



Ready to Pay More for Green Hotels? Insights from the Theory of Planned Behavior

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Abstract: *Hotels that respect green practices are becoming an emerging trend in hospitality, with increasing support from customers. The aim of the study is to determine the extent to which consumers recognize the importance of green hotels and whether behavior influences their willingness to pay more for accommodation in such establishments.*

Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a framework, the questionnaire was extended by the dimension “willingness to pay more” (WTP). An online survey was conducted, and data were collected from a total of 182 respondents. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to examine the sample profile. Spearman’s correlation coefficient was used to address the correlation between TPB dimensions, and regression analysis was used to determine the influence of behavior on WTP.

Results of the research showed a strong positive correlation between TPB dimensions, while also revealing that behavior influences consumers’ willingness to pay more for green hotels.

1. INTRODUCTION

Green practices refer to activities and programs adopted by hotel management aimed at reducing environmental harm and promoting overall ecological well-being (Rahman et al., 2012). These activities are designed by hotel management to preserve the environment in all aspects. Many green practices can be implemented in the hospitality industry, including energy efficiency, water conservation, recycling, the use of local ingredients, certification, and pollution prevention (DiPietro et al., 2013).

For many hotels, the environmental strategy has become an integral part of their business strategy (Chung, 2020; Han et al., 2011; W. G. Kim et al., 2015; Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010; Sekulić & Mandarić, 2024; Trang et al., 2018). The term “green hotel” describes hotels that strive for greater environmental responsibility through the implementation of environmental initiatives such as efficient use of resources, recycling, and the offering and selling of green products made from eco-friendly materials (Quan et al., 2023). Many travelers around the world are increasingly choosing to stay in green hotels while traveling (S. W. Chan, 2013; DiPietro et al., 2013; Han et al., 2010). Consumers are seen as crucial stakeholders in green transformation (Rahman et al., 2012). Therefore, hoteliers need to understand customer needs, and it still remains unclear whether hotel clients are familiar with green practices and whether their behavior aligns with these practices (Trang et al., 2018).

To understand human behavior, research often uses different theories, and one of the commonly used theories is Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985). The Theory of Planned Behavior

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consists of five dimensions: attitudes, subjective norm, perceived control of behavior, intentional behavior, and behavior. This study will determine whether the above-mentioned dimensions of the TPB correlate when it comes to visiting green hotels.

In this research, an additional dimension within the Theory of Planned Behavior is the willingness to pay more. Recent studies provide different insights into the willingness to pay more for eco-friendly practices in hotels (Skordoulis et al., 2022). Willingness to pay more refers to consumers' readiness to pay a higher price for a product or service. Consumers who value environmental protection may be willing to allocate larger amounts of money to support hotels that implement these practices (Han et al., 2011). One of this study's aims is to determine whether an individual's behavior or intention to behave influences their willingness to pay more.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As in many other industries, the hospitality industry has shown increasing interest in introducing and implementing various green strategies and practices (Rahman & Reynolds, 2017). Hotels increase their efficiency and performance by acting responsibly toward the environment, so the chosen corporate strategies must include sustainable development, legal requirements and regulations on environmental and social issues, the management of non-renewable resources, and increasing awareness of corporate investments (Verma & Chandra, 2018). Key operational activities, such as energy management, waste management, and water conservation, encourage hoteliers to adopt green practices to improve the performance of their hotels and gain a competitive advantage (Munitlak Ivanović et al., 2024).

2.1. Green Hotels

The Green Hotels Association defines green hotels as environmentally conscious accommodations that implement sustainable practices and ecological principles in their operations to help protect the planet (Green Hotels Association, n.d.). Green hotels are widely regarded as environmentally friendly establishments that adhere to eco-conscious standards (Chung, 2020). The benefits generated by green hotels are numerous, such as social benefits, guest education, improved hotel image, increased competitiveness, reduced operational costs, increased economic benefits and efficiency, and improved health of employees (Han et al., 2011; Iliina et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2018). The corporate social responsibility (CSR) of hotels is seen as a key role in shaping their corporate image, with consumers responding positively when they perceive a sense of responsibility and environmental interest (Y. Kim, 2023). Moreover, evolving environmental standards have become vital to enhancing a hotel's market competitiveness and positioning (Sekulić & Mandarić, 2024).

The construction of hotels requires the use of a large number of resources (e.g., water, land, energy), while the operation of the hotel involves a significant amount of energy and products (e.g., hygiene products, electronic devices) (Chung, 2020; Sekulić & Maksimović, 2013). Green hotels respect principles of green construction that, among numerous other things, include the design of a hotel as a smart house, resource and energy saving, and waste management (Iliina et al., 2019). During the hotel's operation, energy- and water-saving measures and waste management are often seen as some of the green practices implemented by green hotels (W. G. Kim et al., 2015).

Apart from the fact that the hotel incorporates the characteristics of green building, the service it provides should be "green"; for example, room maintenance and cleaning products, linen and towel washers, as well as personal hygiene products must be biodegradable and environmentally safe (Munitlak Ivanović et al., 2024). It is important to address also the hotel staff and their role

in green hotels (Abdou et al., 2020). Hotel staff should be continuously educated about green practices and trained on how to apply them in their daily operations.

In the context of this research, the term “green hotel” describes hotels that strive for greater environmental responsibility through the efficient use of energy and water and the reduction of solid waste, while at the same time providing quality services.

2.2. Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (further in the text: TPB) is one of the most commonly used theories in behavioral psychology (Varah et al., 2021). The TPB (Ajzen, 1985) is derived from the Theory of Rational Action or Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). According to the TPB, human actions are shaped by interrelated psychological dimensions such as attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intentions, and ultimately, actual behavior. The theory has found wide application and has contributed to the understanding of human behavior in many areas (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014). By 2020, the author of the theory himself had collected over 2000 papers from various fields that apply this theory (Ajzen, 2020).

The fundamental dimensions of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) include:

1. *Attitudes*: Attitudes indicate positive or negative assessments toward certain behaviors (Yarimoglu & Gunay, 2020). A behavior can be predicted based on individuals’ attitudes, even in cases where such a pattern of behavior manifests itself rarely or with delay, or when it is difficult to observe (Mei et al., 2015).
2. *Subjective Norm*: Subjective norm is a dimension that puts the influence of the environment on a particular behavior in the foreground. Subjective norms refer to a person’s perception of social pressure from important others to engage in or avoid a certain behavior (Conner, 2020). In the context of this research, it could be said that a more positive image of society regarding green hotels influences a more positive perception of an individual when deciding to stay in such a hotel (Han et al., 2010).
3. *Perceived Behavioral Control*: This dimension indicates that an individual has control over their actions, which opens up the possibility for them to behave in a certain and acceptable way (Amoako et al., 2020; Conner, 2020).
4. *Intention to Behave*: A key predictor of behavior is intention to behave, which represents a person’s motivation in terms of their conscious plan or decision to perform the target behavior (Conner, 2020). The very intention of behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985).
5. *Behavior*: The final dimension is actual behavior, which results from the intention to act. Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control affect intention to behave, which in turn affects actual behavior (Ajzen, 2002; de Araújo et al., 2022; López-Mosquera, 2016).

This research will use the TPB with its five above-mentioned dimensions in order to better understand consumer behavior when it comes to green hotels. Additionally, alongside the dimensions of TPB, the authors will try to determine whether the dimension “willingness to pay more” more influences the behavior of hotel guests.

2.3. Willingness to Pay

Willingness to pay more (further in the text: WTP) refers to the willingness of consumers to pay a higher price for a product or service that aligns with their values, and, in the context of this

research, values such as environmental awareness and sustainability. Green products and services are often high-quality and limited in the volume of production, which directly affects the price of the final product or service. Often these are more exclusive products, and the decision to buy and consume them is somewhat more complicated, while price is one of the determining factors (Han et al., 2011). Therefore, in the literature, WTP is also sometimes known as willingness to pay premium (Balaji et al., 2019; Varah et al., 2021; Yadav & Pathak, 2017).

WTP is a dimension that is often addressed in research as an additional dimension within the TPB (e.g., López-Mosquera, 2016; López-Mosquera et al., 2014), especially in the context of individuals' willingness to visit or stay in a green hotel (e.g., Varah et al., 2021).

3. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains how an individual's attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence the intention to behave, which ultimately affects actual behavior. TPB has been widely applied in studies related to green hotels (Chen & Tung, 2014; Mohd Suki & Mohd Suki, 2015; Verma & Chandra, 2018; Yarimoglu & Gunay, 2020; Yeh et al., 2020).

Based on the TPB and in the context of visiting green hotels, Nimri et al. (2020) propose the following: individuals are more willing to stay in a hotel if they positively evaluate such behavior, expect a positive assessment of their behavior from the environment, and believe that they have the resources to enable them to do so. Accordingly, the first general hypothesis of this research is proposed:

H1 - There is a statistically significant correlation between the dimensions of the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Consumers' attitudes towards green hotels are shaped by their perception of whether these hotels are beneficial to the environment and society. Research shows that a positive attitude toward environmentally responsible hotel practices significantly increases the intention to choose a green hotel. If more positive attitudes are recorded, it can be expected that the individual is willing to stay in a green hotel (Liat et al., 2019). Han et al. (2010) found that eco-conscious guests show a higher degree of intention to book accommodation in a green hotel, which is a consequence of their positive attitudes towards sustainable practices.

H1a - There is a statistically significant correlation between attitudes and intention to behave.

In the green hotel context, subjective norms may reflect social influences of friends, family, or society that encourage sustainable behaviors. If consumers feel that it is popular in their social environment to support environmental initiatives, they are more likely to choose a green hotel.

H1b - There is a statistically significant association between social norms and intention to behave.

Perceived behavioral control refers to the sense of control that individuals have in relation to the implementation of a particular behavior. In the case of green hotels, consumers who feel they have enough information and resources to support environmental practices and choose a green hotel are more likely to make such a decision. Han et al. (2010) found that perceived behavioral control is directly related to the intention to book a green hotel, because guests who believe that they can easily get to such facilities and can afford that accommodation show a greater willingness to support green initiatives.

H1c - There is a statistically significant correlation between perceived control of behavior and intention to behave.

Intention to behave is usually described as the strongest predictor of individuals' behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Greaves et al., 2013). In this study, the aim is to examine the correlation between the dimensions of TPB; therefore, the next hypothesis can be developed:

H1d - There is a statistically significant correlation between intention to behave and behavior.

Research shows a positive correlation between consumers' increasing awareness of the importance of environmental protection and willingness to pay more for the services of green hotels (Skordoulis et al., 2022). A study by W. G. Kim et al. (2015) found that the use of green practices was positively associated with guests' willingness to pay more to stay in environmentally friendly hotels. It can be assumed that if an individual chooses to behave in a particular manner, this will likely result in an increased willingness to pay a higher price for eco-friendly hotel services. Building on this assumption, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2 - Behavior has a statistically significant influence on the dimension of willingness to pay more.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Questionnaire Development

To achieve the objectives of this study, a survey-based approach was determined to be the most appropriate method of data collection. The research utilized a questionnaire comprising three segments, with certain sections and items inspired by previous studies (Han et al., 2010; Mohd Suki & Mohd Suki, 2015; Quan et al., 2023; Verma & Chandra, 2018; Wang et al., 2018; Yadav & Pathak, 2017). The first segment included five items addressing socio-demographic characteristics. The second consisted of 17 items related to green hotels, and it was inspired by the construct of the TPB. The final segment included three items and represented an additional dimension added to this study - willingness to pay more (WTP). Excluding the first segment, a five-point Likert scale was applied in the second and third segments (1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree).

4.2. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The survey was distributed online during August and September 2024, and a total of 182 valid responses were collected. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the anonymity of the survey, and that the data would be used exclusively for academic purposes. The collected data were coded and analyzed using the statistical program SPSS version 23.00. The sample was described using descriptive statistics. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency of each segment. To validate the research hypotheses, Spearman's correlation and regression analysis were employed.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics

A description of the sample profile is given in Table 1. A higher proportion of respondents were female (65.9%). The average age of the respondents was 43.13 years, with the youngest respondent being 18 years old and the oldest being 82 years old.

Table 1. Sample profile

Gender		n	%	Employment status		n	%
Male		62	34.1	High school student		4	2.2
Female		120	65.9	University student		18	9.9
Age				Employed		135	74.2
Average age = 43.14		Age range (18-82)		Unemployed		5	2.7
Std. = 16.097				Retired		20	11.00
Education level		n	%	Monthly income		n	%
Elementary		3	1.6	Below average		27	14.8
Secondary school		80	44.0	Average		109	59.9
Higher school		8	4.4	Above average		46	25.3
Faculty		30	16.5				
Master studies		42	23.1				
Ph.D.		19	10.4				

Source: Own research

Regarding education, most participants had secondary education (44%), followed by those with a master’s degree (23.1%). In terms of employment, 74.2% were employed. Concerning monthly income, 59.9% reported average income, followed by 25.3% with above-average and 14.8% with below-average income.

5.2. Descriptive Statistics and Measurement Model Validity

The reliability of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). As shown in Table 2, all cumulative variables scored above 0.9, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Descriptive statistics of cumulative variables are also presented in Table 2. Results indicate that respondents gave the highest scores to Perceived Behavioral Control (M=3.7692; SD=1.32691) and the lowest to Attitudes (M=3.2451; SD=1.05681). This suggests that respondents mostly perceive they have control over their own behavior when it comes to green hotels.

The TPB is one of the most widely applied theories in understanding human behavior and has been extensively used in explaining environmental actions (Y. Kim, 2023). In the context of green hotels (e.g., Verma & Chandra, 2018; Wang et al., 2018), TPB has consistently been shown to be effective (Nimri et al., 2020).

The TPB model is often extended by including additional dimensions, such as willingness to pay more. Previous research indicates a generally positive attitude towards paying more for environmentally friendly products and services (Han et al., 2011; Yarimoglu & Gunay, 2020).

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach Alpha of Cumulative Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach Alpha
Attitudes	3.2451	1.05681	0.971
Subjective Norm	3.5453	1.30805	0.975
Perceived Behavioral Control	3.7692	1.32691	0.972
Intention to Behave	3.7335	1.30596	0.966
Behavior	3.6676	1.33330	0.967
Willingness to Pay More	3.4231	1.42412	0.976

Source: Own research

5.3. Correlation

To analyze the correlations between the TPB dimensions, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was used. The results showed a statistically significant ($p < 0.001$; at the 99% confidence level) and strong positive correlation between all TPB dimensions.

The strongest correlation was observed between behavioral intention and actual behavior ($r_s = 0.948^{**}$, $p < 0.000$), while the weakest, though still strong, was between the subjective norm and perceived behavioral control ($r_s = 0.808^{**}$, $p < 0.000$).

Across all cumulative variables of TPB, statistically significant positive relationships were found, with Spearman's correlation coefficients ranging from 0.808^{**} to 0.948^{**} at a 99% confidence level. In particular, a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation was observed between attitudes and behavior ($r_s = 0.923^{**}$; $p < 0.000$), as well as between attitudes and behavioral intention ($r_s = 0.918^{**}$; $p < 0.000$). Attitudes are seen as crucial elements in determining intention to visit a green hotel (Verma & Chandra, 2018; Wang et al., 2018; Yarimoglu & Gunay, 2020). These results are in line with existing research, which consistently emphasizes the role of attitudes as a key determinant of intention to stay in green hotels, and therefore the findings of this study similarly support that conclusion.

Regarding social norms, a strong positive correlation was found with attitudes ($r_s = 0.948^{**}$; $p < 0.000$). Yeh et al. (2020) also reported a statistically significant influence of subjective norm on attitudes, initiating discussion on the nature and direction of that relationship. Interestingly, the same authors found that subjective norms did not directly influence intention to behave (Yeh et al., 2020).

In this study, although the correlation between subjective norm and intention to behave is statistically significant, it is the weakest among the correlations involving behavioral intention ($r_s = 0.848^{**}$, $p < 0.000$). This supports prior findings and highlights the complex and potentially indirect role that subjective norms may play in forming behavioral intentions in the context of green hotel stays.

A particularly important observation is the correlation between intention to behave and actual behavior, which, as expected, emerged as the strongest among all dimensions ($r_s = 0.948^{**}$, $p < 0.000$). This is consistent with Ajzen's (1991) original work, in which behavioral intention is considered the most immediate and strongest predictor of actual behavior.

Table 3. Correlation between cumulative variables of TPB

		Attitudes	Subjective Norm	Perceived Behavioral Control	Intention to behave	Behavior
Attitudes	r	1	0.873**	0.846**	0.918**	0.923**
	p	/	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Subjective Norm	r	0.873**	1	0.808**	0.848**	0.842**
	p	0.000	/	0.000	0.000	0.000
Perceived Behavioral Control	r	0.846**	0.808**	1	0.916**	0.903**
	p	0.000	0.000	/	0.000	0.000
Intention to Behave	r	0.918**	0.848**	0.916**	1	0.948**
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	/	0.000
Behavior	r	0.923**	0.852**	0.903**	0.948**	1
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	/

Source: Own research

Research employing the TPB frequently focuses not only on identifying correlations but also on exploring causal relationships and the extent of influence one variable may have on another. The findings of this study confirm a statistically significant correlation between all TPB dimensions, reinforcing the robustness of the model. Similar results have been reported in other studies, including [Varah et al. \(2021\)](#).

In summary, the results support the main hypothesis of the study, **H1**, as well as the related sub-hypotheses, **H1a**, **H1b**, **H1c**, and **H1d**.

5.4. Regression

To examine the influence of respondents' behavior on willingness to pay more (WTP), a simple linear regression was conducted (Table 4).

Table 4. Influence of behavior on WTP

	R ²	F	β	p
	Willingness to Pay More			
Behavior	0.807	757.482	0.899	0.000**

Source: Own research

The results of the regression analysis show that the behavior dimension of the TPB explains 80.7% of the variance in WTP ($R^2=0.807$). The analysis also confirms that the behavior has a statistically significant effect on WTP ($\beta = 0.899$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting the second hypothesis of this research (H2 – Behavior has a statistically significant influence on the dimension of willingness to pay more). This finding is in accordance with previous research, which indicates that hotel customers who prioritize environmentally friendly practices are more willing to pay premium prices to support green hotel initiatives ([Kang et al., 2012](#); [Özkan et al., 2023](#)).

6. CONCLUSION

In response to increasing environmental awareness and answering requests from the market, many hotels have begun adopting sustainable practices, integrating environmental protection into their core business strategies. Green hotels are recognized as leaders in promoting eco-friendly behaviors by encouraging guests to recycle, reduce water consumption, and minimize electricity usage ([Rahman & Reynolds, 2017](#)). In this manner, they not only contribute to environmental protection but also inspire consumers to adopt more eco-friendly behaviors ([Rahman & Reynolds, 2017](#)). In line with these developments, it was essential to assess consumers' interest in green hotels. Results of this research showed that respondents positively evaluate staying in green hotels.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on environmentally responsible hospitality by examining the applicability of TPB in understanding consumers' behavioral intention, actual behavior, and willingness to pay more. The results provide strong empirical evidence of the significant correlations among the TPB constructs—attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, intention to behave, and actual behavior—confirming the first hypothesis (H1) and all of its sub-hypotheses (H1a–H1d). Most notably, the strongest correlation was observed between intention to behave and actual behavior ($r_s = 0.948$), confirming the TPB model's predictive strength in this context. These findings reinforce the TPB's relevance as a framework for predicting environmentally responsible behavior in hospitality settings.

One of the most important findings of this research showed that the behavioral dimension was found to significantly influence consumers' willingness to pay more for green hotels. As the results of this study showed, actual behavior significantly influences consumers' willingness to pay more. If an individual is ready to use the services of green hotels, their behavior will influence their decision to pay more. This finding is important for future research.

This study provides several valuable contributions. First, this study confirms the applicability of TPB in the context of green hotel consumption, reaffirming its robustness in predicting pro-environmental behaviors. This study additionally emphasizes the strong relationship between intention and behavior, which is one of the most important postulates of the TPB. It proposes and tests an extension of TPB by examining the effect of actual behavior on WTP, offering a more nuanced understanding of consumer decisions in the eco-hospitality sector. This study offers practical insights for the hospitality industry, indicating that consumers are willing to pay a premium for eco-certified services. This finding gives opportunities for hoteliers to develop innovative, sustainable offerings and strategically adjust pricing policies.

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. The sample size was modest (N=182) and not limited to individuals with prior experience in green hotels, potentially affecting the precision of the findings. As the data were collected through self-report surveys, there may be social desirability bias in the responses. The study captures a single point in time and does not explore changes in attitudes or behaviors over time. The complexity of the collected data also leaves the possibility for the implementation of additional statistical procedures that will lead to additional findings and results.

To build on these findings, future studies should consider expanding and segmenting the sample, especially focusing on consumers who have previously stayed in green hotels, to ensure greater relevance and accuracy of insights. Also, one of the possibilities is to explore the role of different socio-demographic variables (such as age, income, and education) in shaping perceptions and behaviors toward green hotels. Explaining human behavior in situations like consumption of green hotel services could be tested by using or combining other theories from behavioral psychology. Future research could also explore additional variables beyond WTP and also further refine and expand the TPB framework. Also, it can be discussed how other dimensions correlate. For example, intention to behave affected willingness to pay in some previous research (Yarimoglu & Gunay, 2020). It is anticipated that the implementation of sustainable green policies by hotels will increasingly serve as a key factor in consumers' decisions when selecting accommodations (Quan et al., 2023); therefore, it is necessary in the future to determine whether the consumption of green hotel services is a predictor or a consequence of behavior.

Given the growing importance of sustainability in consumer decision-making, this study underscores the strategic value of green practices for hotels. Understanding the psychological mechanisms that influence eco-conscious decisions becomes increasingly vital. As demand for eco-conscious services rises, integrating sustainable policies is not only ethically responsible but also economically beneficial and strategically advantageous, aligning business goals with consumer expectations.

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