

A Case Study in Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Hotels of Iskandar Puteri, Johor to Demonstrate the Impact of Hotel Employees' Green Awareness, Knowledge and Skill on Hotel's Green Ability

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Abstract: Unlike most green-hotel studies that focus on consumer behavior, this study tries to analyze difficulties occurring in SME hotels from an employee's standpoint. Variables appear that employees' green ability, which consists of environmental awareness, environmental knowledge, and environmental skill, has a beneficial impact on hotels' green ability. This study comprises 92 responses of a structured questionnaire survey from 14 Iskandar Puteri's SME hotel employees. The results show that environmental skills are the most positively impact on green ability of hotel. According to the findings, hotel staff contribute roughly one-half of the hotels' potential to implement environmentally practices. The practical implications of the study's findings are examined, and recommendations for future research are made.

Keywords: SME hotels; green ability; environmental awareness; environmental knowledge; environmental skill

1.0 Introduction

The tourism industry continues to be one of the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic and the outlook remains uncertain. However, after the situation one of the financial industries with the quickest growth rates worldwide is tourism, which has recently undergone considerable expansion and diversification. The tourism industry's scope consists of travel, conventions, meeting accommodations, restaurants and recreation, aimed at the meeting needs and desired of individuals when traveling away from home.

Referring to the data on tourist arrivals carried out by Tourism Malaysia in November 2020, Malaysia's number of tourist arrivals has been increasing year by year. Tourist Receipts recorded +2.4 percent growth, contributing RM 86.1 billion to Malaysia's revenue. Top contributors from traditional markets were Singapore with RM 20.5 billion in tourism spending, followed by China (RM 15.3 billion), Indonesia (RM 12.9 billion), Thailand (RM 4.0 billion) and India (RM 3.6 billion). According to Tourism Malaysia, in 2019, Malaysia registered 79,929,203 hotel guests in total. Of these, 36.1% (28,836,193) were international guests, while 63.9% were domestic guests (51,093,010). [1]

Hotels can cause negative environmental impacts when the series of daily operation hotel operations used a large amount of water, energy and solid waste which generates tonnes of waste if it is not properly managed. The occurrence of this problem is expected to increase if the planning for both tourism and the environment is uncontrolled and unsustainable, which will threaten the environment. Nur Syahidah says since hotel businesses are opened 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, the series of daily hotel operations used a large amount of water, energy and solid waste, such as non-disposable plastic containers, cleaning agents and non-recyclable packaging, which generate tonnes of waste if it is not properly managed. In this situation not only consumers but employees are also can be expected to cause significant environmental impacts. The most visible impact is the waste produced by human activities. In order to achieve successful protection of the 4 environments, especially in popular tourism destinations, it really needs the support of both hotels and consumers. [2]

The definition of green practices and its role in the consumption of hotel industry should be highlighted first. According Abdou, A. H., Hassan, T. H., & El Dief, M. M. (2020), green practices are programs that facilitate hoteliers to save water, energy and reduce solid waste, reduce operational costs and preserve the environment. The association also defined green hotels as environmentally sustainable, the managers of which are dedicated to the establishment of programs that work specifically to protect the environment. So, the question about the implementation of green practices in hotel industry is

remained here. Hence, the problem statement associated with the need of sustainable environmental practices in the hotel industry would be addressed in the next section. [3]

Studies around the world have shown that hotel operations can have a negative impact on the environment and the most negative environmental impacts of hotels are the generation and disposal of solid waste. e. Solid waste generated from hotels can be classified as wet waste including (food waste, garden waste and cooking oil waste) and dry waste includes recyclable waste such as metals (cans), plastics, paper, linen and other waste. As shown in Figure 1.2, air conditioning in hotel rooms and other areas is consuming more than 50% of the typical hotel energy distribution. Thus, hotel employees have a significant role in controlling energy consumption. According to Patwary, A. K., Omar, H., Tahir, S. (2020), 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions are contributed by the hotel industry worldwide. Hotel industry operations are not considered as environmentally friendly, for several reasons; first, it consumes high volumes of water, second, it has high energy consumption, and third, waste generation. [4]

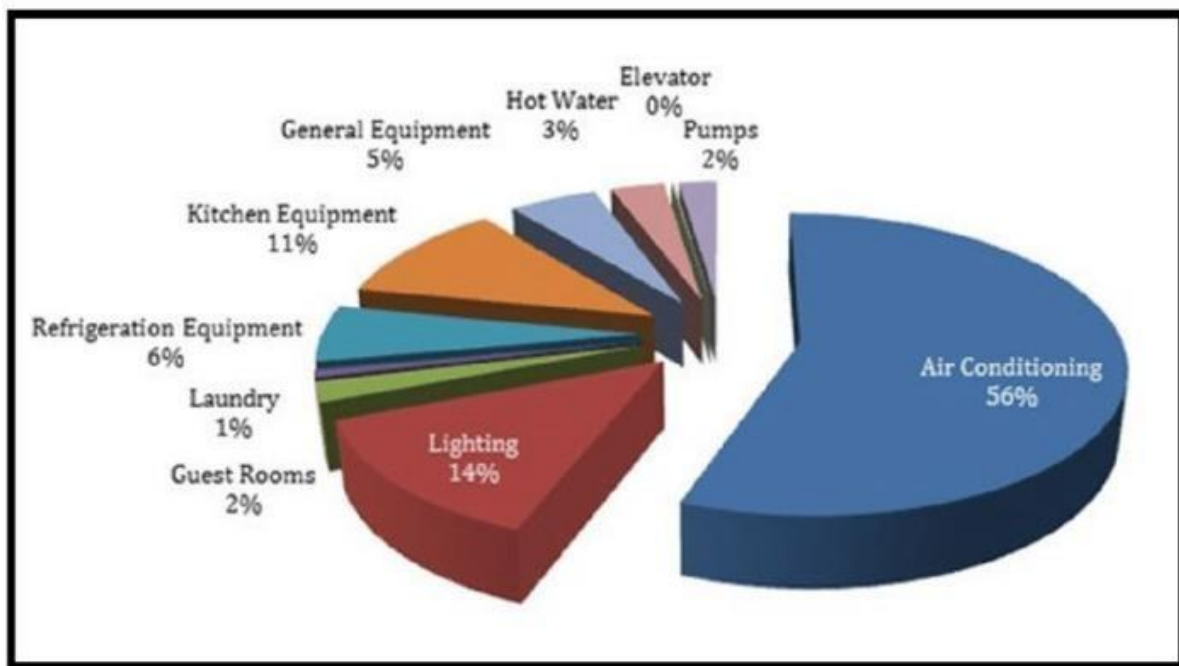


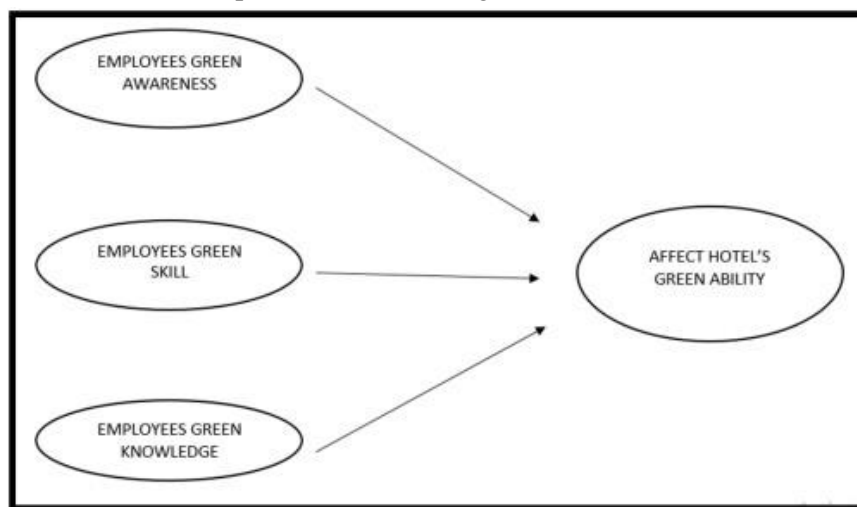
Figure 1: Typical hotel energy distribution

Hotels are among the largest contributors to energy consumption in the tertiary building sector. Additionally, the amount of natural resources used at work by the employees is not predictable, unlike the machines of the manufacturing industry, and the operational nature of the hotel business, open 365 days per year, expects more natural resource consumption than 6 manufacturing firms do. Therefore, it is essential to examine green practices in the hotel industry specifically. As a result, this energy use can be very wasteful and consuming an enormous amount of energy will contribute to global warming. Several studies in Malaysia have also confirmed that the hotel industry consumes a large amount of water, energy and waste and also a typical hotel produces more than 1 kg of waste per guest per day, resulting in tonnes of waste every month.

Since Malaysia's tourism industry has become a national income, the government has been encouraged to build more hotels in the future. Hotel development for Malaysia's economic growth should continue and, at the same time, customers should be addressed. In other words, both hotels and customers should work together to create a healthy tourism environment. One solution to this problem is that the customer and hoteliers should be in contact with the green consumer while staying at the hotel. The generation of solid waste can therefore be reduced if hotel guests and employees are prepared to reuse hotel towels, do not actively use disposable toiletries or change bed sheets on a daily basis. In particular, the hotel employees must have adequate green knowledge, awareness, and skills before pointing out the consumers.

The current study aims to identify the impact of hotel employees' green awareness, knowledge, and skill on a hotel's green ability. this type of SME hotel has the probability of adopting green activities in their chains of hotel even though they have not been awarded as a green hotel investigate how hotel employees' environmental awareness, knowledge and skills affect (SME) hotel's green ability in general. Besides the study also focuses on to identify which of the green attributes of hotel employees impact the (SME) hotel's green ability most. Furthermore, this study tries to determine the level of contribution of hotel employees toward the SME hotel's green ability. All these objectives aim to know how the hotel employees' environmental management awareness, knowledge and skills affect SME hotel's green ability?; which of the green attributes of hotels employees impact the SME hotel's green ability most?; and lastly what are the level of hotel employees' contribution towards environmental management awareness, knowledge, and skill in small medium enterprise (SME) hotel?

The proposed conceptual framework for this study is as shown in Figure 2. This framework was adapted from (Chih-hung Chen, 2016).



2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Environmental Green Practices

According to Chan et al., (2014), through the informal environmental plan or an environmental management system (EMS), hotel employees generally need to complete additional tasks to protect the environment and improve organizational performance. For example, office workers may be required to use double-sided printing or photocopying; room attendants may need to adjust room temperature and sort trash for recyclable items like plastic bottles; chefs can be instructed to turn on the kitchen equipment only when needed and in shifts and do not open it before the end, because the kitchen can consume about 15% of the hotel's electricity and fossil fuels; laundry staff must be at full capacity to wash and cut waste sheets into small pieces for other purposes; staff in the purchasing department may take some time to find what kind of environmentally friendly products and equipment can be purchase. [5]

A formal EMS also necessitates better record keeping, which necessitates managers and supervisors going above and beyond to find ways to prepare and maintain documentation. According to Tulsi & Ji, (2020) her research was more on the conceptual approach to Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) in the hospitality industry and hotel organizations rely heavily on human resources, therefore an employee's level of creativity may affect their flexibility in service delivery and inventive ideas Kim, (2019). [6] [7] Especially in the hotel industry, where everything is governed by human resource management and there is no employee initiative to implement green, these previous studies offer little insight into the

challenges that managers face in terms of employee intentions in terms of environmental programme implementation. The first people to put green into practice should be hotel workers. As a result, the need to assess their level of awareness, expertise, and understanding regarding green practices.

2.2 Employees Green Awareness

Latis, A., Aziz, S. (2018) note people have a lot of information about environmental issues, hence they spend more money on eco-friendly products because of their high level of environmental awareness. [8] Afsar et al., (2016) noted employees are more likely to engage in green activities when they are aware of ecological deterioration, environmental challenges, and the relevance of eco-friendly actions. The researcher also proved that, the interaction of individuals' sense of responsibility and concern about the outcomes of their activities (i.e., environmental awareness) with their sense of community membership and meaning in life (i.e., workplace spirituality) can activate their moral obligation and result in Pro-environmental behavior which can impact the green ability of the workplace in a positive way. This statement could be more suitable for hotel employees if they had adequate green awareness.[9]

Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002: p. 253) defined environmental awareness as "being aware of the impact of human behavior on the environment." They went on to say that environmental awareness was hampered by a number of cognitive and emotional limitations. Cognitive limitations include the non-immediacy of many ecological problems, slow and gradual ecological destruction, and the complexity of environmental problems, all of which can seriously undermine an individual's willingness to act environmentally. Emotional limitations include emotional non-involvement and emotional reactions. It is believed that an individual's environmental awareness grows in tandem with his or her ecological behavior. [10]

2.3 Employees Green Knowledge

Environmental knowledge is a key factor that influences pro-environmental behavior. Chan et al.,(2014) defined environmental knowledge as a general knowledge of facts, concepts, and relationships concerning the natural environment and its major ecosystems. One of the personal hurdles to individuals doing green skills at work is a lack of understanding of environmental knowledge in the workplace. [11] Employees may benefit from increased awareness to participate in green activities in order to mitigate the consequences of environmental issues in the workplace. Same opinion from Bashirun & Noranee, (2020) when they stated that green skill is one of the indicators that impact the green ability of the hotel. Green skills can be attribute as an attitude of employees towards the green performance. It is a person's proclivity towards something, either favorably or adversely. It's also linked to an individual's proclivity for liking or disliking particular attitudes. [12]

The employees should have awareness and knowledge on how they will contribute to energy conservation, water conservation and handling proper waste management. This is because the practical challenges of attaining sustainability in the hotel sector are highly difficult to implement as per say by Baynova (2020). [13]

3. Study Methods

The objectives of this study are using questionnaire to obtain the accurate information about impact and level of employee's contribution on hotel's green ability. The study was carried out within Iskandar Puteri's area hotel and focus findings only be generalizing among the SME hotel employees. Hotel employees are targeted because it will identify the environmentally friendly awareness, knowledge and skills, because everyone complaining that consumers are negatively affecting the hotel.

.According to the latest data from Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, the total number of SME hotels located around area Iskandar Puteri is 31. The researcher only able to provided questionnaire to 14 hotel employees which comprises of 70 of them, and 27 were selected as random

employees to collect additional survey. This is due to the lack of response from the hotel management who allowed their employees to answer this survey. A Google Form was prepared and sent to the 14 SME hotels where the population size is around 80 and 66 questionnaires were distributed based on the sampling size provided in Krejcie Morgan Table (1970). 31 questionnaires were given randomly to other hotel employees as an additional reference. Thus, the total number of respondents is 97, and 5 respondents' questionnaires were known as invalid (data from test of normality). Finally, the total number of respondents is 92. Through the process, there are few selected journals that have been referring to in order to make this research complete and accepted.

4. Results & Findings

4.1 Respondents Profile

Based on the sample collected through the distribution of questionnaires, female respondents slightly outnumber male respondents, accounting for 59% as against 33%, respectively. From the ethnic groups, the Indian employees occupied the highest percentage (43.5%), followed by Malay (31%), Chinese (20.7%), and others (2.2%). The majority ownership of the hotel comprises from local which is (87%), followed by other types of ownership.

The majority of the respondents' hotel room's number from the range of 30-60 rooms (35.9%) and 60-90 rooms (33.7%), 17.4 percent were from the 10-30 rooms and minimal respondents fell within the range of 90-120 rooms. The majority of the respondents have first degree as their highest educational qualification achieved (59.3%). In terms of position, most of the respondents worked as a front desk assistant which is (43.5%), followed by housekeeper (20.7%), and the rest stand from managers (12%), supervisors (18.5%) and others (5.4%). The main reason why questionnaires given to front desk and housekeeping employees is because they are playing the major role in SME hotels, also this study is completely on employees' awareness. Finally, (98.9%) of the employees agreed that they are environmentally friendly staff, and remained (1.1%) answered 'no' to the question.

4.2 Findings

By using Pearson correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the independent variables (IVs) and the dependent variable (DV), the result can be interpreted from Table 1, as below:

4.2.1 Green Awareness (1v1)

There is a significant, moderate and positive correlation between environmental awareness and green ability ($r = 0.70$, $r = 0.70$, respectively, $p < .01$). In testing the relationship between variables, 0.70 is strong, within the range of 0.30 to 0.60 is considered moderate, and less than 0.30 would be weak. The relationship between the variables is stated as 0.62, respectively, which further reinforces the relatively moderate relationship between the IV and the DVs. This correlation indicates that the environmental awareness and green ability has a positive relationship in each other where it's affected positively towards green ability of hotel.

4.2.2 Green Skills (1v2)

There is a significant, moderate and positive correlation between environmental Skill and green ability ($r = 0.62$, $r = 0.62$, respectively, $p < .01$). In testing the relationship between variables, 0.70 is strong, within the range of 0.30 to 0.60 is considered moderate and less than 0.30 would be weak. The relationship between the variables is stated as 0.62, respectively, which further reinforces the relatively moderate relationship between the IV and the DVs. This correlation indicates that the environmental skills and green ability has a positive relationship in each other where it's affected positively towards green ability of hotel.

4.2.3 Green knowledge (1v3)

There is a significant, moderate and positive correlation between environmental awareness and green ability ($r = 0.70$, $r = 0.70$, respectively, $p < .01$). In testing the relationship between variables,

0.70 is strong, within the range of 0.30 to 0.60 is considered moderate and less than 0.30 would be weak. The relationship between the variables is stated as 0.20, respectively, which further reinforces the relatively weak relationship between the IV and the DVs. This correlation indicates that the environmental knowledge and green ability has weak relationship in each other where it's affected negatively towards green ability of hotel.

		Green Ability (DV1)
Green Awareness (IV)	Pearson Correlation	.33.8**
	Sig. (2 -tailed)	.003
Green Skills (IV)	Pearson Correlation	.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
Green Knowledge (IV)	Pearson Correlation	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062

Table 1: Correlation Analysis Result

To identify the predictor and its contribution towards the criterion, multiple regression analysis was performed to integrate the results. It aims to determine the prediction of a single dependent variable from a group of independent variables. To ensure the appropriateness of the outputs from the regression analysis, the assumptions of multiple regression must be closely adhered to. Table 2 shows the R Square of this model is 0.454, which means that this model explains 45.4% of the variance in hotel employees agreed that the green attributes impact the hotel's green ability in positive way. This analysis is significant, as the significant value in Table 3 is zero or $p < 0.0005$.

COEFFICIENT VALUE OF MODEL				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.673 ^a	.454	.435	.49187
a. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental Awareness Mean, Green Skills, Environmental Knowledge				
b. Dependent Variable: Green Ability				

Table 2: Coefficient Value of Model

In referring to Table 3, the largest standardized coefficient beta is 0.654, which is contributed by Employees Green Skills, This indicates that Employees Green Skills have a stronger unique contribution in explaining the dependent variables compared to Environmental Awareness and Knowledge. The variable make a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable, as the significant value for the variable is less than 0.05. However, other variables have significant values of more than 0.05, which indicate that they do not make a significant unique contribution to the equation. The unstandardized Coefficient B is the beta that will be used in the equation for the model. The B value is an indication to predict the dependent variable values; therefore, only those variables that have a significant value will be entered into the equation. From the findings shown in Table 4.3, the multiple regression equation is as follows: $SU = 1.423 + 0.654 EGS$ Where: EGS = Employees Green Skill

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.673	3	5.891	24.349	<.001 ^b
	Residual	21.290	88	.242		
	Total	38.963	91			

a. Dependent Variable: Green Ability
b. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental Awareness Mean, Green Skills, Environmental Knowledge Mean

Table 3: Annova Test Results

In referring to Table 4.6.3, the largest standardized coefficient beta is 0.654, which is contributed by Employees Green Skills, This indicates that Employees Green Skills have a stronger unique contribution in explaining the dependent variables compared to Environmental Awareness and Knowledge. The variable make a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable, as the significant value for the variable is less than 0.05. However, other variables have significant values of more than 0.05, which indicate that they do not make a significant unique contribution to the equation. The unstandardized Coefficient B is the beta that will be used in the equation for the model. The B value is an indication to predict the dependent variable values; therefore, only those variables that have a significant value will be entered into the equation. From the findings shown in Table 4, the multiple regression equation is as follows: $SU = 1.423 + 0.654 EGS$ Where: EGS = Employees Green Skill

Model	Coefficients		t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Beta		
(Constant)	1.423	0.389	3.662	<.001
Environmental Knowledge Mean	-0.049	0.098	-0.499	0.619
Green Skills	0.654	0.677	7.601	<.001
Environmental Awareness Mean	0.026	0.101	0.261	0.795

Table 4: Coefficient for dependent results

5.0 Discussion of the Result

The analysis started with the descriptive analysis, followed by the preliminary analysis – normality test, reliability test and validity test – to ensure the data were valid and reliable. Correlation analysis was used to test the hypothesis. All hypotheses were accepted. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine which variable was the most significant and the best predictor to predict the outcome as well as to develop the equation. From the results, only two variables are significant predictors to predict the outcome.

Regarding to hotel employees' environmental management awareness, knowledge and skills, the results is finding a positive significant towards the green ability of the hotel where it's is affecting the green ability of hotel positively. Meanwhile, only two attributes of employees identified have positively significant to the green ability of hotel and this attribute is consider important how hotel employees' environmental management awareness, knowledge and skills affect SME hotel's green ability.

Second, the level of hotel employees' contribution towards environmental management awareness, knowledge, and skill in SME hotel can be conclude from the means of 38 items, tested according to each variable. The items in environmental awareness and knowledge variable have an indication above 3.00. This is an indication that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the items' statements based on the both independent variable and considered those items as major antecedents of green ability of the hotel. Meanwhile, environmental skill variable have an indication

above 2.00 only which most of the respondents least agreed towards the items as they only follow some of the skills in rarely or sometimes. The employees have high level contribution regarding the green awareness and knowledge, but when it's come to skills they only have moderate level of contribution.

The last issue is about the green attributes of hotel employees' impact SME hotel's green ability most. According to the largest standardized coefficient beta is 0.654, which is contributed by Employees Green Skills. This indicates that Employees Green Skills have a stronger unique contribution in explaining the dependent variables compared to Environmental Awareness and Knowledge. The variable makes a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable, as the significant value for the variable is less than 0.05.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

From the results, this study is able to draw some conclusive findings. For employees' green ability, an employee's environmental skills contributes the most to his/her hotel's green ability. Employees' green ability as a whole predicts approximately 45% of a hotel's green ability ($R^2 = 0.45$). However, an employee's environmental knowledge seems to have an adverse effect on his/her hotel's green ability. One can start to wonder why that is. From the studies of Chih-hung Chen (2016), environmental knowledge plays an important and positive role in implementing green practice. [14] This particular finding is certainly confounding. One may argue that being knowledgeable of a problem and not being able to solve it is negative. Although a study from Wenyao Zhang et al., (2021) shows the application of environmental knowledge as a powerful green lifter is to increase employees' initiatives to continue green practices, which is conducive to correctly understanding and vitalizing employees' positive subjective ideas of green practices while preventing their negative ideas of green practices. [15] There is also a study by Martin Gartmeier et al., (2017) states that sometimes negative knowledge holds information regarding whether solutions are ineffectual in a certain circumstance where it also refers to individuals' awareness of blanks or shortcomings in their own knowledge or skills. This issue could jeopardize a hotel's green efforts. [16] According to Chih-hung Chen (2016), one should keep in mind that Asian environmental education is more basic in comparison to that of western societies, and awareness without correct information may impede efforts to cope with environmental concern. [14] So, if the hotels ownership have linked with international, they might have to adapt the culture of westerns where the management and employees of the hotel need to follow the green practices that they are following in western countries so that impact of the environmental awareness, knowledge and skills of the employees are certainly.

Even though there are few quite good number of green consumers who preferred to stay in green ability of hotel, but there are some barriers in adapting it. According to Baker et al., (2013) the unwillingness of guests to put up with discomfort is one aspect related with an aversion to environmentally responsible conduct in hotels. For example, customers prefer to be treated with fresh towels and clean linens on a daily basis. Furthermore, visitors may be unwilling to engage in green activities if it interferes with their enjoyment or comfort level. As a result, employees may experience problems in dealing with 62 green practices in this situation. The only solution is to try to educate them on proper energy, water, and trash management practices. It is difficult to manage both in the same situation. In this scenario, planning is critical so that personnel can satisfy both customers and the hotel's green capabilities. [17]

Furthermore, from Han, Xing, and Kara Chan (2013) opinion various studies suggest that implementing green in hotels is costly owing to the installation of green items, but the majority of consumers are prepared to pay higher prices for green hotel rooms to support environmental protection. [18] This is where green hotel adoption is critical, as consumers are

willing to pay more for green hotels. The paper might focus on ways to inspire hotel personnel to learn new green awareness, knowledge, and skills. As previously said, an employee's green ability is a critical aspect in determining a hotel's green ability. Further investigation suggests that an employee's environmental awareness and skill contribute the most to his/her hotel's green ability, however an employee's environmental knowledge appears to have a detrimental effect on his/her hotel's green ability. This implies that simply being aware of and informed about an issue does not confer the ability to address it. As a result, it is critical for hotels to invest a proportion of their resources to training and educating their workers about the implementation of green operations

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