

## **The Case For Green Hotels: An Investigation Into The Outlook Of South African Business Travellers**

**Kola Ijasan<sup>1</sup>, Olusola Ajibola<sup>2</sup> and Khatija Gaibee<sup>1</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>School of construction Economics and Management,  
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.*

*<sup>2</sup>Department of Estate Management, Covenant University, Ota*

### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the outlook of business travellers within South Africa towards green hotels. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which greenness affects consumers in South Africa. This was achieved by reviewing literature related to green hotels and consumers' attitudes towards green products and its competitiveness in the market. A questionnaire was compiled based on existing literature. Data was collected by means of an online survey and the data are herein descriptively presented. The findings indicate that respondents have a positive attitude towards 'green hotels' but there is a dearth of knowledge as to what standards there are regarding what makes a hotel 'green'.

The surveyed guests believed that a standard should be set for green hotels and that if a conventional and green hotel served the same function, the green hotel would be the preferred choice. It is seen that it might be important for green hotels to consider incorporating a premium into their bills as results show that there exists an appetite for environmentally friendly products in South Africa. Future research is suggested to establish a model that green hotels can adopt to include a premium in the pricing of their facilities. The potential benefits of this study is contained in its opening up of a debate on the connection of sustainability within the hotel industry in South Africa. It also seeks to create awareness among hotel facilities operators on the myriad of benefits attributable to being green.

**Keywords:** Green Buildings, Green Hotels, South Africa

### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of "hotel development" can be used to either refer to the construction or the business development of a hotel (Venter and Cloete, 2007). In certain instances, it

can refer to both simultaneously. Construction is strategically important as it provides the building and infrastructure on which many industries and public entities depend. The hotel industry is no different. It is the basis of tourism in a country. The Appraisal Institute (1992) asserts that it is not only individuals that benefit from the purchase and ownership of a property; the community as a whole and the national economy are also enriched.

Hotels are categorized in the property sector as Special Trading properties. Baltin (1999) explains that hotels have an inextricable relationship between the real estate and the business operation. According to Rushmore (2008), the success of a hotel business depends on the trading brand, management and location sensitivity. This research seeks to identify the worth that a green compliant building can add to the corporate image of a hotel and if South Africans are prepared to be in a greener environment.

Green building/construction according to Chan et al (2009) involves the construction of resource-efficient buildings with innovative technologies to reduce energy and water consumption and improve waste management. Kim and Han (2010) highlighted that within the built environment, hotels are one of the major consumers of energy and water. Kim and Han (2010) emphasized this point by citing examples from Bohdanowicz (2005) and Chan (2005) which varied from consuming vast quantities of non-recyclable products and generating an extensive amount of waste to consuming significant amounts of water and energy and emitting carbon dioxide and air, water and soil pollutants. A research by Kirk in 1995 showed that besides the enormous emission from CO<sub>2</sub>, the cost of heating rooms in UK hotels cost \$228.9 million. Besides heating, water consumption, waste treatment and lighting are other costs that can substantially impact on the bottom-line of any business.

A research by Bloom et al (2011) showed that one of the reasons why the adoption of green initiatives has been slow in the US among residential property homeowners and investors is due to the fact that most property owners opine that the green attributes of a property are usually ignored when the property is sold. Goodwin (2011) quoting a Singapore focused research by Addae-Dapaah, et al (2010) found that although respondents were aware of the benefits of green buildings, this awareness had little influence on their choice of commercial building because the benefits are seen as being too remote, uncertain, and unquantifiable. However, for hotels, there is a move towards being green, as the hotel operators have been encouraged and motivated to do this by customers' desires for green oriented products. As the public has become more knowledgeable of the damage to the environment, consumers have been leaning towards green products (Han et al., 2009; Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007; Wolfe and Shanklin, 2001 and Kim and Han, 2010). According to Manaktola and Jauhari (2007), hotel guests who try to lead a greener lifestyle will look for hotels that follow eco-friendly practices.

According to Millar and Baloglu (2008), factors such as global climate change has increased the damage to the environment thus it has become a particularly hot topic within the travel and tourism industry today. As awareness of the negative impact hotels have on the environment has grown, hotels have been receiving an extensive amount of attention (Kasim, 2004 and Millar and Baloglu, 2008). Rahman et al (2012)

identified that hotels can use their size and positioning within the built environment to promote corporate responsibility on a meaningful scale as a result of the negative impact the hotel industry has on the environment.

## **RESEARCH GAP AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

There has been much research on what it means to 'go green', 'green hotels' and the willingness of travellers to pay a premium for greenness. Wilkinson et al (2013) explored the relationship between environmental consciousness of green building occupiers and those that don't currently live in one and the research shows there is no significant difference between these set of occupants in terms of their pro-environmental cognition. Kuminoff, et al (2010) conducted a study on the willingness of travellers to pay a premium for a hotel that promotes greenness. The research found that 'greenness' was increasingly becoming a search criterion among travelers and also that hotels in the USA charge a premium for their greenness.

Lee et al. (2011) explored the relationship between greening and competitiveness in some US cities. They found out that destination that ensures greening as a part of their organizational central goal can have a competitive advantage in the tourism industry. Also in the US, Barber (2012) showed that the 'green momentum' is growing globally and that becoming green could be an opportunity for hotels to create a competitive advantage, even though direct links between the environment and profitability are unsubstantiated.

A study of the attitude and behavior of consumers in India towards the adoption of green practices in the hotel industry was conducted by Manaktola and Jauhari (2007). The study revealed that consumers in India are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of engaging in environmentally friendly practices in the lodging industry, and that a positive attitude towards green practices relates strongly to positive behavior towards green practices. However, they further noted that both the positive attitude and behavior do not necessarily translate into the willingness to pay for green practice.

From the review of extant literature, it was seen that there is a dearth of research into the outlook of travellers in South Africa towards green hotels. This is in spite of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) having identified business tourism commonly referred to as the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) industry as a niche tourism segment with growth potential (Wilma den Hartigh, 2009)

From the foregoing, it has been established that studies on green incentives in the hospitality industry have been undertaken in other countries such as India and the USA, but there does not seem to be evidence of similar studies in South Africa. Research has been done on the perception of convention attendees and the attitude of green practices in hotel industry however this study focused on the business traveller who stays at hotels during a business trip. The potential benefits of this study will be to improve the brand and corporate image of the hotel alongside contributing to a sustainable environment. Therefore a study focusing primarily on the business

traveler needs to be conducted to evaluate the extent to which the “greenness” of a hotel affects consumers’ decisions taking the following into account:

1. What does a green building mean?
2. Why green buildings are important?
3. What consumers’ attitudes towards green hotels are?

Question 1, 2 and 3 are all explored through extant relevant literature, however the research focuses extensively on question 3 i.e. hotel products consumers attitude towards ‘greenness’. The next section presents a global view of ‘green’ hotels before narrowing down to the South African perspective.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature serves to produce the background of the concepts of greening and other associate terminologies to describe environmental consciousness. It focuses on the hotel industry and on extant research conducted in other countries by focusing on the concept of a greener environment, the pressure on hotels to become green and the attitude that consumers have towards green products

### **The Green Concept-what does a green building mean?**

This is aimed at the first and second research questions of this paper, which are ‘what does a green building mean and why green buildings are important’ Research by Malkani and Starik (2013) quoting Nalewaik and Venter (2009) showed that the so-called green buildings are somehow interchangeably associated with concepts such as lifecycle cost savings, improvement in human performance (including productivity gains and better employee/occupant health), and an increase in prestige. According to the Governor’s Green Government Council (2013) of the United States Environmental Protection Agency EPA, definitions of ‘green’ vary from a building that is “not as bad” as the average building in terms of its impact on the environment or one that is “notably better” than the average building, to one that may even represent a regenerative process where there is actually an improvement and restoration of the site and its surrounding environment. The construction professionals and the professionals required for the operational business need to understand the concept of a green building in order to achieve ‘greenness’. However the conundrum arises as the hotel industry is reputed for its business on perceived opulence, luxury and grandeur.

But what does a ‘green’ building look like? The Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) defines a green building as “*a building that is energy efficient, resource efficient and environmentally responsible*”. These elements should be incorporated in the design, construction and operational practices of the building and should significantly reduce or eliminate its negative impact on the environment and its occupants (Green Building Council of Australia, 2013). It can hence be deduced that a green building is one that is designed, built and operated in an environmentally sustainable way. According to the Green Hotels Association (2012), green hotels can be defined as pro-environmental lodging properties which implement different green

practices such as saving water and energy, reducing the solid waste, and recycling and reusing the durable service items (e.g., bins, towels, etc.) to protect the earth we live in.

Iwanowski and Rushmore (1994) and Graci (2008) asserted that many facility operators have not grasped the concept of a 'green hotel'. Graci (2008) citing Henderson (2007), maintain that there are factors such as cost, lack of government regulations and the complex, varied structure of the industry that hinder the ability of individual companies to make strides towards being environmentally dedicated. Pryce (2001) earlier claimed that not all hotels (especially small and medium-sized hotels) see the advantages of implementing environmental initiatives irrespective of what these advantages may be.

Market prices reveal that consumers are willing to pay a premium for items such as hybrid cars (Kahn 2007), solar electricity (Kotchen and Moore 2007), fair-trade coffee (Loureiro and Lotade 2005) and eco-labeled seafood (Johnston et al. 2001) and it is for this reason that Kuminoff et al., (2010) identified that "green" goods are becoming big business. This statement further corroborates the 2010 assertion by Bansal and Roth, who identified competitiveness, legitimation and ecological responsibility as the three main incentives for a business to go green.

Rahman et al., (2012) explained that competitiveness reflects the role that going green can play in improving profitability and that an important aspect of competitiveness is identifying how savings can be transferred to customers and not only how the business can lower its expenses. When a firm chooses to go green, as it is the right thing to do, then the firm is referred to as being responsible. Rahman et al., (2012) further asserted that when a firm goes green, the firm is adding worth to the brand's image, which ultimately results in a financial benefit for the firm therefore one of the most important reasons for going green is the customer.

### **Why Green Hotels-importance of green hotels**

The hospitality and tourism industry is under pressure from forces such as consumer demand, increasing environmental regulation, managerial concern with ethics, customer satisfaction, and maintenance issues related to the physical plant and the need for aesthetics (Foster et al. 2000). These might be some of the reasons for going green; but studies by Rahman et al, (2012) Gan (2006) and Juholin (2004) have shown that hotels go green for a variety of reasons such as economic benefits, strengthening employee organizational commitment, public scrutiny, improved investor relations and general social good.

As part of the World Conservation Strategy formulated in the 1980s, the concept of sustainable development emerged. The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) and International Hotels Environmental Initiative (1992) served as a catalyst for green hospitality practices (Tzschentke and Kirk, 2004 and Choe et al. 2012). Choe et al; (2012) further pointed out that acquiring a high level of energy and resource efficiency, as well as enhancing the corporate brand image, is vital for hotel management.

Barber (2012) remarked that conventional hotels (non-green) are often associated with issues related to deterioration of the environment or wasting resources. This

conclusion was drawn by Barber (2012) as research conducted by Bohdanowicz (2005), Chan (2005), Radwan et al., (2010) found that conventional hotels had caused enormous harm to the environment through excessive consumption of non-recyclable goods, water, and energy for heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (e.g., electricity and gas). Due to the harm being caused to the environment, hotels need to take environmental action to aid in conserving and sustaining resources required by future generations (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Chan, Wong and Lo, 2009; Dief and Font, 2010; Radwan et al., 2010 and Barber, 2012).

Due to the industry's high visibility globally as well as its ability to potentially save millions of dollars by "going green", Ryan (2002) reasoned that the hospitality industry has become a channel for social change. By going green, the hotel produces less tangible results such as improvement to the firm's reputation and thus it is difficult to quantify the good return that the investor expects (Bird et al., 2007 and Kang et al, 2012). An easy way to quantify the return for the investor would be to charge the hotel guest a premium for the green practices that the hotel endorses. According to Kang, et al, (2012), it remains unclear whether or not customers are willing to pay a premium for a green hotel. This is however one of the questions this study sets to answer within the South African market.

Many hospitality operations are confronted with two diametrically opposing issues although there is an increasing focus on the environment (Barber, 2012). On the one hand, operations such as hotels are trying to create and implement environmental policies while on the other hand, hotel guests expect to be pampered with hot water, high-pressure showers, freshly laundered linen an ample supply of towels, abundant supplies of food and drink and airport shuttles (Kirk, 1995 and Barber, 2012). Previously guests were of the opinion that if a hotel operated with green practices, it would reduce the standard of the experience for the guest (Lee et al., 2011). However, other studies by Turtle (2008) and Lee et al., (2011) have indicated that this idea is still debatable and contentious

### **Consumers' attitudes towards Green Hotels**

According to Vora (2007), forty-three million U. S. travellers have expressed their concern for the environment. This indicates that there is an increasing number of consumers who are environmentally conscious, and this will have a significant impact on hotel selection. Other studies by Han et al., 2009 and Kim and Han, 2010 also showed that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of individuals who express their ecological concerns; hence it can be deduced that the public is continuously attracted towards protecting the environment (Chan and Wong, 2006). Changes have been identified in the purchasing behavior and attitudes of consumers towards business establishments that are eco-friendly as a result of consumers being more aware and concerned about the environment (D'Souza & Taghian, 2005 and Han & Kim, 2010). The management and marketing decision-making arms of hotels are now seeking to integrate the concerns that hotel guests have regarding the environment (Bohdanowicz, 2006; Mensah, 2006, Lee et al., 2010; and Kim and Han, 2010). Hotels are recognizing the shift in consumer behavior towards green products and the importance of promoting green products and services (Pizam, 2009 and Kim

and Han, 2010). Hence hotels are now delivering green facilities and products within their buildings. However, for green buildings to deliver the desired sustainability, occupants need to be able to use the resource-efficient technical constructs of green building optimally (Wilkinson et al, 2013)

Lewis and Chambers, 2000; Han and Back, 2013 opined that in order for a hotel to increase its number of customer retention rates and profits, the hotel needs to aim to build positive guest retentions This is because a company's identity, revealed by green initiatives, is relatively enduring (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004), differentiates it from others (Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007) and enables it to enhance consumers' self-esteem (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). Customers who have higher degrees of concerns about environmental issues are more likely to identify with a company that exerts intensive green initiatives (Kang et al, 2012). A guest could be influenced to pay a premium to be accommodated in a green hotel if the guest approves both of the initiatives and approach the hotel has towards environmentally sound practices (Kang et al., 2012). This would in turn promote positive word-of-mouth recommendations of the product (Bowen and Chen, 2001; Lee et al., 2010 and Barber, 2012).

Lynes and Dredge (2006) and Graci (2008) described how organizations seek to strengthen their reputation as good corporate citizens by explaining the importance of enhancing and reinforcing an organization's positive image in the market place. This is especially for those organizations, which are scrutinized by the public. Graci (2008) explains that the image and reputation of an organization allows the organization to have a competitive advantage in the market thus it is one of the most intangible and priceless assets an organization can have. An increased competitive advantage of an organization includes benefits such as increased price premiums, attractiveness to customers, improved market share, access to or creation of new markets, improved company image, increased productivity of employees and operational fitness (Descano and Gentry 1998; Bansal and Roth 2000; Rivera 2001; Graci, 2008)

For a firm to create a successful green image, the firm needs to effectively communicate to the consumer the perceived benefits of green products (Lee et al., 2010 and Barber, 2012). According to Barber (2012), if a hotel has a sound green image, then the hotel can secure a top market position. Barber (2012) further explained that a successful green image can be achieved through cost reduction in the use of energy and water, which will appeal to investors, attract and retain highly motivated employees and develop guest loyalty. From the 'greening of accommodation' study conducted by Graci(2002), stated that first-time hotel guests base their accommodation decisions on location, amenities and service; however, a returning guest may take into consideration the commitment the hotel has towards the environment. Hence hotel managers need to understand the guests' environmental values, attitudes, and intentions (Ottman, 2011).

Despite the increasing focus on the environment, many hospitality operations are confronted with two diametrically opposed issues (Barber, 2012). The author further added that on one hand, operations such as hotels are trying to create and implement environmental policies; on the other hand, hotel customers seeking services also expect to be pampered with hot water, high-pressure showers, freshly laundered linen,

an ample supply of towels, abundant supplies of food and drinks and airport shuttles. This situation presents a conundrum for most hotel services facilities providers. As consumers are becoming more aware of the detrimental environmental effects and the concept of sustainability, they are becoming more proactive in terms of their purchasing power, i.e. they have been purchasing green products. This has resulted in the hotel industry having to become green. Although all hotels are not green, it has been established that becoming green at an early stage could serve to provide a competitive advantage to hotel brands that do so. The literature review indicates that research has been undertaken in this area of study; however, no study focusing exclusively on the outlook of travelerin South Africa towards green hotels has been conducted. It was therefore essential to conduct an evaluation of the extent to which the “greenness” of a hotel affects consumer decisions. The primary focus of such an evaluation was based on the business traveler. This enabled broad research questions to be answered.

### **RESEARCH APPROACH AND ETHICS**

According to Ritchie, et al (2003) and Carter and Little (2007), research methods are the practical activities of research, which consist of sampling, data collection, data management, data analysis and reporting.

In the course of the research, 2 main data collection steps were followed. Firstly, the manager-level employees of 4 green hotels in Johannesburg were interviewed as a form of a pilot exercise in order to get better overview of the nature of the problem. These unstructured interviews took place within the hotel premises and afterwards, the researchers were shown around the specific aspects of the facilities that made the hotels ‘green’. On average, each interview and tour took 2 hours. Of note is the fact that none of the 4 hotels contacted at this stage had applied for any form of government assistance towards the facilitation of their green projects. This is in spite of the South African governments allocation of R800M in 2011. The reasons given for this varied among the respondents. All 4 respondents said all their projects are either privately or bank financed with no help from any government agencies.

A particular benefit of this exercise was that asides it being a method of collecting preliminary data, it corroborated the research problem about a lack of concern for the demand for green initiatives from business travelers. It served as a qualitative inquiry and also helped the researchers to:

- (1) Test the adequacy of the proposed questionnaire
- (2) Develop more robust research questions i.e. ensuring content validity and finally
- (3) Getting access to other hotel facilities services providers in South Africa to participate.

The emerging themes from the pilot interviews were subsequently incorporated into the questionnaires before administration. One crucial advice from the pilot interviews on practical method of data collection was that the best way to ensure that the researchers succeeded in getting responses was to link our questionnaires to the



feedback pages of recently checked out guests. 19 resorts agreed to put the qualtrics link for the research on their website. This posed a major ethical issue of respondents' confidentiality. This was however overcome by securing direct access to the data as completed questionnaires were not stored on the servers of the hotels but sent directly to the researchers anonymously.

According to (Naoum, 1998), questionnaires are mainly used for descriptive and analytical surveys because they determine facts, opinions and views of what is happening and by who, where, how many and how much. As suggested by Seymour (2001), from the respondent's point of view, the primary intent of questionnaires is to allow for easy participation in a way that prevents the researcher from influencing their responses. For this reason, the respondents were sent a structured closed-end questionnaire, which were completed online.

The content of the questionnaire was based on both review of extant literature and key findings from the pilot interviews; the questions were in English (as that is the most widely spoken in South Africa) and also in order for it to be completed by international traveler where applicable. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section sought the respondents' basic demographic information and the second section focused on attitudes and expectations. The second section was based on an ordinal scale as described later in this research paper.

Data for this study was collected between January and June 2013. One hundred and forty-two responses were received for the survey but an exact sample could not be specified, as it is an online survey. The findings presented in this paper are based on 136 respondents, as 6 of the responses were incomplete. The chi-square frequency test was used to establish the extent of agreement in perceptions. According to Farrell (2011), the chi-square test (a non-parametric test) is an inferential statistical test, which shows the association between two sets of data and can be used only when the data is nominal or ordinal. The degree of freedom of  $n = 136$  was established and a 10% error with 90% accuracy was used for comparison purposes. Upper and lower critical values were determined. Calculated values were then compared to the lower and upper critical values. The decision rule was that if the calculated value fell between the lower and upper critical values, then the test failed to reject the null hypothesis, which implied that no relationship was perceived to exist.

As the main objective of the research was to establish the perception among business traveler on greening hotels, the findings from the questionnaires were compared to the literature published to date. An accurate description of the findings is fundamental to the research being undertaken as it adds immeasurably to the knowledge of the shape and nature of society. If the research can prove that social problems exist then that research can provoke action.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

This section presents the data collected and how the respondents view the concept of 'green' hotels in South Africa. The questionnaire was structured to explore research question 3 mainly i.e. the attitude of guests to the concept of 'greening'. To achieve this, the questionnaire was subdivided into sections in order to explore such issues as:

- Whether greenness was one of the reasons for choosing the hotel
- Whether guests are prepared to pay a premium for the green practices of the hotel
- Whether guests are attracted towards hotels marketing themselves as ‘green ‘
- Perception of hotel guests to the green momentum
- The loyalty of hotel guests

Table 1 shows the basic profile of the respondents. Of note are the facts that all the respondents are educated to high school levels, the respondents all said they were the ones that decided on the hotel and also there wasn't an overall dominance of any gender even though men were more than women. The research does not insinuate that responses were motivated in any way by the gender of the respondents

**Table 1:** profile of respondents

<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female
	62.5%	37.5%
<b>Education</b>	All above Matric (high school)	
<b>Decision on hotel</b>	All made by the respondents	
<b>Age Distribution</b>	Male	Female
20-30	24	19
31-40	34	18
41-50	15	11
51-60	5	2
> 60	7	1

On whether greenness was on the determining factors to choose the hotel, 33.8% of the respondents answered in the affirmative, 15.3 % said ‘no’ while 50.7% weren't even aware of the ‘green’ status of the hotel while they were making the booking. This shows that there is still a seeming lack of awareness among the respondents about the benefits or otherwise of the green revolution in hotel buildings. This is inconclusive as this research could not ascertain if the ‘green concept’ is gaining momentum or otherwise as the survey was not longitudinal in nature.

The survey also asked if the guests are ready to pay a premium for a green hotel. If they answered ‘yes’ they were further asked to rank the degree to which they have agreed with the statement of readiness to pay a premium for the ‘green attributes’ of a hotel. The findings show that only 61 (45%) of the respondents wouldn't mind to pay an extra for being in a green hotel. Of the 61 respondents, only 19 (31%) said that they ‘strongly agree’ while 42 (69%) ‘Agree’ with the statement of readiness to pay a premium for a green hotel. These results at this stage could not be taken as a carte blanche for the opinions of hotel guests; hence the next section of the questionnaire presented a series of statements to gauge the perception of hotels guests on the concept of greenness in South Africa. These are discussed below.

Regarding if guests attraction towards hotels marketed as ‘green’. The questionnaire asked the question of how likely are you to choose a hotel based on its greenness. This question was deemed out of place because as the rest of the survey showed, the standard of ‘greenness’ is somewhat ambiguously used within the South African environment and there is a gap in the aspect of industry standards regarding what constitutes ‘greenness’. The results were hence termed ‘inconclusive’ as only 69 respondents answered it. It is attributable to the fact that most respondents do not understand the concept of greenness sufficiently to make a decision based on it.

On the issue of the perception of the guests to the green momentum of hotels, 16 statements were made and the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with these statements. These statements were compiled from literature review based on research conducted in various countries other than South Africa. The results are presented in Table 2

**Table 2:** Perception of greenness of hotels in South Africa

STATEMENT ON GREENNESS OF HOTELS	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Green goods are important to remain competitive in today’s market	0.00	11.43	17.14	48.57	22.86
The respondent is ecologically responsible	0.00	0.00	30.56	52.78	16.67
Environmental degradation has become a major concern	0.00	0.00	11.11	30.56	58.33
Pollution prevention, product stewardship and sustainable development are three important facets of environmental performance	0.00	0.00	11.11	47.22	41.67
A standard should be set for the green momentum of hotels	0.00	0.00	2.78	61.11	36.11
Generally hotels targeting business travellers are situated in damaged environments	5.71	28.57	25.71	28.57	11.43
Hotels should continue to focus their industry on perceived opulence, luxury and grandeur	8.33	25.00	30.56	22.22	13.89
The hospitality industry has become a channel for social change due to the industry’s high visibility globally and its ability potentially save millions of dollars by going green	0.00	0.00	36.11	44.44	19.44
For a hotel to be successful in being green, it is important for the hotel managers and operators to act in an environmentally responsible manner	0.00	0.00	2.78	63.89	33.33
The respondent generally purchases green products	0.00	13.89	47.22	25.00	13.89
Terms such as “Ozone depletion”, “Greenhouse effect” and “Acid rain” has changed the purchasing decisions of the respondent	0.00	16.67	25.00	41.67	16.67
The respondent proactively engages in activities such as recycling, saving electricity and water, decreasing the use of disposable products	0.00	2.78	19.44	47.22	30.56

The respondent's actions are necessary to aid in protecting the environment	<b>0.00</b>	<b>5.56</b>	<b>5.56</b>	<b>58.33</b>	<b>30.56</b>
The respondent basis his/her first time accommodation on location, amenities and services however, when the respondent returns the respondent takes into consideration the commitment towards the environment	<b>0.00</b>	<b>16.67</b>	<b>38.89</b>	<b>30.56</b>	<b>13.89</b>
Environmental friendliness of products is not the over-riding determinant of product or brand choice but merely adds to the value of the product	<b>0.00</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>11.11</b>	<b>58.33</b>	<b>22.22</b>
It is vital for environmentally friendly products to perform the same function as conventional products in order for the respondent to choose the environmentally friendly product	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>11.11</b>	<b>47.22</b>	<b>41.67</b>

Due to the small size of the respondents, the research collapses the results of the ranking into three for easy of reporting in the following way. Strongly agree and agree, neutral and finally, 'disagree and strongly disagree'. On the statement on the importance of green or environmentally friendly products in hotels, 86% of the respondents think it is indeed important for green products to perform equal function as the non-environmentally friendly ones. This shows that even if people are inclined towards greenness, if the products are substandard in their performance, the users will prefer to turn to the non-environmentally friendly ones. Also of note is the fact that 97% either agree or strongly agree that there is a need for a standard to be set for green hotels in South Africa while a further 97% agrees with the need for hotel managers to act in environmentally friendly manners. To this light, it was seen that also 33% of the respondents think it is high time hotels stopped making the main focus of their product's marketing on opulence, luxury and grandeur but on greenness. With this statement, the respondents showed their inclination towards making the greenness of hotels more visible in marketing materials. This is suggestive of a move of the conventional promotion of hotels based on their location, (excessive) embellishments and the stateliness of the facilities. It is however difficult to conclude on whether or not the respondents can be categorized as green citizens based on the

## CONCLUSION

The green momentum in the built and human environment is gaining traction world over, but some countries seem to be ahead of others. Going green is a common phenomenon within both the academia and industry practitioners in the built environment. However, within the hotel sector, there is a lack of research into this. This research has explored the concept of 'greenness' within South Africa; it has captured the gap in literature, which can be summarized as a lack of South African based research.

The perception of hotel facilities users is very encouraging within the bounds of the response size. It is seen that most of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that hotels should be promoted on their 'green' status rather than just opulence,

location grandeur and style. It also emerged that hotel facility managers should act in environmentally friendly ways. Nearly 9 in 10 respondents agreed that environmental degradation has reached a critical point and even though they are don't consider themselves as environmentalist, they agree that there is a need to bring environmental sustainability into the public cognizance. This presents a good outlook for sustainability in South Africa. This corroborates the findings of both by Kuminoff et al. (2010) and Kang et al (2012). Whilst Kuminoff et al (2010) concluded that travelers are willing to pay a premium for green hotels in Virginia; and advised that green lodges consider that in their pricing, Kang et al (2012) opines that to an extent, if properly managed and presented, hotel facilities could even charge a premium for their greenness, although more research needs to be done to ascertain how this could be done.

One of the limitations of this research was the inability to ensure criterion validity, as there was a lack of previously used survey instruments in the field of green hotels within the South African environment. This work has nevertheless moved a step closer in the direction of correcting that. It is also further recommended that additional research be conducted into the perception of green hotels. This could be done in 2 ways, firstly by encouraging and engraving standardize industry descriptors of what 'greenness' means within an hotel facility and secondly by taking a longitudinal survey of responses over time in order to ascertain whether or not there is an upward movement in the acceptance of green hotels in South Africa.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Appraisal Institute (1992). *Appraising Residential Properties*. Chicago, Appraisal Institute.
- [2] Baltin, B. (1999). *The Hotel Development*. Washington, Urban Land Institute.
- [3] Bansal, P. and K. Roth (2010). "Why Companies Go Green: A Model of Ecological Responsiveness." *Academy of Management Journal* **43**(4): 717-736.
- [4] Barber, N. A. (2012). "Profiling the Potential "Green" Hotel Guest: Who Are They and What Do They Want?" *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* **July 2012**.
- [5] Bhattacharya, C. B. and S. Sen (2004). "Doing better at doing good: when, why, and how consumers respond to corporate social initiatives.." *California Management Review* **47**(1): 9-24.
- [6] Bird, R., et al. (2007). "What corporate social responsibility activities are valued by the market?." *Journal of Business Ethics* **76**(2): 189-206.
- [7] Bloom, B., et al. (2011). "Valuing Green Home Designs: A Study of Energy Star Homes " *Journal of Sustainable Real Estate* **3**(1): 109-126.
- [8] Bohdanowicz, P. (2005). "European hoteliers' environmental attitudes: greening the business." *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* **46**(2): 188-204.

- [9] Bohdanowicz, P. (2006). "Environmental awareness and initiatives in the Swedish and Polish hotel industries-survey results." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* **25**(4): 662-682.
- [10] Bowen, J. T. and S. L. Chen (2001). "The relationship between customer loyalty and customer satisfaction." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* **13**(5): 213-217.
- [11] Carter, S. M. and M. Little (2007). "Justifying knowledge, justifying method, taking action: epistemologies, methodologies, and methods in qualitative research." *Qual Health Res.* **17**(10): 1316-1328.
- [12] Chan, E. H. W., et al. (2009). "The Market for Green Building in Developed Asian Cities—The Perspectives of Building Designers." *Energy Policy* **37**(8): 3061-3070.
- [13] Chan, W. and K. Wong (2006). "Estimation of weight of solid waste: newspapers in Hong Kong hotels." *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* **30**(2): 231-245.
- [14] Chan, W. W. (2005). "Predicting and saving the consumption of electricity in sub-tropical hotels." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* **17**(3): 228-237.
- [15] Choe, Y., et al. (2012). "The influence of environmental values, economic values and social structure on consumers' choice of green hotels: the case of luxury hotels."
- [16] D'Souza, C. and M. Taghian (2005). "Green advertising effects on attitude and choice of advertising themes." *Asian Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* **17**(3): 51-66.
- [17] Descano, L. and B. Gentry (1998). "Communicating Environmental Performance to the Capital Markets." *Corporate Environmental Strategy* **6**(2): 15-19.
- [18] Dief, M. E. and X. Font (2010). "The determinants of hotels' marketing managers' green marketing behavior." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* **18**(2): 157-174.
- [19] Foster, S. T., et al. (2000). "The impact of customer contact on environmental initiatives for service firms." *International Journal of Operations & Production Management* **20**(2): 18-20.
- [20] Gan, A. (2006). "The impact of public scrutiny on corporate philanthropy." *Journal of Business Ethics* **69**(3): 217-236.
- [21] Goodwin, K. R. (2011). "The Demand for Green Housing Amenities." *Journal of Sustainable Real Estate* **3**(1): 127.
- [22] Governor's Green Government Council (2013). *WHAT IS A GREEN BUILDING?* E. P. Agency, US EPA.
- [23] Graci, S. (2008). "Why Go Green? The Business Case for Environmental Commitment in the Canadian Hotel Industry." *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research* **19**(2): 251-270.
- [24] Green Building Council of Australia (2013). "What is green building?". 2014, from <http://www.gbca.org.au/about/what-is-green-building/>.

- [25] Green Building Council of South Africa. March 2012, from <http://www.gbcsa.org.za>.
- [26] GHA (Green Hotel Association), 2012. What are Green Hotels?, From <http://greenhotels.com/index.php> (Retrieved May 2012).
- [27] Han, H., et al. (2009). "Empirical investigation of the roles of attitudes toward green behaviors, overall image, gender, and age in hotel customers' eco-friendly decision-making process." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* **28**(4): 519-528.
- [28] Iwanowski, K. and C. Rushmore (1994). "Introducing the Eco-friendly Hotel." *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* **35**(1): 34-38.
- [29] Juholin, E. (2004). "For business or for the good of all? A Finnish approach to corporate social responsibility." *Corporate Governance* **4**(3): 20-32.
- [30] Kahn, M. E. (2007). "Do Greens Drive Hummers or Hybrids? Environmental Ideology as a Determinant of Consumer Choice." *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*. **54**(2): 129-145.
- [31] Kang, K. H., et al. (2012). "Consumers' willingness to pay for green initiatives of the hotel industry." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* **31**(2): 564-572.
- [32] Kasim, A. (2004). "Socio-environmentally responsible hotel business: Do tourists to Penang Island, Malaysia care?" *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing* **11**(4): 5-28.
- [33] Kim, Y. and H. Han (2010). "Intention to pay conventional-hotel prices at a green hotel-a modification of the theory of planned behaviour." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* **18**(8): 997-1014.
- [34] Kuminoff, N.V., Zhang, C., Rudi, J., 2010. Are travelers willing to pay a premium to stay at a "green" hotel? Evidence from an internal meta-analysis of hedonic price premia. *Agricultural and Resource Economics Review* **39** (3), 468-484.
- [35] Kirk, D. (1995). "Environmental management in hotels." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* **7**(6): 3-8.
- [36] Kotchen, M. J. and M. R. Moore. (2007). "Private Provision of Environmental Public Goods: Household Participation in Green-Electricity Programs." *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* **53**(1): 1-16.
- [37] Kuminoff, N. V., et al. (2010). "Are Travelers Willing to Pay a Premium to Stay at a "Green" Hotel? Evidence from an Internal Meta-Analysis of Hedonic Price Premia." *Agricultural and Resource Economics Review* **39**(3): 468-484.
- [38] Lee, J., et al. (2011). *Quality of a Green Destination as Perceived by Convention Attendees: The Relationship between Greening and Competitiveness*. Boston MA.
- [39] Loureiro, M. L. and J. Lotade (2005). "Do Fair Trade and Eco-Labels in Coffee Wake Up the Consumer Conscience?" *Ecological Economics* **53**(1): 129-138.
- [40] Manaktola, K. and V. Jauhari (2007). "Exploring consumer attitude and behavior towards green practices in the lodging industry in India."

- International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management **19**(5): 364-377.
- [41] Millar, M. and S. Baloglu (2008). "Hotel Guests' Preferences for Green Hotel Attributes." *Hospitality Management* **Paper 5**.
- [42] Radwan, H. R. I., et al. (2010). "Managing solid waste in small hotels." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* **18**(2): 175-190.
- [43] Rahman, I., et al. (2012). "How "green" are North American hotels? An exploration of low-cost adoption practices." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* **31**(3): 720-727.
- [44] Rushmore, S. (2008). "Hotel Investments Handbook." Retrieved 17 November, 2013, from <http://www.hvs.com/Jump/?aid=3237>.
- [45] Ryan, C. (2002). "Equity management, power sharing and sustainability-issues of the 'new tourism'." *Tourism Management* **23**(1): 17-26.
- [46] Turtle, C. R. (2008). "Creating green meetings makes sustainability and business sense." *Hotel Business* **20**(30).
- [47] Tzschentke, N., et al. (2004). "Reasons for going green in serviced accommodation establishments." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* **16**(2): 116-124.
- [48] Venter, I. and C. E. Cloete (2007). "A framework for successful hotel developments." *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences* **10**(2): 223-237
- [49] Wilkinson, S. J., et al. (2013). "The Relationship between the Occupation of Residential Green Buildings and Pro-environmental Behaviour and Beliefs." *Journal of Sustainable Real Estate* **5**(1): 1-22.
- [50] Wolfe, K. L. and C. W. Shanklin (2001). "Environmental practices and management concerns of conference center administrations." *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* **25**(2): 209-216.
- [51] Wong, V., et al. (1996). "Market strategies and market prospects for environmentally friendly consumer products.." *British Journal of Management* **7**(3): 263-281.