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CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS GREEN HOTELS' ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY POLICIES IN BANGKOK

Kanyapilai Kunchornsirimongkon, Morakot Ditta-Apichai

*Hotel Management Program, International College, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Nakhon Pathom
Education Center, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand,
E-mail: kanyapilai.ku@ssru.ac.th*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to study consumers' attitude and factors influencing the attitude toward environment-friendly policies of Green Hotels in Bangkok. The research data was collected from 385 Thai consumers from nineteen green hotels in Bangkok through questionnaire. Percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test and One-way ANOVA were used to analyze data. The finding showed that respondent's attitude toward Green hotels' environment-friendly policies was highly favorable. Cleanliness, waste water management and environmental-friendly waste management were mostly concerned issues. Sex, age, level of education, occupation, average monthly income and room rate per night were significant factors affecting respondents' attitude with statistic level of .05. Hotel business entrepreneur can use the research finding to develop their marketing strategy to attract more of environmental-friendly consumers.

Keywords: attitude, green hotel, environment-friendly policy.

INTRODUCTION

Bangkok is an economic hub of Thailand and tourism sector has been generating tremendous revenues to the country. The hotel business plays a key role in tourism business. (Shafaat & Sultan, 2012) Since the hotel business is aiming to provide service and convenience to customers therefore these factors would directly impact customers' satisfaction. (Chaleeya Chindaboonmanee and Anurak Ruengrob, 2016). In general, hotel operation requires a substantial amount of energy, water and resources (Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010). In consequence, hotels generate high number of waste and considered to be a business which significantly impact environment. (Jirapol Sinthunawa, 2007)

Presently, environmental conscious consumers have grown in number therefore hotels with eco-friendly practices are well received by this group. (Millar & Baloglu, 2011) Consequently, Green hotel or a hotel with environment-friendly policies and measures is outstandingly increasing. Green hotels perform better in terms of revenues and efficiency in comparison to hotels without environmental standards. (Sininat Poolkuea, 2016)

Despite the growth of the green hotel, there is a lack of research about hotels in Thailand regarding environmental issue. Therefore, it is necessary and interesting to study an application of environment-friendly policies in green hotels and in particular, the attitude of consumers towards hotels' eco-friendly policies as well as factors which influencing attitude of consumers toward green hotel. The certain variables affect the tourists in deciding to stay at the environmental friendly hotels. (Rumpapak L, 2018). The data obtained from the research can be used as a guideline for hotel entrepreneurs to develop their environmental measures and strategies in order to meet the demand of environmental concern consumers.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative research using questionnaire survey as a tool to collect data from October 2017 to September 2018. The target group was Thai consumers who had stayed in green hotel in Bangkok within the period of one year. There were 19 green hotels listed as certified Green Hotel in Bangkok during 2015-2016. (Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, 2018) These hotels were Siam Kempinski Hotel, Dusit Thani Hotel, Royal Princess Larn Luang Hotel, Banyan Tree Hotel, Grand Center Point Ratchadamri Hotel, The Lit Bangkok Hotel, Sivatel Hotel, Maitria Hotel Sukhumvit 18, Chatrium Collection, Centara Watergate Pavillion Hotel, Dream Hotel Bangkok, Centara Grand Hotel Central Ladprao, AETAS Lumpini Hotel, Emporium Suites Hotel, Novotel Bangkok Bang Na, Chaophaya Park Hotel, The Sukosol Hotel, The Siam Hotel, Baiyoke Suite Hotel and DPU Hotel. The questionnaire is divided into 3 parts; (Part 1) asking about General information on demographic characteristics of respondents using check-list; (Part 2) asking about hotel guests' attitudes toward

green hotel's environment-friendly policies using the Likert Scale Rating from 1-5; and (Part 3) testing the hypothesis of factors that affect the attitude of hotel guests about green environment-friendly policies of green hotels using t-test, one-way Anova statistic. The researcher collected 385 questionnaires from direct distribution to the target group.

RESULTS

Part 1 General information on demographic characteristics of respondents

From the sample group of 385 people, there was 50.6% of female and 49.4 % of male. Majority of respondents aged over 35 years old, representing 52.7% followed by the age of 25 - 34 years old, representing 36.1%, and 11.2% of respondents were under 25 years old. In term of education, 68.3% hold bachelor degree, 30.6% with higher education than bachelor's degree, and lastly 1% with lower than bachelor degree.

In addition, the results of the data analysis of the sample group showed that 54% of respondents engaged in civil servant's / state enterprise sector, following by 29.9% in private companies, 12.5% of students, 3.6% of entrepreneurs.

Regarding average monthly incomes, 42.6% earning from 15,000 - 25,000 baht, 24.4% earning from 25,001-40,000 baht, 19.7% earning more than 40,000 baht, and lastly 13.2% earning less than 15,000 baht.

Concerning the range of hotels' room rates paid by respondents, 47.3% paid less than 3,000 baht/night, 38.4% paid from 3,000 – 6,000 baht/night, and 14.3% paid from 6,001 – 9,000 baht/ night. As for the number of nights stayed at the hotel, 52.5% stayed one night, following by 38.2% of two nights stay and 9.4% of three nights respectively.

Part 2 Analysis of hotel guests' attitudes toward green hotels' environment-friendly policies

The results from the analysis of hotel guests' attitudes toward green hotels' environment-friendly policies in Table 1 shows that the attitude levels of the sample group regarding ecofriendly policies of the green hotels is overall in high level ($\bar{X} = 3.68$). When considering the list of attitudes by level of agreement from high to low, the result shows that hotel guests highly support the idea of having non-smoking area in the hotel ($\bar{X} = 4.43$), following by the usage of environmental-friendly cleaning products in the hotel ($\bar{X} = 4.38$), The hotel has waste water treatment before releasing water into public water pipes ($\bar{X} = 4.34$), the hotel has a policy to reduce paper and include software or electronic systems in the service process ($\bar{X} = 4.24$), the use of water-saving sanitary ware in the hotel ($\bar{X} = 4.19$), the use of water-saving showers ($\bar{X} = 4.06$), the use of water-saving taps in the hotel ($\bar{X} = 4.00$), the hotel sets the air-conditioning standard. temperature at 25 degrees Celsius ($\bar{X} = 3.98$), personal financial status affects the decision to pay more for a green hotel ($\bar{X} = 3.91$), the hotel is using energy-efficient air conditioners ($\bar{X} = 3.86$), Green Hotels in Bangkok are truly environmental-friendly in their practices ($\bar{X} = 3.82$), the hotel sets the time to turn off lights in some areas to save energy ($\bar{X} = 3.13$), Feeling any difference in using green hotels comparing to other hotels in general ($\bar{X} = 3.12$), accepting to use same towel for several days ($\bar{X} = 1.91$), and the hotel inform guests about their environmental practices ($\bar{X} = 1.84$) respectively.

Table 1: The average and standard deviation of the green hotel guests' attitude level regarding environment-friendly policies.

Green hotel guests' attitudes	$\bar{X}$	SD.	Interpretation	Level
1. The hotel informs about their environmental practices	1.84	0.730	Low	15
2 . You agree with the hotel using energy saving air-conditioning?	3.86	0.430	High	10
3. You agree with the hotel setting air-conditioning's standard temperature at 25 degrees Celsius.	3.98	0.618	High	8
4. You agree with the hotel using water saving showers.	4.06	0.419	High	6
5. You agree with the hotel using water-saving tap.	4.00	0.342	High	7
6. You agree with the hotel using water-saving sanitary ware.	4.19	0.794	High	5
7. You accept to use the same towel for several days.	1.91	0.595	Low	14
8. You agree with hotel setting the time to turn off lights in some areas to save energy.	3.13	0.347	Moderate	12
9. You agree with the hotel using environmental-friendly cleaning products?	4.38	0.592	Extremely High	2
10. You agree with the hotel having non-smoking areas	4.43	0.601	Extremely High	1
11. You agree with hotel treating waste water before releasing into public water pipes.	4.34	0.581	Extremely High	3
12. You agree with the hotel having policy to reduce paper and. including the use of software or electronic systems in their service process.	4.24	0.729	Extremely High	4
13. You see that green hotels in Bangkok are truly environmentally friendly.	3.82	1.381	High	11
14. Your financial status affects the decision to pay more for staying in a green hotel.	3.91	0.517	High	9
15. Feeling different in using green hotels compared to your typical hotel.	3.12	0.331	Moderate	13
Overall			High	
	3.68	0.412		

Part 3 Testing the hypothesis of factors that affect the attitude of green hotels' guests regarding environment-friendly policies.

Hypothesis 1: Green hotels' guests with different gender have different attitudes about environment-friendly policies.

The hypothesis testing with the t-test reveals that female has an attitude about environment-friendly policies than male.

Hypothesis 2: Green hotels' guests with different ages have different attitudes about environment-friendly policies.

Guests under the age of 25 have attitudes about environment-friendly policies more than guests who age 25-34 years and 35 years or above at a statistically significant level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 3: Green hotels' guests with different educational levels have different attitude about environment-friendly policies.

The hypothesis test with one-way ANOVA analysis shows that guests with a postgraduate education level have attitudes about environment-friendly policies rather than those with bachelor's at a statistically significant level of 0.05. Moreover, guests with an undergraduate education level have attitude about environment-friendly policies less than those with bachelor degree and postgraduate at a statistically significant level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 4 Green hotels' guests with different occupations have different attitude about environment-friendly policies.

Guests who are student have attitude regarding environment-friendly policies of green hotels rather than guests who are employed in private company or in government office/ state enterprises at a statistically significant level of 0.05. As for guests who are entrepreneur, they have attitude regarding environment-friendly policies of green hotels rather than guests who are employed in private company or in government office/ state enterprises at statistically significant level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 5: Green hotels' guests with different average monthly income have different attitudes about environment-friendly policies.

Guests with an average monthly income below 15,000 baht have attitude about environment-friendly policies rather than those with average monthly income between 15,000 - 25,000 baht and 25,001 - 40,000 baht at statistically significant level of 0.05. Moreover, guests with an average monthly income of 25,001 - 40,000 baht have attitude about environment-friendly policies greater than those with average monthly income of 15,000 - 25,000 baht at statistically significant level of 0.05. Regarding guests with an average monthly income of 40,001 baht above, this group has attitudes about environment-friendly policies rather than those who have an average monthly income between 15,000 - 25,000 baht and 25,001 - 40,000 baht at statistically significant level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 6: Green hotels' guests who paid different room rate per night have different attitude of guests about environment-friendly policies.

With statistical significance at the level of 0.05, guests who paid less than 3,000 baht have attitude about environment-friendly policies less than guests who paid between 3,000 - 6,000 baht and 6,001 - 9,000 baht.

Hypothesis 7: Green hotels' guests with different number of room-night stay have different attitude about environment-friendly policies.

The statistic shows that different numbers of room-night stay has not affects attitudes about environment-friendly policies.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

According to the research results, the willingness to collaborate with environment-friendly policies of hotel guests in Thailand can be discussed as follow;

The attitude of the guests toward environment-friendly policies of green hotels in Thailand was found at a high level. This is because the hotels' guests remark eco-friendly practices of green hotels such as provision of non-smoking areas, operating business in accordance with the environment-friendly policies namely treating waste water before releasing to natural resources, having water and energy saving measures and having proper waste management process.

Gender affects attitude of consumers toward eco-friendly policies in green hotels. Female guests are willing to comply with green practices in order to minimize negative impacts to environment than male guests. In addition, this research reveals that guests under the age of 25 tend to have favorable attitude about eco-friendly policies of the hotel rather than those aged 25 - 34 years and 35 years or above. New generation are interested in environmental issues since they are aware of environmental problems facing nowadays. Therefore, eco-friendly measures alike paper reduction and incorporate software or electronic systems in the service process by green hotels can meet the need of new generation.

The results of this study also shows that education level impacts attitude of green hotels' guests; in essence, having higher education, showing better attitudes toward environment-friendly policies. Regarding the hotel guests' occupations, this factor also influences attitude of the guests due to different level of awareness perceived by different occupations. Green hotels' guests with different monthly average income have different attitudes toward eco-friendly policies of green hotels because their financial status affects their buying power and also their decision to pay extra for green hotel. On the other hand, hotel price per night is related to the standard level of that hotel. Pricing can be an indication of an ability to conduct business in accordance with environmental-friendly policies; therefore, making the guests feel different in using green hotels compared to other hotels.

Important suggestions from the research results is that green hotels lack public communication concerning their eco-friendly practices; therefore, hotel entrepreneurs can further improve on this area in order to make guests feel the difference between staying in a green hotel and a typical hotel. In addition, the attitude of guests toward the use of same towel for several days is not favorable; therefore, hotel entrepreneurs should adjust their policy and service process.

Future research should be focus on attitude and guest satisfaction towards products and services based on eco-friendly policies of green hotels in others touristic destinations especially Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima, Phuket, Songkhla, etc.

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