

Abstract

Hotels implementing green initiatives are favorably perceived by tourists, emphasizing the role of sustainability in attracting guests, despite higher costs due to eco-friendly features (Chen and Tung, 2014; Teng et al., 2018). While green hotels effectively reduce energy consumption and waste, academic research on their impact remains limited. This bibliometric study advances understanding of the factors influencing consumer behavior and intentions toward green hotels, offering insights into their preferences. Using the Scopus database up to 2024, the study employed VOS Viewer and R to analyze citation, co-citation, and co-word analysis and other bibliometric mapping. It identifies key attributes of green hotels that meet tourist demands and provides actionable insights for hoteliers. Through three bibliometric analyses, the study outlines critical themes reflecting past, present, and future trends in sustainable hospitality, bridging the gap between academic research and industry practices.

Keywords: Green hotel, sustainability, bibliometric analysis, review, Sustainable development goals.

Introduction:

As environmental awareness rises globally, consumers are increasingly mindful of their actions and their environmental consequences, pushing the tourism and hospitality sector to develop strategies that align with these concerns (Balaji et al., 2019; Arun et al., 2021). Hotels that embrace green initiatives are viewed favorably by tourists, underscoring the value of sustainable practices in attracting guests (Chen and Tung, 2014; Teng et al., 2018). Despite this, the industry faces criticism for its substantial waste production, such as energy consumption and food waste, with visitors also playing a role in environmental harm through their activities (Abdou et al., 2020; Bashir et al., 2019).

Studies reveal that individuals who adopt pro-environmental behavior or engage in green consumption are more inclined to select green hotels, often promoting them through word-of-mouth and expressing a willingness to pay higher prices (Hall et al., 2016; Rahman and Reynolds, 2019). While green hotels are generally more expensive than conventional ones due to the additional costs of integrating sustainable features, customers who prioritize environmental sustainability remain loyal to such establishments. For the industry to thrive in the digital era, hotel operators must invest in the development and enhancement of green hotels, as these investments are projected to generate increased revenues and profitability over time (Chia-Jung and PeiChun, 2014). Consequently, identifying the key factors that motivate customers to choose green hotels despite their higher costs is critical for the industry's success.

Aligning consumer preferences with sustainable tourism initiatives not only fortifies the tourism ecosystem but also advances the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), fostering socio-economic growth and alleviating poverty in local communities (Scheyvens and Hughes, 2019). This bibliometric review is underpinned by two pivotal premises: the pressing challenge of environmental degradation driven by human consumption and the imperative to comprehend consumer behavior to facilitate sustainable transitions and mitigate ecological concerns (Trudel, 2019). Within the realm of tourism and green hotels, human behavior and decision-making emerge as critical drivers for promoting the green economy and ensuring the preservation of the global environment (Yeh et al., 2021).

This study advances the foundational understanding of the determinants and predictors influencing consumers' behavior and intention to visit green hotels, offering critical insights into the underlying motivations driving such preferences. These findings provide valuable knowledge for stakeholders, business owners, and scholars seeking to enhance tourist attraction toward green hotels. Aligning with Bavik and Koseoglu (2022), the study identifies key attributes that green hotels provide to meet tourists' needs, particularly within the broader hospitality industry and among hoteliers. Notably, while Arun et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive review of green hotels, other studies have primarily focused on broader themes such as green hospitality research (Kim et al., 2017) and eco-innovation in hospitality (Sharma et al., 2020). However, as Arun et al. (2021) highlight, existing reviews have not fully encompassed the rapidly expanding literature on green hotels. Although Fauzi et al. (2024) and others contributed a robust bibliometric analysis, their study was limited to the Web of Science Core Collection or more specific database, leaving a gap in understanding the multifaceted factors—ranging from behavioral (Fauzi et al., 2022; Filimonau et al., 2022) and psychological (Balaji et al., 2019; Kim and Ha, 2022) to contextual (Ferreira et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2019)—that motivate consumers to choose green hotels. These factors are further shaped by the sustainability practices adopted by green hotels. The growing interest in green hotels within tourism underscores the need to address this gap, as a deeper understanding of customer behavior and preferences can significantly enrich the literature on sustainable tourism. Unlike previous reviews, this study contributes a novel knowledge map, utilizing bibliometric

analysis and network visualization to trace past, present, and emerging trends in green hotel research, thereby adding substantial value to the field.

The study's outcomes will delineate key themes derived from past, present, and future trends through three distinct bibliometric analyses. By constructing a network map, the research integrates the temporal and topological dimensions of prior studies, synthesizing the central themes within green hotel research. To achieve this, the study outlines the following objectives: (1) to identify the core issues in green hotel research through citation analysis; (2) to map the knowledge structure of green hotels using co-citation analysis; and (3) to project and anticipate future research trends in the field through co-word analysis.

Green hotels and sustainable tourist behavior

Green hotels represent a pivotal initiative within green business, offering a multifaceted mechanism to influence environmental, social, and commercial development (Hasan et al., 2019). These initiatives drive the transition toward a green economy, moving beyond traditional "business as usual" models to embrace sustainability-driven regulatory frameworks, supported by financial incentives, green innovation, eco-conscious consumer behavior, and sustainable investments (Purwandani and Michaud, 2021). To remain competitive, hoteliers must innovate by integrating green services, such as adopting green technologies, to mitigate environmental harm and enhance tourists' awareness of sustainability and conservation (Songur et al., 2023). This transformation involves a comprehensive green service model that aligns service quality with user expectations within the marketing mix (Assaker, 2020). Consequently, an increasing number of hotels are promoting green hotels and their pro-environmental values to attract eco-conscious travelers and boost patronage.

A green hotel is defined as an accommodation property that adheres to ecological practices aimed at safeguarding the planet from environmental degradation (Han et al., 2010). These establishments strive to minimize negative environmental impacts while maximizing benefits through pro-environmental actions and sustainable policies (Chen et al., 2021). A more rigorous, internationally recognized definition emphasizes that green hotels must implement environmental management systems compliant with global standards (Chan, 2011). This approach extends green practices beyond the hotel itself, fostering collaboration among customers, local communities, and suppliers, marking the most advanced stage in the industry's evolution (Jiang and Gao, 2019). Specifically, green hotels commit to energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, green product usage, noise pollution control, wastewater management, and partnerships with local organizations to develop environmentally sound operational policies (Olya et al., 2019). Their role in the tourism ecosystem is critical, offering both service providers and consumers opportunities to uphold environmental principles, reduce non-renewable energy consumption, and promote sustainability (Bagheri et al., 2020). Notably, a growing majority of travelers consider environmental factors when planning holidays and selecting accommodations (Abdou et al., 2020).

Pro-environmental practices in green hotels yield dual benefits: enhancing resource efficiency through energy and water savings, and serving as a strategic tool for sustainability marketing to attract eco-conscious customers (Chan, 2014; Hou and Wu, 2021). To effectively market green hotels, service providers must prioritize customer perceptions and satisfaction regarding green practices during their stays (Tan, 2023). Social media platforms and third-party websites like TripAdvisor, through initiatives

such as the Green Leaders Program, enable travelers to share feedback on hotels' environmental efforts (Lee et al., 2016). Additionally, advancements in data analytics have revolutionized service quality in green hotels, offering deeper insights into customer preferences and operational improvements (Arici et al., 2022). Given the critical role of green hotels in environmental preservation, understanding the determinants that influence tourists' intentions to choose such accommodations is essential for advancing green hotel services and fostering sustainable tourism.

Methodology

Bibliometric approach

This study employs a quantitative bibliometric approach, utilizing bibliographic databases to construct science mapping, a method widely recognized for its effectiveness in analyzing scientific literature (Donthu et al., 2021; Tan and Fauzi, 2023). The analysis focuses on quantitative metrics such as citations, contributions, authorship patterns, and co-authorship distributions over a specified timeframe (Khan et al., 2021). Bibliometric methods serve as a robust complement to systematic literature reviews and meta-analyses, offering a structured framework for evaluating scientific contributions (Zupic and Cater, 2015). The data encompass diverse sources, including journal articles, books, book chapters, review papers, proceedings, and editorials. Three key science mapping techniques are applied:

- (1) Citation Analysis: As the foundation of science mapping, citation analysis measures the influence of publications within a specific field, with highly cited works indicating significant contributions and shaping the intellectual landscape (Zupic and Cater, 2015; Gundolf and Filser, 2013). This approach also highlights the foundational studies that underpin current research (Hota et al., 2020).
- (2) Co-citation Analysis: This method examines the frequency with which two documents are cited together, revealing relationships among references and uncovering the knowledge base of a field through seminal publications (Small, 1973; Sarin et al., 2020; Donthu et al., 2021).
- (3) Co-word Analysis: By analyzing keyword co-occurrences, this technique constructs the knowledge structure of a field, identifying conceptual relationships and emerging trends (Callon et al., 1983; Zupic and Cater, 2015; Tan Luc et al., 2020).

Research Design and Data Collection

Similar to systematic literature reviews, bibliometric analysis initiates with a carefully designed keyword search strategy to ensure exhaustive data retrieval (Köseoglu & Arici, 2023). This process includes rigorous data cleaning, such as identifying synonymous terms and utilizing thesauri to capture all pertinent literature. The search strategy incorporates a keyword string combining terms like "green hotel*," "sustainab* hotel*," "eco* friendly hotel*," and "environment* friendly hotel*" to account for variations in terminology. The search is confined to titles, abstracts, and keywords within the Scopus database, with a focus solely on peer-reviewed journal articles to guarantee high-quality, dependable data. Books, book chapters, and conference proceedings are excluded due to their inconsistent peer-review standards. The initial search, conducted on January 2, 2025, yielded 710 documents, which were refined to 532 after excluding non-journal publications and non-English articles. Six additional articles were removed due to incomplete information, resulting in a final dataset of 526 documents. This approach aligns with established bibliometric practices that prioritize journal articles for their rigorous peer-review

process and reliability (Robert et al., 2017; Lin, 2021). Data analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software and the Biblioshiny package in RStudio, tools widely recognized for their efficacy in bibliometric research.

Results:

The descriptive analysis reveals that the 526 journal articles analyzed were authored by 1,310 individuals and collectively garnered 25,063 citations, with an average of 47.65 citations per article. Figure 1 depicts the annual publication trends in green hotel studies from 1994 to December 2024, indicating a consistent year-on-year increase in research interest. However, a notable decline in publications occurred in 2021, likely due to the global shift in focus toward the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the tourism sector (Dwivedi et al., 2022). As consumer awareness and concern for pro-environmental behavior in tourism continue to grow, the volume of studies in this field is expected to rise steadily in the coming years.

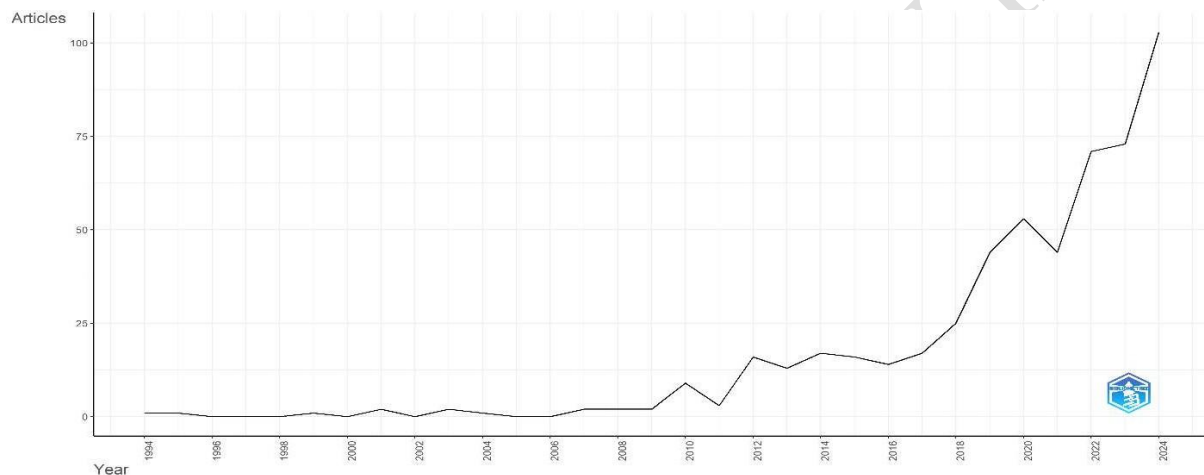


Figure 1: Annual Scientific Production (1994-2024) (Source: Author's analysis)

Document citation analysis:

The findings reveal that the most highly cited publications include Han et al. (2010) with 1,323 citations, Chen and Tung (2014) with 1,085 citations, and Han (2015) with 813 citations. Table 1 presents the top 10 cited articles, detailing their total citations and citations per year. Based on an inductive interpretation of these documents, three central themes emerged from the top-cited publications: (1) consumers and

planned behavior, (2) willingness to pay a premium for green hotels, and (3) the extended theory of planned behavior.

Table 1: Top 10 cited articles (Source: Author's Analysis)

Paper	DOI	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
HAN H, 2010, TOUR MANAGE	10.1016/j.tourman.2009.03.013	1323	82.59	3.59
CHEN MF, 2014, INT J HOSP MANAGE	10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.09.006	1085	90.42	6.08
HAN H, 2015, TOUR MANAGE	10.1016/j.tourman.2014.09.014	813	73.91	4.90
HAN H, 2010, INT J HOSP MANAGE	10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.01.001	708	44.25	1.92
LEE JS, 2010, J SUSTAINABLE TOUR	10.1080/09669581003777747	674	42.13	1.83
PHAM NT, 2019, TOUR MANAGE	10.1016/j.tourman.2018.12.008	493	70.43	5.62
KIM Y, 2010, J SUSTAINABLE TOUR	10.1080/09669582.2010.490300	485	30.31	1.32
HAN H, 2011, INT J HOSP MANAGE	10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.07.008	443	29.53	1.60
HAN H, 2015, INT J HOSP MANAGE	10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.11.004	398	36.18	2.40
VERMA VK, 2018, J CLEAN PROD	10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.10.047	375	46.88	5.17

Consumers and Planned Behavior:

Individual planned behavior is elucidated by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a widely accepted rational-choice model that explains the human decision-making process (Han, 2015). The TPB evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1985), which posits that individual decision-making is influenced by volitional factors (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of green hotels, the TPB demonstrates greater predictive power compared to the TRA (Han et al., 2010). All three components of the TPB significantly influence tourists' decisions to visit green hotels, with no notable differences in TPB variables between customers exhibiting pro-environmental behavior. Similarly, Kim and Han (2010) pioneered a model extending the TPB to include environmental concern, perceived customer effectiveness, and environmentally conscious behavior to explain eco-friendly behavior toward green hotel visitation. Their findings revealed that the extended TPB provides a more comprehensive explanation of customers' green hotel visits than the original TPB.

Paying a premium for a green hotel:

Green hotels typically command higher prices than conventional hotels due to the significant investments required to build and maintain environmentally friendly features. Han et al. (2011) found that the perceived level of corporate social responsibility is a key driver of customers' willingness to pay a premium for green hotels, contributing to sustainable development. Their study also revealed that female customers are more inclined than males to pay extra for green accommodations and to spread positive word-of-mouth. Similarly, Millar and Baloglu (2011) observed that hotel guests are generally willing to pay slightly more for "green" rooms, with business travelers showing a greater willingness to pay a premium compared to leisure travelers. Han et al. (2009) further explored customers' attitudes toward green behavior and their overall image of green hotels, finding that these factors significantly influence visit intention, word-of-mouth intention, and willingness to pay extra. The study highlighted that the overall image of green hotels mediates the relationship between customer attitudes and these behavioral intentions. Lee et al. (2010) reinforced these findings by demonstrating that the image and branding of green hotels strongly influence customers' behavioral intentions, including their willingness to pay a premium, recommend the hotel, and revisit. While customers generally understand that green hotels are more expensive, it is crucial for governments and industry stakeholders to address public perceptions that may deter guests. Without efforts to shift these perceptions, such beliefs could discourage potential customers from choosing green hotels.

Extended theory of planned behavior:

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has been widely used to study consumer intentions to visit green hotels, with extensions proposed to enhance its predictive power. Chen and Tung (2014) expanded the TPB by adding environmental concern and perceived moral obligation, finding that these factors positively influence the core TPB variables and strengthen the intention to visit green hotels. Han and Kim (2010) integrated the TPB with variables like service quality, overall image, satisfaction, and past behavior, showing that this model outperforms the original TPB in predicting behavior, particularly for revisiting green hotels. Han (2015) further enriched the TPB by incorporating the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, highlighting the role of awareness of consequences and normative processes in shaping intentions. Han and Yoon (2015) combined the TPB with the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB), integrating variables such as perceived effectiveness and environmental awareness to explain decision-making. This integration validates environmental concepts within a goal-directed framework and enhances understanding of how guests choose green hotels.

Co-citation analysis

The three most co-cited documents are Han et al. (2010) with 1,489 citations, Ajzen (1991) with 396 citations, and Kim (2010) with 408 citations. Table 2 presents the top 10 co-cited documents, while Figure 2 illustrates the network structure and visualization of the co-citation analysis in green hotel research. The analysis reveals three distinct yet interconnected clusters, each labeled based on qualitative and inductive interpretation. **Cluster 1** (red), comprising 52 publications, is themed “Tourist Willingness to Pay More for Green Hotels.” This cluster highlights that environmentally conscious consumers are more likely to pay a premium for green hotels due to their perceived value and quality attributes (Lee et al., 2010; Hameed et al., 2022). A hotel’s overall image significantly influences consumers’ behavioral intentions, including their willingness to visit, recommend, and pay extra. However, Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) found that while Indian consumers prefer hotels with green practices, they are unwilling to pay more for such services, indicating regional variations in consumer behavior.

Table 2: Top 10 documents in co-citation analysis

Author	Citations	Total Link Strength
Han H.2010	1489	12617
Ajzen I.	396	4936
Kim Y.	408	4867
Hair J. F.	301	4441
Sarstedt M.	304	4340
Ringle C. M.	260	3893
Lee J. S.	255	3232
Rahman I.	270	3047
Wang I.	234	2940
Lee S.	260	2773

Source: Author analysis

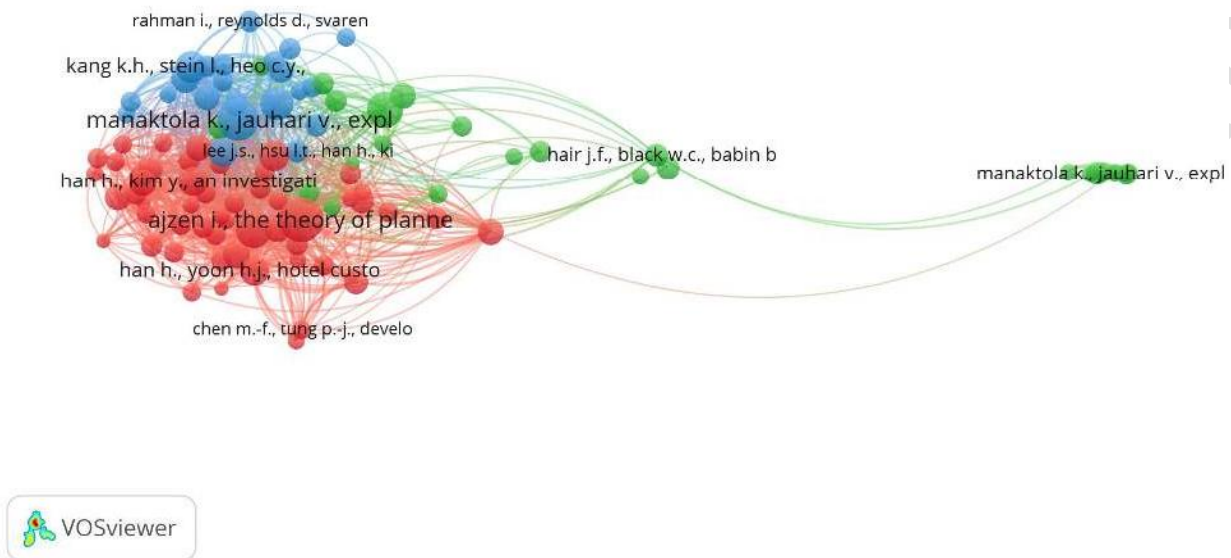


Figure 2: Science mapping of Co-citation analysis (Source : Author's own analysis)

Han et al. (2009) found that female and senior customers are more willing to pay a premium for green hotels, though their financial commitment is weaker compared to their enthusiasm for spreading positive recommendations about green hotels' benefits. The study also revealed that overall image, attitude, visit intention, and word-of-mouth were stronger among females and older adults.

Cluster 2 (green): Comprising 26 publications, this cluster is themed "Predictive Power of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)." The TPB, an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), is widely recognized for predicting behavior across various contexts (Ajzen, 1991, 2020). Han et al. (2010) demonstrated that the TPB has greater predictive power for green hotel visit intentions than the TRA. Kim and Han (2010) further enhanced the TPB by incorporating perceived customer effectiveness, environmental concerns, and environmentally conscious behavior, improving its ability to predict customers' intentions to visit green hotels.

Cluster 3 (blue): With 22 publications, this cluster is labeled "Green Hotels and the Extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior." Recent studies have extended the TPB by integrating constructs from other theories or adapting them to specific contexts. Chen and Tung (2014) added environmental concern and perceived moral obligation, showing that these factors significantly influence TPB variables and green hotel visit intentions among Taiwanese consumers. Verma and Chandra (2018) included moral effectiveness and conscientiousness to assess young Indian consumers' intentions. Han and Yoon (2015) integrated the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB) with the TPB, incorporating motivation (desire), affective processes (anticipated emotions), and automatic processes (past behavior) to predict environmentally friendly behavior, establishing the MGB as a superior framework for understanding green hotel choices.

A total of 19 keywords met the threshold of 20 occurrences out of 2,115 keywords in the co-word analysis. The most frequent keywords were “green hotels” (111 occurrences), “sustainability” (55 occurrences), and “green hotel” (108 occurrences). Table 3 lists the top 10 highest-occurrence keywords in green hotel studies. Figure 3 presents the co-word network structure, revealing three significant clusters (red, green, and blue) that reflect key thematic areas in the research.

Rank	Keyword	Occurrences	Total link strength
1	Green Hotels	111	45
2	sustainability	55	41
3	Green hotel	108	39
4	tourism	26	28
5	Theory of planned behavior	21	22
6	Green practices	23	21
7	Hospitality	18	20
8	Environmental concern	18	19
9	Hotel industry	26	16
10	attitude	17	14

Source: Author's own analysis

Cluster 1 (red): Comprising 21 keywords, this cluster is labeled “Determinants of Consumer Green Hotel Visit Intention.” Recent studies highlight the focus on implicit factors influencing consumers’ decisions to choose green hotels. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) remains central to understanding these

decisions (Verma and Chandra, 2018; Nimri et al., 2020; Yeh et al., 2021). However, despite consumers expressing environmental concerns and positive attitudes toward green hotels, these sentiments often fail to translate into actual behavior, a phenomenon known as the attitude-behavior gap (Wang, 2022; Wang et al., 2019). This gap may explain why, despite promotional campaigns, bookings for green hotels remain stagnant. Cluster 2 (green): With 20 keywords, this cluster is themed “Green Hotels and Sustainable Tourism.” Sustainable tourism, rooted in ecological, economic, and socio-cultural principles, aims to mitigate the environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourism while fostering a sustainable ecosystem, prosperous society, and robust economic growth (Torres-Delgado and Saarinen, 2014; Pan et al., 2018). Green hotels play a pivotal role in advancing sustainable tourism, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 13 (climate action) (Ahmed et al., 2021; Abdou et al., 2020). Their contributions can be examined from various perspectives to understand their impact on sustainable tourism development. Cluster 3 (blue): Consisting of 12 keywords, this cluster is labeled “Customer Satisfaction Toward Green Hotels.” Ensuring customer satisfaction is critical for green hotels, necessitating adherence to high service quality standards. Lee and Cheng (2018) developed the Green Lodging Service Quality (GLSERV) scale to evaluate customer experiences in green hotels, providing a framework for assessing and improving service quality.

Using Biblioshiny in RStudio, I conducted a bibliometric analysis to assess the density and centrality of keywords based on their temporal evolution. The latest trends (2024) highlight “personal norm” as a highly used keyword, while the top two keywords, “green hotel/hotels” and “sustainability,” emerged with high density in the most co-occurring keywords. This temporal evolution is visualized in Figure 4.

Next, a thematic map analysis was performed to identify niche, emerging, declining, and basic themes within the 426 publications (Figure 5). The analysis revealed that basic themes include social media, eco-friendly hotels, sustainability, and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Niche themes focus on extraversion, Generation Y, green attitudes, and environmental management systems. Emerging themes encompass eco-friendly behavior, sustainable hotels, and segmentation, with intersections between green consumerism and green perceived quality.

The findings suggest that the basic themes of green hotel customer behavior are rooted in the TPB, loyalty, and satisfaction. Emerging themes delve into predictors of consumers’ willingness to pay a premium for green hotels, while niche themes explore broader areas such as environmental protection, demographic factors (e.g., gender), and environmental management systems that support green hotel

practices.

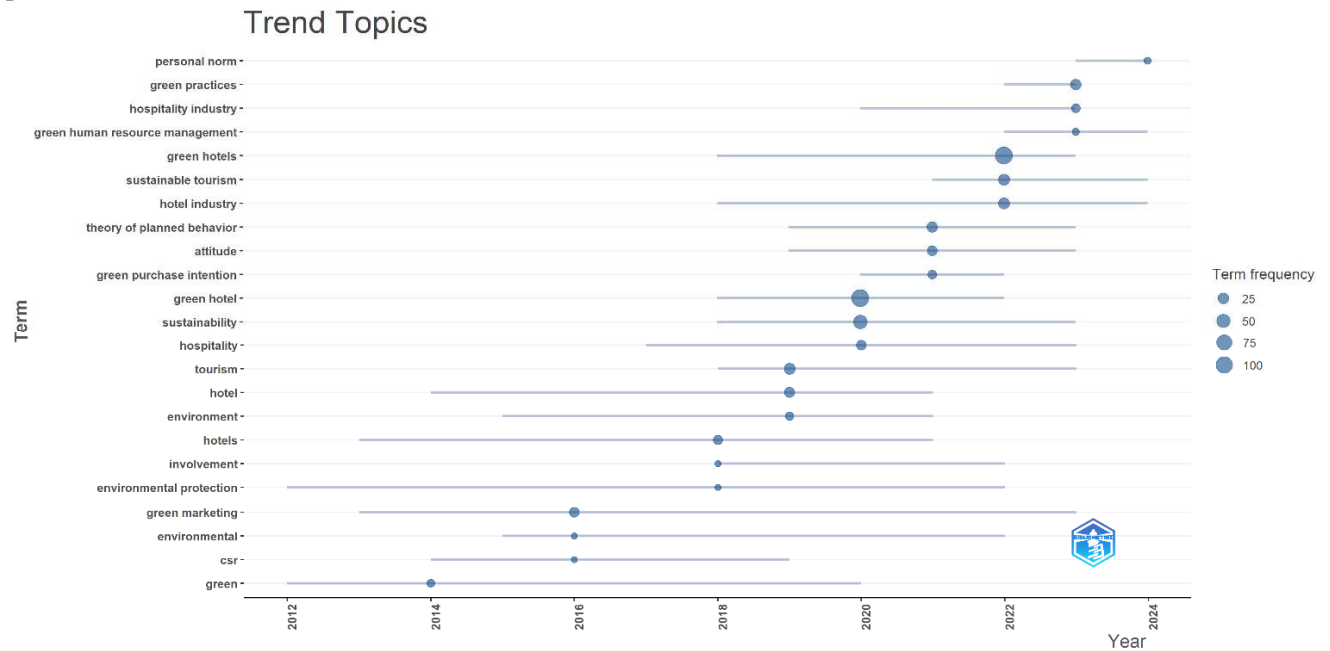


Figure 4: Temporal Evaluation of Keywords (Source: Author own analysis)

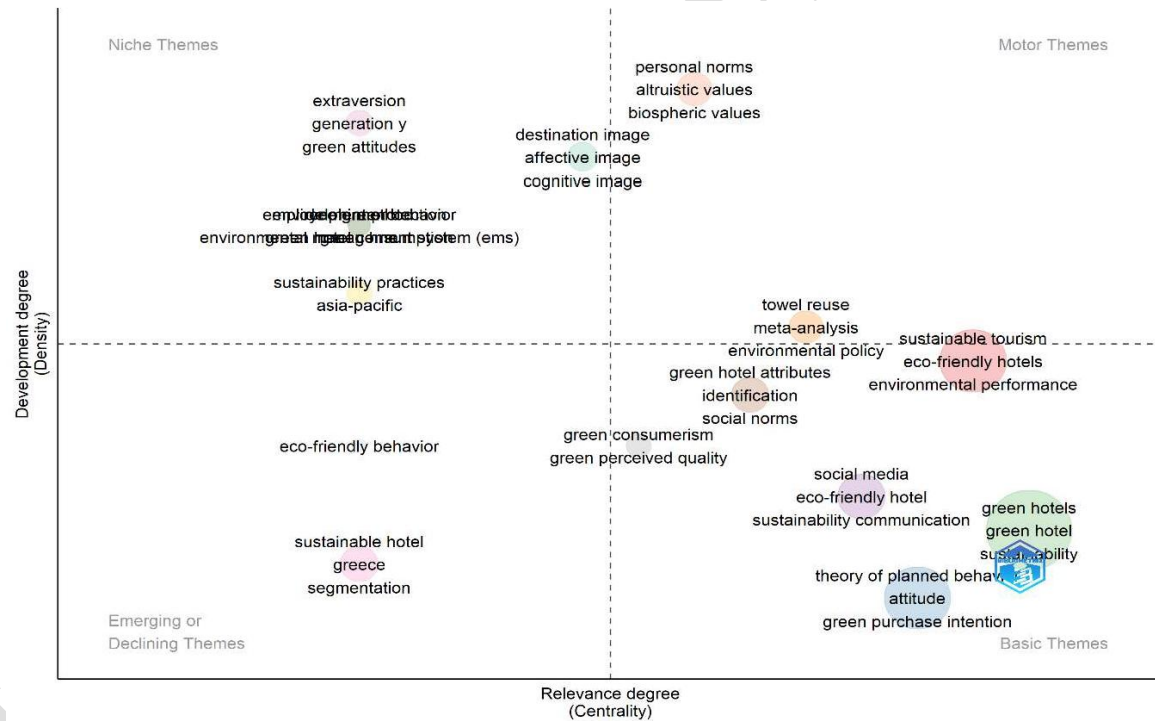


Figure 5: Thematic Map Analysis (Source: Authors own analysis)

Co-authorship analysis

This analysis offers valuable insights into the collaborative networks of authors contributing to green hotel literature. Table 4 lists the top 10 authors with the highest co-authorship, ranked by the number of documents published. Professor Heesup Han from Sejong University, Republic of Korea, emerges as the most prolific author, with twice the output of the second-highest author, Lei Wang from Xuzhou University of Technology, who has published thirteen articles. Philip Wong ranks third with ten articles. This top-10 co-authorship list highlights the strong collaborative relationships among these scholars, underscoring their significant contributions to advancing research in the field of green hotels.

Table 4: Top 10 co-authors in green hotel literature

No	Top co-authorship	Document	Citation	Total link strength
1	Han, Heesup	25	6565	11
2	Wang, Lei	13	589	16
3	Wong, Philip Pong Weng	10	372	16
4	Lee, jin-soo	7	2229	7
5	Patiar, anoop	6	299	0
6	Zhang, Qi	6	125	12
7	Ali, faizan	5	554	4
8	Acampora, Alessia	5	349	7
9	Merli, Roberto	5	349	7
10	Yu, jongsik	5	154	6

(Source: Authors analysis)

Discussions and conclusions

This study highlights key themes in green hotel research, focusing on past and future trends. Citation analysis reveals that the majority of studies center on consumer behavior, particularly the willingness to pay a premium for green hotels despite their higher costs compared to conventional hotels. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is the most widely used framework for understanding this behavior (Ajzen, 2020; Fauzi et al., 2023). Many studies have extended the TPB by integrating it with other theories, such as the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory (Han, 2015) and the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (Han and Yoon, 2015), or incorporating variables like environmental concern (Chen and Tung, 2014), service quality, overall image, and past behavior (Han and Kim, 2010). These extensions enhance the TPB's ability to predict and explain tourists' preference for green hotels.

Co-citation analysis aligns with citation findings, emphasizing themes such as tourist willingness to pay more for green hotels and the role of planned behavior. Co-word analysis identifies future research opportunities, including exploring predictors of green hotel visitation from diverse perspectives (Cluster 1), examining the relationship between green hotels and sustainable tourism (Cluster 2), and understanding tourist satisfaction with green hotels (Cluster 3). To remain competitive, green hotels must match or exceed the service quality of conventional hotels while maintaining their environmental benefits, ensuring financial sustainability.

Conclusions

Green hotels are widely recognized as a commendable initiative in the global pursuit of sustainable development. Despite their proven effectiveness in reducing energy depletion and waste, their academic recognition remains limited, as evidenced by the relatively low number of publications—only 532 peer-reviewed journal articles since 1994. Key themes emerging from the bibliometric analyses focus on understanding consumer behavior and satisfaction with green hotels. To promote their adoption, increased efforts are needed, including (1) supporting service providers in transitioning from conventional to green hotels and (2) raising consumer awareness of the benefits of green hotels. This shift is essential for aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and advancing sustainable tourism. Educating the public on the environmental, social, and economic advantages of green hotels is crucial for fostering widespread acceptance and driving the transition toward a more sustainable global tourism ecosystem.

Theoretical implications:

The most significant theoretical implication of this study lies in the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the foundational framework for understanding tourist pro-environmental behavior (Fauzi et al., 2023). The TPB's core components—attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—positively influence green purchasing behavior (Chen and Tung, 2014; Han, 2015; Yadav and Pathak, 2017), which in turn affects consumers' decisions to visit green hotels (Bashir et al., 2019; Nimri et al., 2020). As the primary theory for understanding customer intentions and attitudes toward sustainable accommodations (Teng et al., 2018), the TPB has been applied in both its basic form (Han et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2019; Yeh et al., 2021) and extended versions (Kim and Han, 2010; Chen and Tung, 2014; Verma and Chandra, 2018; Bashir et al., 2019; Nimri et al., 2020). Despite numerous efforts to integrate the TPB with other theories, it remains the dominant framework for predicting pro-environmental behavior (Rahman and Reynolds, 2019; Nimri et al., 2020). Scholars have called for further extension, merging, or decomposition of the TPB to enhance its predictive power (Kiatkawsin and Han, 2017; Olya et al., 2019).

To strengthen the TPB, studies have integrated it with theories such as the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory (Han, 2015), values theory (Rahman and Reynolds, 2019), and the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (Han and Yoon, 2015). Beyond the TPB, other theories also explain green hotel visitation. For instance, the Theory of Green Purchase Behavior (TGPB) predicts environmentally responsible buying behavior, particularly in the context of green hotels and restaurants (Han, 2020). Similarly, the VBN theory, which assesses environmentally responsible behavior through a sequential process from environmental values to pro-environmental intentions, provides an altruistic framework for understanding public pro-environmental actions (Han, 2020; Kiatkawsin and Han, 2017; Bamberg and Moser, 2007). These theories highlight that, alongside the TPB, other frameworks rooted in consumer-conscious environmental predictors also play a vital role in explaining green purchase behavior, particularly in the context of green hotels.

Practical implications

This review offers significant practical implications for hoteliers and service providers. First, pricing strategies must reflect the long-term benefits of green hotels, despite the substantial initial investments

required. Effective communication about green hotels' environmental and economic advantages is essential to encourage pro-environmental behavior, such as choosing green accommodations while traveling (Akel and Noyan, 2024). Well-informed consumers are more likely to pay a premium for green hotels, enabling service providers to capture a larger market share and ensure consistent future profits, especially as climate change concerns grow. To support this transition, governments and regulatory agencies (e.g., tourism ministries or agencies at federal and state levels) should provide incentives or rewards to service providers adopting green practices, particularly small and medium enterprises and local lodging providers.

Green marketing programs can further attract visitors by promoting eco-friendly initiatives, such as discounts for guests who participate in environmental actions like bringing their own toiletries or using mass transportation (Chia-Jung and PeiChun, 2014; Van Huy et al., 2023). These programs can target both green hotels and conventional hotels seeking to transition to sustainable practices. Over time, green hotels are likely to become the preferred choice for travelers, ensuring profitability and relevance in the post-COVID-19 tourism industry (Fotiadis et al., 2021).

Additionally, standard operating procedures and policies can be adapted to encourage green hotel visitation. For example, studies show that female consumers exhibit stronger pro-environmental attitudes and intentions toward green hotels (Han et al., 2009; Nimri et al., 2020; Moise et al., 2021). Female travelers, who often influence their families and communities, represent a significant market segment. By tailoring strategies to appeal to female consumers—who score higher in environmental attitudes, concern, and green purchase behavior (Wang et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2012)—hoteliers can drive demand for green hotels and foster broader adoption of sustainable tourism practices.

Limitations and suggestions for future works

This bibliometric review has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study is restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles to ensure the inclusion of high-quality and reliable publications. Additionally, non-English publications were excluded, potentially omitting significant contributions from non-English sources. Second, the qualitative nature of cluster theme extraction may lead to slightly different interpretations by other scholars, as the process relies on subjective judgment. Third, the review is limited to three analyses—citation, co-citation, and co-word analysis—while other methods, such as bibliographic coupling, could offer alternative perspectives on green hotel themes. Bibliographic coupling, which identifies connections between documents based on shared references, is particularly useful for uncovering current research trends (Most et al., 2018). Fourth, while this review provides a knowledge structure for green hotel research, it highlights a reliance on specific scholars, such as Professor Heesup Han from Sejong University, Republic of Korea, whose work dominates the field. This concentration may limit the diversity of perspectives in the literature.

For future research, alternative theories and frameworks could provide deeper insights into the complex cognitive and affective factors influencing consumers' decisions to visit green hotels (Ahn and Kwon, 2020; Olya et al., 2019). For instance, the Protection Motivation Theory could be applied to understand how consumers' protective motivations influence their green hotel choices, as it has been effective in other sustainable consumption studies (Ibrahim and Al-Ajlouni, 2018; Chen, 2020; Pang et al., 2021). Similarly, the Theory of Consumption Value and the Stimuli-Organism-Response (SOR) framework have proven effective in explaining green hotel visitation (Asl and Khoddami, 2023; Sann et al., 2023). Schwartz's Personal Value Theory, which explains complex human behavior, could also be adapted to this context (Paul and Roy, 2023).

Given the relatively nascent state of green hotel research, future studies should explore additional factors influencing public adoption of green hotels, such as the role of leadership at individual and institutional levels in promoting sustainable development (Ahmed et al., 2021). Furthermore, the potential of green hotels to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 13 (climate action)—should be examined across different geographical and regional contexts (Abdou et al., 2020). Investigating how green hotels' operational practices align with these environmental goals could pave the way for achieving both economic growth and sustainability objectives, ensuring a balanced approach for future generations.

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