' perceived environmental responsibility influences significantly on tourists' attitude and intention. It also revealed that consumers' attitude mediates the in-between perceived environmental responsibility and intention to visit green hotels in Malaysia.

Key words: perceived environmental responsibility, attitude, intention, green hotels, tourism, Malaysia

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INTRODUCTION

Green practices in hotel refer to the adoption of the green system to operate the hotel operations that generally reduce the extra use of water and energy, more use of non-durable products, reduce unhealthy gas emission, water, oil and soil pollution (Lee et al., 2010). In recent years, several hotels have adopted the green practices for operating their business, as well as protecting the environment (Chandran and Bhattacharya, 2019; Wan et al., 2017; Rahman et al., 2012; Miao and Wei, 2016).

Many companies are motivated to invest in new environmental-friendly service and marketing strategies as the market's environmental consciousness is increasing rapidly (Chen and Chai, 2010). In the hotel industry, becoming green hotel is an underlying precondition to retain pro-environmental consumers who are more likely to buy and willing to pay for environmentally friendly lodging products (Chen and Tung, 2014; Han, 2015). Hotel industry ought to introduce environmentally sustainable accommodation by implementing green management techniques, eco-friendly standards and conservation practices to prevent adverse environmental effects (Han, 2015). If hotel managers pick and purchase a lodging-related commodity that represents the green needs of customers, they are responsible for implementing green strategies (Han and Kim, 2010). For instance, hoteliers should also consume a significant quantity of water, energy and disposable products that do not affect the environment (Han et al., 2010). While negative effects on the environment are evident in the hotel industry, the attitude of consumers towards green products remains unclear (Bohdanowicz et al., 2011). Environmentally friendly hotels aim to build green systemic changes that considerably decrease adverse environmental effects (Rahman and Reynolds, 2016; Lee et al., 2010).

It is achieved by the rigorous implementation of creative and successful Green practices such as solid waste reduction, energy and water conservation, and the recycling of all goods for the benefit of the environment (Greco et al., 2018; Han et al., 2010; Ham and Han, 2013). This study explores the effect on the attitude and intention of tourists to visit green hotels in Malaysia of their perceived environmental duty. It also explored the mediating role of attitude between environmental perceptions and intention to visit green hotels in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Intention

Behavioural intention refers to desire, ability or chance to do something (Ajzen, 1991), such as offering positive/negative advice, charging a premium, buying back or switching to another brand (Zeithaml et al., 1996). The behavioural intention identified by Warshaw and Davis (1985) is an intention of the person to perform a particular action or not. The goal of the present study is to explore consumers' intention to visit the green hotel. The previous research demonstrated that people are more likely to spend more money on the green hotel when they participate in a positive mouth-of-mouth activity (Han et al., 2009). Several studies (Chen and Peng, 2012; Lee et al., 2010) have found that customer attitudes towards positive green behaviour are a significant predictor of staying at a green hotel. The choice of customers to live in a green hotel is strongly affected by their perception of environmental effects and environmental responsibility (Han et al., 2010).

Attitude

Attitude has been the first component for measuring the intention of behaviour. Ajzen (1991) states that the attitude is "the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable assessment or assessment of the behaviour" (p. 188). Attitude is the human tendency either

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positively or negatively towards something (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, the green hotel sector is more likely to increase favourable attitudes towards green hotels (Han, 2015). Thus, through different media, constructive effects are produced that can lead to a positive attitude. Hoteliers should, for instance, support green campaigns that lead towards long-term green consumption (Han et al., 2010). The Green Campaign eventually raises consumers' environmental consciousness, which encourages customers to take more social responsibility and prefer green hotels in the future. Jauhari and Manaktola (2007) for example, stated that when tourism enterprises have implemented their green practices, they have increased the consumer's attitude towards the green hotel or their intention for a green hotel (Jauhari and Manaktola, 2007).

Perceived Environmental Responsibility

Sense of responsibility means that one's own life integrates meaning and expectations of self-categorization into a set of standards of identity (Stets and Burke, 2000). Because of an individual's reflection on social interactions, perceptions and systems of society and community, the environmental obligation is socially formed and expressed (Gill, 2012; Islam and Patwary, 2013). Over the years, consumers acquired knowledge and understanding of environmental problems (Lee, 2008). Some people may nevertheless take part in such activities or actions as a symbolic feature to establish a reputation or even to establish an appearance to others or to obtain an identity at the adolescent stage of life (Hormuth, 1999). Since pro-environmental behaviour is a special kind of altruistic act, in which a person establishes self-identity or introduces itself to others in society (Hopper and Nielsen, 1991; Lee, 2008). An individual is free from harm when he/she takes responsibility for the environment (Babcock, 2009). However, several environmental responsibility research in the seventies and eighties were performed (Follows and Jobber, 2000). They expressed concern that during that time, the assessment of the environmental effect of a product focussed primarily on behaviours of non-consumption such as energy conservation and political activism.

Based on the discussions above, this study proposed the hypotheses:

H1: "Attitude positively influences consumers' intention to visit green hotels in Malaysia."

H2: "Perceived Environmental Responsibility positively influences consumers' attitude towards green hotels in Malaysia."

H3: "Perceived Environmental Responsibility positively influences consumers' intention to visit green hotels in Malaysia."

H4: "Attitude mediates the relationship between attitudes and consumers' intention to visit green hotels in Malaysia."

METHODOLOGY

The research implemented a quantitative research method to analyze the effect of perceived environmental responsibility on tourists' attitude. Systemic random sampling was used in this research, as the survey was conducted in several tourist spots in Malaysia. International tourists in Malaysia were the target respondents of this research. The study sample is 393, and the entire response from Malaysia. A Likert scale of one to seven points (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) has been used to measure questions. The research used data analysis software Smart-PLS version 3 and SPSS 24. For measuring perceived environmental responsibility, five items were adopted from Paço and Rodrigues, (2016); Manzo and Weinstein, (1987). For attitude, eleven items were adapted from Han et al. (2010) and Chen (2014). For measuring intention, four items adapted from Han et al. (2010) and Chen (2011).

RESULTS

Demographic Information of the Respondents

For demographic distribution of the respondents, they are sorted in terms of gender, age group, marital status, and occupation. Distribution of gender among respondents is almost the same as male 194 (50.9%) and female 187 (49.1%). In the age group, majority of the respondents are 28-32 years old (22.6%), followed by 43-47 years (20.1%), 33-37 years (18.8%), 23-27 years (15.3%), 38-42 years (8.4%), 53 years and above (4.8%) and 18-22 years (3.6%). In terms of marital status, 69% of the respondents are married, 106(27%) are single, 12 (3.1%) are widows, and 4 (1%) are divorced. For occupation, more than half of the respondents are working in government sector (55.7%), followed by private sector (30.5%), students (5.9%), self-employed (5.6%), housewife (1.8%) and unemployed (0.5%).

Assessment of Measurement Model

In the measurement model of the study, the outer loadings are good enough to fit into the construct (Table 1 and Figure 2). Outer loadings of the study for attitude are ranged from 0.727 to 0.854. For intention, loadings are ranged from 0.816 to 0.900. For perceived environmental responsibility, the outer loadings ranged from 0.744 to 0.913.

Table 1. Construct Validity and Reliability

Construct/ Associated Terms	Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Value Extracted
Attitude			
ATT1	0.842	0.946	0.639
ATT10	0.741		
ATT2	0.802		
ATT3	0.773		
ATT4	0.820		
ATT5	0.832		
ATT6	0.766		
ATT7	0.854		
ATT8	0.824		
ATT9	0.727		
Intention			
INT1	0.878	0.918	0.738
INT2	0.900		
INT3	0.816		
INT4	0.839		
Perceived Environmental Responsibility			
PER1	0.851	0.937	0.750
PER2	0.908		
PER3	0.901		
PER4	0.913		
PER5	0.744		

As shown in Table 1, Average Value Extracted for three variables shown in acceptable range as it is 0.639, 0.738 and 0.750 for attitude, intention, perceived environmental responsibility, respectively.

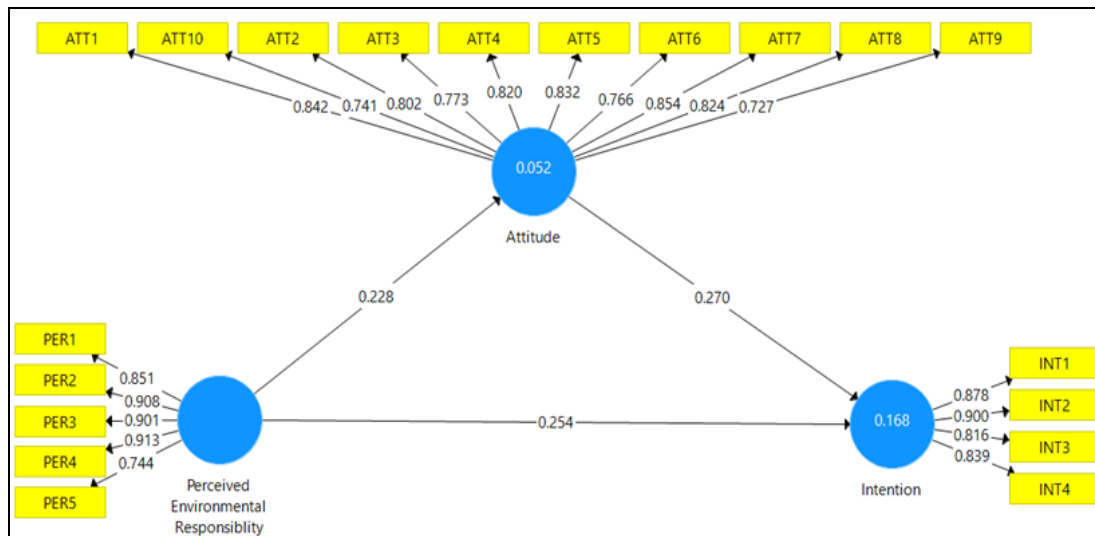


Figure 1. Measurement model of the study

The degree to which each latent variable is different from other models in the sample is discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014; Patwary et al., 2020; Kamarudin et al., 2020). Two techniques, which are Heterotrait-Monotrait-Ratio (HTMT) and Fornell Larcker Criteria, were used to explain the discriminant validity.

Table 2. Discriminant validity Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Attitude	Intention	Perceived Environmental Responsibility
Attitude			
Intention	0.354		
Perceived Environmental Responsibility	0.237	0.337	

Table 3. Discriminant validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Attitude	Intention	Perceived Environmental Responsibility
Attitude	0.799		
Intention	0.328	0.859	
Perceived Environmental Responsibility	0.228	0.315	0.866

Henseler et al., (2015) indicated that HTMT 0.85 and 0.9 standards for discriminatory validity should be identified. This research uses the more restrictive HTMT to test the legitimacy of discrimination. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate, in accordance with the Fornell Larcker criterion and the HTMT ratio, the results of the discriminating validity assessment and show that the model has justifiable discriminant validity.

In Table 4, Variance Inflation Factors is considered for testing the collinearity statistics. The highest collinearity counts for the overall model is 3.694, which is also acceptable. Other than that, all items in the study conceded very low collinearity which is good for model fitness.

Table 4. Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Outer VIF Values	VIF
ATT1	3.618
ATT10	2.289
ATT2	2.973
ATT3	2.570
ATT4	2.861
ATT5	2.735
ATT6	2.416
ATT7	3.223
ATT8	2.770
ATT9	1.986
INT1	2.450
INT2	2.792
INT3	1.973
INT4	2.142
PER1	2.705
PER2	3.694
PER3	3.680
PER4	3.518
PER5	1.784

Assessment of Structural Model

The diagram in figure 3 is shown to demonstrate the structural model of the study. T-values of the model are showing high efficiency in the construct. The influence of the independent variable to the dependent variable is positively significant.

The bootstrapping method was performed in Smart PLS 3 to find the direct effects among the variables. The direct relationship of this study standardized into three, which are the influence of attitude on intention, the influence of perceived environmental responsibility on consumers' attitude, and the influence of perceived environmental responsibility on consumers' intention. The also posed an indirect relationship which is the mediating role of attitude in between attitudes and consumers' intention.

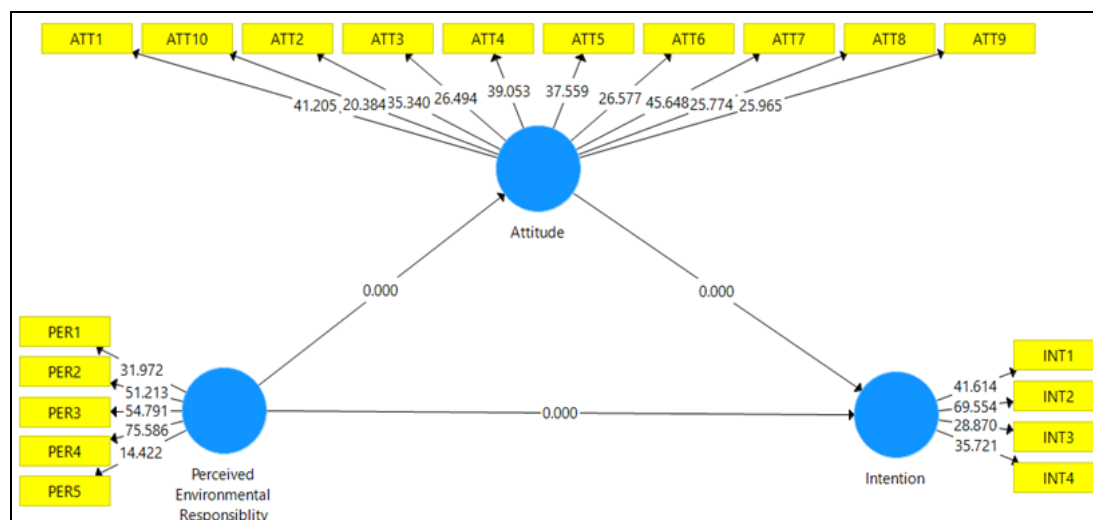


Figure 2. Structural Model of the Study

As shown in Table 5, attitude (T value= 5.311, p value= 0.000), and perceived environmental responsibility (T value= 4.328, p value= 0.000) have significant relationship with intention. Besides, Perceived Environmental Responsibility also has significant relationship with attitude (T value= 4.253, p value= 0.000).

Table 5. The direct and indirect effects of the study

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	t Value	P values	Supported
H1	Attitude -> Intention	0.270	5.311	0.000	✓
H2	Perceived Environmental Responsibility -> Attitude	0.228	4.253	0.000	✓
H3	Perceived Environmental Responsibility -> Intention	0.254	4.328	0.000	✓
H4	Perceived Environmental Responsibility -> Attitude -> Intention	0.061	3.165	0.002	✓

Table 5 also shows the results of the mediating effects of the study as this study considers attitude as a mediating variable between perceived environmental responsibility and intention. As shown in table 5, attitude plays a significant mediating role between perceived environmental responsibility and intention (T value= 3.165, p value=0.002).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the relationship between consumer environmental perception and visiting green hotels is statistically significant. This indicates that the attitude in visiting green hotels in Malaysia has more impact on the environment. There are several studies supporting hypothesis findings (Lee, 2012; Johri and Sahasakmontri, 1998; Alom et al., 2019; Hassan et al., 2020).

The result also shows that consumers mediate the link between perceived environmental responsibility and tourists' behavioural intent in considering green practices in the Malaysian hotel industry. According to the theory, Kim (2011) pointed out that consumers with a high degree of environmental awareness should result in a positive disposition towards the environment, which would also be focused on buying goods which are deemed environmentally friendly. TPB and an extension TRA assert that the purchase intention of a person depends on his actions, and several others (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). The hypothesis results show that attitude influences the behaviour of tourists concerning green practices in the Malaysian hotel industry in a significant way.

This finding is supported by Polonsky et al. (2012). According to TPB tenets, behavioural motives are known as the immediate precursor of behaviours (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), while convictions act as an immediate precursor (Ajzen, 1991).

CONCLUSION

An environmentally sustainable perception could lead to a positive attitude towards visits to green hotels. It was statistically achieved that the efforts of marketers towards adhering to offering useful information and environmental consciousness lead to formation of a favorable attitude among the consumers which further motivates them to consider these aspects by exerting a positive significant influence on their behavioral intention by taking into consideration the environmental aspects. It implies that managers must be putting in all efforts towards maintaining environmental protection across their marketing activities in order to ensure that consumers find their green products appropriate and fit starting from their initial assessment of products at the attitude formation stage to the intention development stage when consumers are planning to buy, and during the stage when consumers actually act upon.

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