

3 Chinese customers' attitudes towards sustainable practices in luxury resort hotels and their behavioural intention to pay

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Abstract

With the changing environment and the times, sustainability has become the hottest topic at this stage, and this is reflected in the hospitality industry. This chapter will focus on sustainability, relating it to customers' attitudes towards sustainability in resorts and analysing their intention to pay. To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between customers and sustainability, this chapter will focus more on luxury resorts and Chinese customers to understand what their attitudes are towards sustainable practices in luxury resorts and their payment intentions. This research will take a quantitative approach, using questionnaires to arrive at data presented in charts and tables, which are more conducive to helping us discover the relationship between the data. The study found that Chinese consumers have a positive attitude towards sustainable behaviour in hotels and a significant positive relationship with intention to pay, but this also has a strong relationship with education level. Respondents with positive attitudes were more likely to base their level of willingness to pay on their ability to pay. These results agree with previous literature examining the positive influence between sustainability and customers. However, unlike the factors found in some studies, this study found education level to be a significant factor. This chapter provides a detailed study of Chinese customers of luxury resorts, by understanding their attitudes and motivations to take relevant sustainability measures.

Keywords: Sustainable development, sustainable practices, intention to pay, Chinese customers

Introduction

With the huge role that sustainability plays in the global hospitality industry and its impact on the industry, more and more hotel groups are focusing on and implementing sustainable practices. Many hotel groups have also included sustainable practices in their group's future development plans. As sustainability grows within the industry, more and more companies, especially in the service sector, are beginning to consider and analyse the relationship between consumers and sustainable practices. The increasing growth of the hospitality industry and globalisation has led to the formation of a global industry with consumers and travellers from all over the world. In a customer-centric service industry such as hospitality, customer perceptions are a priority for hotels. Studying customer attitudes towards sustainability is a worthwhile aspect of the industry. Malheiro et al. (2020) argue that this is the same set of variables and interdependent but from different sectors and disciplines leading to different interpretations. So nowadays it has evolved into a very controversial paradox (Adelson et al., 2016). It is mainly reflected in the fact that in many developing countries the relationship between growth and environmental changes, like poverty and employment, has been balanced and that growth can be destructive to the environment, mainly in traditional societies and lifestyles (Ramirez, 2012).

Sustainable development has a significant impact on the hospitality industry. As the hospitality industry grows and competition between hotels becomes more intense, many hotels are reforming and innovating through different means to diversify their services to stand out from the rest, and hotels need to ensure that innovation is sustainable (Ozturkoglul, Fari and Saygili, 2019). Also, the hospitality industry is one of the main sectors that affects the environment, with a large amount of waste generated every year. This is why Malheiro et al. (2020) argue that the hospitality industry has a very big responsibility and obligation when it comes to sustainable development. However, despite this, the hospitality industry faces some challenges in terms of sustainability, such as which of the many sustainability projects are currently a priority for the hospitality industry (Malheiro et al., 2020). There is a strong relationship