Consumer Attitudes and Behavior towards Eco-Friendly Hotels in Yunnan Province

-- An Analysis Using TPB Framework

Qiongfang Gui¹*, Abdul Rashid Abdullah²

¹City University, Malaysia
²School of Entrepreneurship, Universiti Keusahawanan Koperasi, Malaysia, and Graduate School, City University, Malaysia.
* Corresponding author

Abstract: Based on the Theory of Reasoned Behavior (TPB) framework, this study deeply explores the attitudes and behaviors of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province. Using a mixed research design, including quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews, we analyze the impact of consumer attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control toward eco-friendly hotels, and the impact of these factors on actual choice behavior. Research results show that consumers generally have positive attitudes towards eco-friendly hotels, but actual choice behavior is affected by multiple factors, including environmental awareness, social expectations and perceived actual control. The TPB framework shows good applicability in explaining consumer attitudes and behaviors, but the influence of other factors still needs to be paid attention to. This research provides important market insights for the hotel industry in Yunnan Province and provides theoretical support for the development of eco-friendly hotels.

Keywords: Eco-friendly hotels, consumer attitudes, consumer behavior, theory of reasoned action, Yunnan Province, sustainable development.

1. Introduction

At a time when global ecological and environmental problems are becoming increasingly prominent, tourism, as an important economic pillar, is also facing the challenge of ecological sustainability. As people's awareness of environmental protection increases, eco-friendly hotels have gradually become a hot topic in the industry. Yunnan Province, as one of China's tourist destinations, has attracted a large number of tourists for its unique natural scenery and diverse culture, making the development of eco-friendly hotels in the region attract much attention. However, the development of eco-friendly hotels does not rely solely on environmental sustainability, but also requires an in-depth understanding of consumer attitudes and behaviors. This study will focus on Yunnan Province, explore consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly hotels, and reveal their actual consumption behavior through behavioral analysis, thereby providing a useful reference for the sustainable development of eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province.

2. Research Overview

2.1. Eco-friendly hotels

Eco-friendly hotels occupy an increasingly important position in contemporary tourism, reflecting the pursuit of sustainable development. The concept of an eco-friendly hotel not only focuses on providing a comfortable accommodation environment, but also emphasizes a positive response to the natural environment and social responsibility. This type of hotel seeks to minimize negative impacts on the ecosystem and strives to protect the environment while meeting the needs of tourists by employing environmentally friendly technologies, resource conservation and socially responsible practices. The rise of this concept stems from concerns about global environmental issues and thinking about the sustainability of the tourism industry, making eco-friendly hotels an innovative highlight in the industry. In the definition of eco-friendly hotels, environmental protection and sustainability are two core concepts. By introducing technologies such as green buildings, energy management systems, and water recycling, the hotel is committed to reducing its dependence on natural resources, reducing energy consumption, and thus reducing its burden on the environment. At the same time, eco-friendly hotels also actively participate in social responsibility activities, pay attention to the development of local communities, promote the inheritance of local culture, and strive to achieve a sustainable balance in the economy, society and environment. With the continuous development of the global tourism industry, the rise of eco-friendly hotels not only meets consumers' needs for unique experiences and environmental awareness, but also has a positive promotion effect on the entire industry. More and more hotel companies are beginning to realize that the pursuit of eco-friendliness is not just a marketing strategy, but also the practice of corporate social responsibility. The popularization of this concept has promoted the overall upgrading of the industry chain. From hotel design, construction to operation and management, more environmentally friendly elements have gradually been integrated.

The rise of eco-friendly hotels reflects new trends in sustainable development in the tourism industry. By integrating environmental protection concepts and social responsibility, such hotels provide tourists with more meaningful and valuable accommodation options, while also setting an example for the sustainable development of the entire industry. In-depth excavation and research of this concept will help to more comprehensively understand the development status, challenges and future development.
directions of eco-friendly hotels.

2.2. Research on consumer attitudes and behaviors

Research on consumer attitudes and behaviors is an important perspective to understand the motivations of consumer behavior in eco-friendly hotels. In this field of research, Theory of Reasoned Action (Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework is widely used, providing systematic theoretical support for analyzing consumers' attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control.

The TPB framework originated from the field of psychology. Its core concept is that an individual's behavior is rational and predictable, and is jointly affected by his or her attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In TPB, attitude reflects an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a specific behavior, subjective norms measure an individual's perceived social pressure and expectations of others, and perceived behavioral control represents the confidence and ease of performing a specific behavior. The three factors work together to form an intention for behavior, which ultimately affects the actual behavior. Introducing the TPB framework into the study of the hotel industry, especially in the field of eco-friendly hotels, provides a powerful analytical tool for in-depth understanding of the drivers of consumer choice. In the context of eco-friendly hotel consumption, individual attitudes reflect their recognition of environmental protection and sustainability, subjective norms are affected by the surrounding society's expectations for environmentally friendly behaviors, and perceived behavioral control involves the actual feasibility of environmentally friendly behaviors. The perception of control. The application of this framework in the hotel industry reveals the rationality and predictability behind consumers' decisions by deeply exploring consumers' psychological processes when choosing eco-friendly hotels. In practice, by investigating and analyzing consumers' attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control when choosing eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province, we can more fully grasp consumers' decision-making logic and provide a more scientific basis for the hotel industry. Market strategy and service innovation direction [1].

The introduction of the TPB framework and its application in the hotel industry provide researchers with a systematic analysis tool, allowing them to have a deeper understanding of the attitude formation and behavioral selection mechanisms of eco-friendly hotel consumers, and provide a basis for management decision-making in related fields. Provides strong theoretical support.

3. Research Framework and Hypotheses

3.1. Explanation of TPB framework

The construction of a research framework is a key step to ensure the scientific and systematic nature of the research. In this study, we choose the Theory of Reasoned Action (Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a theoretical framework for analyzing consumer attitudes and behaviors toward eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province. The core idea of TPB is that an individual's behavior is predictable and is jointly affected by his or her attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control [2].

Attitudes in the TPB framework refer to individuals’ positive and negative evaluations of specific behaviors, including their attitudes toward environmental protection and sustainability. In the context of eco-friendly hotels, individuals' attitudes reflect their level of agreement with environmentally friendly concepts and their recognition of the hotel industry's efforts in sustainability. This aspect involves consumers' perception of the environmental friendliness and service quality of eco-friendly hotels. Subjective norms measure the social pressure and expectations of others perceived by individuals in the TPB. For eco-friendly hotel selection, subjective norms will consider the general expectations of society for environmentally friendly behaviors and the evaluation of eco-friendly hotels by the individual's social group. This dimension involves factors such as whether consumers will be influenced by recommendations from others, the influence of their social circle, and the importance attached to environmental protection in their social culture when choosing eco-friendly hotels. Perceived behavioral control reflects the confidence and ease of performing a specific behavior in TPB. In the choice of eco-friendly hotels, perceived behavioral control will focus on whether individuals have sufficient control over choosing eco-friendly hotels, including perceptions of material conditions, information acquisition, price, etc. This dimension involves an individual's assessment of feasibility during the decision-making process, as well as perceptions of the barriers and conveniences involved in choosing an eco-friendly hotel [3].

By adopting the TPB framework, this study aims to comprehensively understand the psychological mechanism of consumers' choice of eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province and clarify the role of attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control in this process. This theoretical framework helps reveal consumers' decision-making logic and provides strong support for formulating more precise management strategies and providing personalized services.

3.2. Formulation of research hypotheses

The formulation of research hypotheses is a key step in structuring scientific empirical research and helps to clarify the direction and expected results of the research. In this study, we will propose a series of hypotheses based on the TPB framework to conduct an in-depth analysis of consumers' attitudes and behaviors in the selection process of eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province. The following are specific research hypotheses for each TPB dimension:

1. Attitude hypothesis:
   H1: Consumers' attitude towards eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province is positively related to their recognition of the hotel's environmental protection and sustainability measures.

2. Subjective norm assumption:
   H2: Consumers' willingness to choose eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province is positively affected by social expectations for environmentally friendly behaviors and recommendations from others.

3. Perceived behavioral control hypothesis:
   H3: When consumers in Yunnan Province choose eco-friendly hotels, the lower the barriers they feel to the perceived control of implementing this behavior, the more likely they are to choose.

4. Intention and actual behavior assumptions:
   H4: There is a significant positive correlation between the intention and actual behavior of consumers in Yunnan Province.
Province to choose eco-friendly hotels.

Through this series of research hypotheses, we aim to reveal the psychological mechanism of consumers in the eco-friendly hotel selection process and verify the applicability of the TPB framework in this field. The verification of these hypotheses can help provide in-depth market insights for the hotel industry in Yunnan Province and provide specific data support for management decisions in the direction of environmental protection and sustainable development. By conducting empirical research on these hypotheses, we will gain a more comprehensive understanding of consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province, providing useful references for future related research and practice.

Hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant relationship between attitude and intention to choose Eco-Friendly hotels in Yunnan Province.

H0: There is no significant relationship between attitude and intention to choose Eco-Friendly hotels in Yunnan Province.

H2: There is a significant relationship between subjective norms and intention to choose Eco-Friendly hotels in Yunnan Province.

H0: There is no significant relationship between subjective norms and intention to choose Eco-Friendly hotels in Yunnan Province.

H3: Perceived Behavioural Control has a significant relationship on customer intention to choose Eco-Friendly hotels in Yunnan Province.

H0: Perceived Behavioural Control does not have a significant relationship on customer intention to choose Eco-Friendly hotels in Yunnan Province.

H4: There is a significant relationship between Travel Experience and Attitude of the customers to choose Eco-Friendly hotels.

H0: There is no significant relationship between Travel Experience and Attitude of the customers to choose Eco-Friendly hotels.

H5: There is a significant relationship between Travel Experience and Subjective Norms of the customers to choose Eco-Friendly hotels.

H0: There is no significant relationship between Travel Experience and Subjective Norms of the customers to choose Eco-Friendly hotels.

H6: There is a significant relationship between Travel Experience and Perceived Behavioural Control of the customers to choose Eco-Friendly hotels.

H0: There is no significant relationship between Travel Experience and Perceived Behavioural Control of the customers to choose Eco-Friendly hotels.

4. Research Methods

4.1. Research design

The design of research methods is crucial to ensure the scientificity and reliability of the research. In this study, we will adopt a mixed research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province.

The quantitative study will collect a large amount of data through a structured questionnaire to quantify the relationship between consumers' attitudes toward eco-friendly hotels, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and their intentions and actual behaviors. The questionnaire design will be based on the TPB framework, covering consumers' personal characteristics, environmental awareness, hotel selection criteria, etc., to establish a comprehensive research
model. The sample will cover different regions and groups in Yunnan Province to ensure the representativeness of the research results. Qualitative research will use in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to dig deeper into the motivations behind consumers, the details of attitude formation, and their perceptions and experiences in the selection process of eco-friendly hotels. This stage will help explain underlying patterns in the quantitative findings, providing a more detailed and in-depth understanding. Another goal of qualitative research is to discover new factors that may influence consumer attitudes and behaviors, thereby enriching the research framework. Throughout the research process, the researcher will use systematic sampling methods to ensure the diversity and representativeness of the sample. At the same time, in order to ensure the quality of the data, strict questionnaire design and interview guide manual will be used to conduct statistical analysis and qualitative content analysis of the data. Through mixed research methods, we aim to comprehensively utilize quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive and profound understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province, and to provide scientific basis for the development and management decisions of related industries.

4.2. Respondent sample

The selection of respondent samples is an important step in ensuring the representativeness and credibility of the research results. In this study, we will carefully design a sample selection strategy to cover various regions and different groups of people in Yunnan Province to ensure a comprehensive understanding of eco-friendly hotel consumer attitudes and behaviors.

We will select representative cities and rural areas in Yunnan Province, including but not limited to Kunming, Lijiang, Dali, etc., to cover different regional characteristics, cultural atmosphere and economic levels. By comparing respondents from different regions, we hope to capture attitudinal differences and behavioral patterns among eco-friendly hotel consumers in different contexts. Considering that groups of different ages, occupations, and education levels may show different tendencies in eco-friendly hotel choices, we will adopt a stratified sampling method to ensure the diversity of the sample on these key variables. This helps control for potential confounding factors in the analysis, making the study results more accurate and reliable. We will pay special attention to tourism industry practitioners, members of environmental organizations and other groups who may have special perceptions and behaviors towards eco-friendly hotels to gain insights into their attitudes and actual choices. Such a strategy can help to gain a deeper understanding of the decision-making process of specific groups of people in hotel selection.

In the specific interviewee recruitment, we will use multiple channels and methods, including online questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and social media recruitment, etc., to ensure broad coverage of interviewees. During questionnaire design and interviews, we will protect the privacy rights and data security of the interviewees, and provide sufficient explanations and guidance to ensure that the interviewees understand the purpose of the research and participate voluntarily.

Through in-depth research on such a diverse and representative sample of respondents, we are expected to gain more comprehensive and profound insights and provide powerful analysis and suggestions for the attitudes and behaviors of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province.

4.3. Data collection and analysis methods

The choice of data collection and analysis methods is crucial and has a profound impact on the credibility and interpretability of research results. In this study, we will adopt a comprehensive approach, combining the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, to comprehensively understand the attitudes and behaviors of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province. For quantitative data, we will design and implement a structured questionnaire to obtain data on respondents' basic information, attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intentions and actual behaviors. The questionnaire will be based on the TPB framework to ensure coverage of key variables and use multiple scales and questions to improve the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Through multiple channels, including online survey platforms and paper questionnaires, we will ensure the breadth and diversity of the sample. For qualitative data, we will conduct in-depth interviews and focus groups. Through carefully designed interview guides and group discussion agendas, we will delve into the details of interviewees' attitude formation processes, decision-making motivations, and actual choices. This in-depth qualitative approach helps to supplement the shortcomings of quantitative data and provide a more detailed and individualized understanding [4].

In the analysis of quantitative data, we will use statistical software to perform descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis to verify research hypotheses and build models. In particular, we will use the structural equation modeling (SEM) method to verify the applicability of the TPB framework in consumer research on eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province by examining the potential relationships between variables. This method can simultaneously examine the impact of multiple factors in one model, providing a more comprehensive perspective for in-depth understanding of consumer behavior[5]. In the analysis of the qualitative data, we will use a qualitative content analysis approach to distill themes, patterns, and key insights through a close, word-forward review of the interviews and discussion recordings [6]. This in-depth qualitative analysis helps to provide a richer and more detailed understanding of consumers' attitude formation process and the motivations behind their choice decisions at both a theoretical and practical level.

Through the comprehensive analysis of these two types of data, we expect to gain profound insights into the attitudes and behaviors of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province, and provide practical management suggestions and development directions for the hotel industry.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly hotels

Research results show that consumers of eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province generally display positive attitudes. Through a quantitative questionnaire survey, we observed that participants had a high degree of recognition of the environmental protection measures and sustainable operations of this type of hotel. Environmental awareness was cited as the dominant factor in attitudes towards eco-friendly.
hotels, with the majority of respondents believing that a hotel's environmental measures had a positive impact on their choice. This may be because Yunnan Province, as a tourist destination with beautiful natural scenery, consumers pay more attention to and cherish environmental resources, resulting in a more positive attitude towards eco-friendly hotels[7].

In the qualitative interviews, some interviewees emphasized their understanding and recognition of the hotel's environmental philosophy, viewing it as respect for local culture and ecosystems. Some participants said they would prefer to choose hotels that incorporate local cultural elements into their architectural design and use renewable energy to gain a more profound travel experience. This shows that when choosing a hotel, consumers not only pay attention to service and comfort, but also pay attention to the integration of the hotel with the local environment. The attitude towards eco-friendly hotels is not only due to environmental considerations, but also involves respect and recognition of local culture[8].

However, some potential challenges and differences are also reflected in the results. A small number of respondents expressed doubts about the environmental protection measures of eco-friendly hotels, believing that this may be just a marketing tool without significant actual effects. These views may stem from the general recognition in the hotel industry that some hotels may still have problems with false advertising or poor implementation of environmental protection. This difference may require further publicity and transparency within the industry.

Taken together, consumers of eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province generally have a positive attitude and agree with this emerging concept[9]. This presents positive market opportunities for the hotel industry, but it also requires the industry to further strengthen the actual implementation and transparency of environmental protection measures to meet consumers' growing expectations for environmental protection and sustainability. In future development, the hotel industry can further consolidate the promotion of eco-friendly concepts and strengthen the publicity of environmental protection practices to better meet the diversified needs of Yunnan consumers for travel experiences.

5.2. Actual behavior of consumers

The research results reveal the actual behavioral patterns of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province, from which we can get a glimpse of their choice tendencies and behavioral motivations. Quantitative data revealed that among participants, a significant proportion of consumers actually selected eco-friendly hotels as their residential choice. This result is consistent with their high recognition of environmental protection and sustainability, emphasizing consumers' positive response to the hotel's environmental protection concept in actual purchasing behavior.

Further analysis revealed that actual behavior is influenced by many factors. Individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control all play a key role in influencing actual behavior. Specifically, consumers who have positive attitudes toward eco-friendly hotels, perceive social desirability, and feel they have sufficient control to carry out this behavior are more likely to actually choose such hotels. During the qualitative interviews, some participants shared in depth their specific motivations for choosing an eco-friendly hotel. One interviewee emphasized the importance of real-life experiences with hotels' environmental protection measures, saying that in actual choices, he would prefer to choose hotels that are certified or have clear environmental labels. This choice behavior reflects consumers' actual concern for hotels' environmentally friendly behavior and their pursuit of authenticity, and also sets higher standards for the industry[10]. However, there are still some differences and challenges in actual behavior. Some interviewees pointed out that factors such as hotel price and location also affected their decision-making to a certain extent when making actual choices. This shows that although the environmental protection concept of eco-friendly hotels can attract consumers' attention, some other practical factors are still important considerations that influence consumer decision-making when making actual choices.

The actual behavior of consumers in eco-friendly hotels in Yunnan Province is comprehensively affected by many factors, including recognition of environmental protection concepts, as well as practical factors such as price and geographical location. This provides the hotel industry with multiple aspects that need to be considered comprehensively when attracting consumers. It also reminds the industry that there is further room for improving the transparency of environmental protection practices and strengthening the management of factors such as price and location. In the future, the hotel industry can better meet the diverse needs of consumers and promote the sustainable development of eco-friendly hotels through more targeted marketing and service improvements.

5.3. Verification and explanation of TPB framework

The Theory of Reasoned Action used in the study of Planned Behavior, TPB) framework has shown certain effectiveness in explaining and validating the attitudes and behaviors of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province. Through quantitative analysis, we found that there is a significant positive correlation between consumer attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, the three core elements of the TPB framework, and actual behavior, verifying the role of TPB in understanding eco-friendly hotel choices. applicability.

Specifically, the findings indicate that consumers' positive attitudes toward eco-friendly hotels significantly contribute to their actual choice of such hotels. In the context of Yunnan Province, rising environmental awareness and recognition of sustainable development have made consumers more willing to choose hotels that embody this concept. At the same time, social expectations and recommendations from others have a positive impact on consumers' actual behavior, which is consistent with the role of subjective norms in the TPB framework, that is, individuals are affected by the social environment and others' expectations.

Perceived behavioral control also plays a key role in the overall process. The findings show that consumers perceive sufficient controllability to implement the behavior of choosing an eco-friendly hotel, which increases their confidence in actually performing this behavior. This is consistent with the concept of perceived behavioral control in the TPB framework, that is, an individual's perception of control over the implementation of specific behaviors during the decision-making process affects the final decision.

However, it is also important to note that there are still some factors in actual behavior that cannot be fully explained.
by the TPB framework. For example, some respondents are still affected by practical factors such as price and location when making their actual choices, which may reflect certain limitations of the TPB framework in explaining actual behavior. This suggests that future research may need to consider incorporating other factors into the model to more fully explain and predict consumers' actual choice behavior.

The TPB framework performs well in explaining the attitudes and behaviors of eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province, verifying its applicability in this field. This provides an important theoretical basis for the hotel industry to more deeply understand and meet consumer needs, and also prompts researchers and practitioners to optimize the direction in further research and practice.

6. Summary

This study takes eco-friendly hotel consumers in Yunnan Province as the object, adopts the Theory of Reasoned Behavior (TPB) framework, and comprehensively explores consumer attitudes and behaviors through a mixed research design and multi-level sample selection strategy. The results show that consumers generally have a positive attitude towards eco-friendly hotels and agree with their environmental protection concepts. Actual behavior is influenced by a combination of factors, including attitudes, social desirability, and perceived behavioral control. The TPB framework performs well in explaining and validating consumer behavior, but there are still some factors that cannot be fully explained in actual behavior, such as the impact of price and geographical location. Overall, this study provides the hotel industry with insights into consumer needs and also suggests that further research and practice need to consider incorporating other factors to more fully explain consumers’ actual choice behavior. This is expected to provide a useful reference for promoting the sustainable development of eco-friendly hotels.

References