

TO GO GREEN OR NOT TO GO GREEN: AN  
ANALYSIS OF HOTEL CHOICE DECISION-MAKING

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To go green or not to go green: An analysis of hotel choice decision-making

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Presented as part of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management within the Department of Recreation and Tourism Management at Vancouver

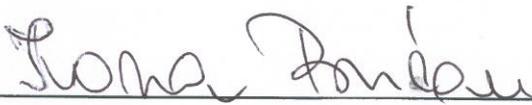
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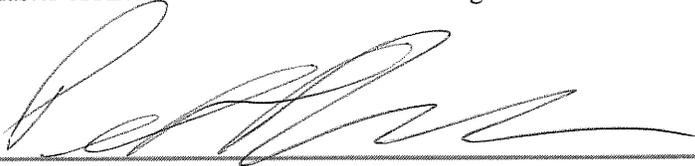


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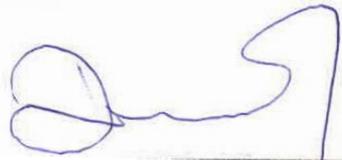
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# **To go green or not to go green: An analysis of hotel choice decision-making**

## **ABSTRACT**

Hotels have enormous growth potential for economic development. However, they consume significant amounts of energy and water while generating waste and releasing pollutants into the atmosphere. In order to minimize their impact on the environment, many hotels have initiated various environmental ‘best practices.’ These efforts differentiate them from other hotels, increase profitability, and help attract environmentally conscious visitors looking for ‘green’ certified products and places. However, the underlying factors that influence guests’ decisions when choosing between green hotels versus conventional, non-green hotels have not been fully explored. The aim of this research was to explore the formation of visitor beliefs underlying their intentions to stay at a green hotel in Vancouver, using the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) as a theoretical framework. An elicitation procedure was used to identify belief constructs since beliefs cannot be transferred from population to population and from behavior to behavior. It showed that visitors and non-visitors shared most of the beliefs that should be targeted in persuasive communication. This research demonstrates that this type of qualitative study is applicable immediately, and can be used as a basic foundation for all subsequent phases of the research and for communication whose goal is to encourage guests to stay at the environmentally healthy properties.

Keywords: green hotels, decision-making, theory of planned behavior, elicitation phase

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my mentor Dr. Pete Parker for sharing his knowledge with me, for his valuable insights, comments and patience. His guidance, expertise, friendship and constant support helped me immensely in completing my master thesis.

My sincere thanks also goes to Dr. Rick Rollins and Dr. Matthew Bowes for their help and a contribution of their knowledge.

I would like to acknowledge Tourism Vancouver Visitors Centre and their manager Cara Vanderhall, for giving me the opportunity to conduct my interviews at their Visitors Centre. I greatly appreciate their help and friendly atmosphere they created on site.

I extend my appreciation to all participants for their involvement in this research and sharing their precious time with me.

I am also grateful to family Stipanovic, Boro and Nada for their love, generous support and encouragement. I will never forget all that they did for me.

I would also like to thank my friends Kristina Rakovic, Jelena Vadanjel-Doukas, Natasa Vukalovic and Tina Stipanovic for their unlimited friendship and support.

I am grateful to my sisters Leona and Sanja, and my nephew Luka. Their immense love and understanding is something that I can always count on. I am so fortunate to have them in my life.

I want to thank my parents Darinka and Ivica Bucan for their unconditional love and never-ending support. I will forever be grateful to them for always believing in me.

Lastly, I am truly grateful to Nebojsa for his love and patience.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **The hotel industry**

Tourism is one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries (WLO, 2015). The hotel industry, tourism's most important and energy intensive sector, consumes significant amounts of energy and natural resources, and produces large amounts of air and water pollutants, and waste (Bohdanowitz, 2005; Chen & Chen, 2012; Graci & Dodds, 2008; Hu et al., 2010; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007; Teng et al., 2013; Wu & Teng, 2011). Further development of the hotel industry will likely lead to deterioration of the natural habitat (Bohdanowitz, 2005). Degradation and over exploitation of the natural resources can have many negative consequences for environment and ultimately for a hotel business (Bohdanowitz, 2005). The hotel industry is therefore obligated to perform responsible business practices (Bader, 2005; Bohdanowitz, 2005) and requires an immediate change in course of action (Chan & Chan, 2012; Teng et al., 2013).

As environmental concern has grown, so too have travelers and tourism industry employees become aware of the need for environmental protection (Andereck, 2009) and the need to "go green" (Graci & Dodds, 2008; Mihalič et al., 2011). Many industries initially started incorporating environmental practices due to governmental regulations (Lee et al., 2010; Sarkis, 1998), competitive pressure (Sarkis, 1998), or to avoid criticism from environmental conservation organizations (Lopez et al., 2011). Originally, hotels were only going "green" to abide governmental regulations, and save money (Lee et al., 2010), but over time, consumer demand and potential costs savings became the strongest motivators to go green (Bohdanowitz, 2006). Although organizations realize a need to be more environmentally friendly it is challenging to meet standards associated with environmental laws, stakeholder expectations, and industry barriers (Lopez et al., 2011). Furthermore, environmental criteria are not clearly defined, are constantly changing, and it is still unclear what the term "green" really means (Lopez et al., 2011). Some say the term "green" refers to actions that diminish harmful impacts on the environment (Wolfe & Shanklin, 2001), and is commonly referred to as being "sustainable", "eco-friendly", or "environmentally responsible" (Pizam, 2009; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007).

Hotels are considered to be going green when trying to save energy and reduce waste through the actions of the management, staff and guests (Chen & Chen, 2012). The Green Hotel Association (2013) defines green hotels as environmentally healthy properties with programs that reduce solid waste, save energy and conserve water in order to protect the environment. In the mid-1980s, many hotels started including environmental practices into their operations such as: use of fluorescent bulbs, towel and linen reusing program, light out cards, low flow toilets, low flow showerheads, limiting the disposable toiletry supplies, dispensers for soap/shampoo, using less detergent, using greywater from showers and sinks for landscaping, well-educated staff about green practices, donations to charity, and locally grown food. (Andereck, 2009; Millar & Baloglu, 2011; Bohdanowitz, 2005; Graci & Dodds, 2008; Kang et al., 2012). By the end of the 20th century green hotels existed on every continent in various forms (Bader, 2005), and their numbers are constantly growing (Pizam, 2009). Hotels that go green have been shown to: reduce energy consumption and increase employee morale (Enz & Siguaw, 1999; Graci & Dodds, 2008), satisfy environmentally oriented consumer expectations (Enz & Siguaw, 1999; Lee et al., 2010; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007), increase business profitability (Bader, 2005), improve brand image (Graci & Dodds, 2008; Han et al., 2011), attract and retain more customers (Bader, 2005; Lee et al., 2010), and reduce hotel operation costs (Bader, 2005; Graci & Dodds, 2008; Chen & Chen, 2012).

Considering the benefits of going green, it is unclear why some hotels still refuse to “go green”, and why are some are more environmentally friendly than others (Graci & Dodds, 2008). Hoteliers might be delaying their green investments because of their uncertain consumer demand (Bader, 2005) or because of the fear that they will be perceived as lowering their standards (Kang et al., 2012). It is still unclear, if this green hotel trend is just a marketing trick, temporary trend, or something that will become a permanent rule in the hotel industry (Pizam, 2009). However, Enz and Siguaw (1999) argue that eventually all hotels will have to incorporate environmental plans and programs.

As public environmental awareness improves, more consumers are becoming aware of the negative environmental consequences of their purchasing habits, and are increasingly choosing to purchase more environmentally friendly products and hotels (Han et al., 2010; Han et al., 2011; Laroche et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2010). However, there is a lack of literature regarding tourists' views of green innovations (Andereck, 2009), especially within the hotel

industry (Graci & Dodds, 2008). Little research has focused on understanding the decision making processes when choosing a green hotel over a non-green hotel (Han et al., 2010; Han et al., 2011; Han & Kim, 2010; Teng et al., 2013; Wu & Teng, 2011).

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a conceptual framework that has been used to explain the consumer decision-making process (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB was first used in a green hotel setting by Han et al (2010) while trying to identify what factors are influencing hotel guests' behavioral intentions to visit a green hotel. Several others scholars have also now applied the framework, including short description of the elicitation process (Han & Kim, 2010; Wu & Teng, 2011; Teng et al., 2013; Chen & Tung, 2014).

The TPB postulates that attitude toward behavior, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control are predictors of behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). These variables are influenced by behavioral, normative and control beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). The theory constructs do not necessarily have the same power when influencing behavioral intention, therefore there is a need to measure importance of each belief (Yamada & Fu, 2012). According to Ajzen & Fishbein (2010) new sets of beliefs and important referents should be elicited for every new context and population since there is no standard questionnaire for TPB. In other words, every time TPB is applied in a new behavioral setting it should be preceded by an elicitation study (Curtis et al, 2010). However, Fishbein and Middlestad (1995) claim that many researchers often target beliefs based on their intuition or import them from previous studies. That is confirming that the elicitation phase in behavioral studies based on the TPB is often undervalued (Curtis et al, 2010).

Few studies have used an elicitation study to explore the influence of belief constructs on the TPB variables in a green hotel context (Han et al, 2010; Kim & Han, 2010; Han & Kim, 2010). The elicitation phase serves several purposes. First, it can identify salient beliefs which are underlying the target behavior and then develop a valid belief measurement instrument. Second, open-ended question are used to recognize common terminology and wording of the target population which is useful for subsequent communication. Third, by including guests who do and do not perform a behavior there is potential for preliminary analyses and the identification of differentiating beliefs (Curtis et al, 2010, Middlestadt et al., 1996). Therefore, this study will focus on the elicitation phase.

The purpose of this study was to obtain a better understanding of the underlying beliefs of hotel guests' intentions to stay in a green hotel when they visit Vancouver. This study can help us to understand the factors that affect the propensity to exhibit sustainable behavior by supporting green hotels in Vancouver. This formative research has both theoretical and practical implications and is crucial for valid and relevant research of a larger scale that can help hotel industry to create more effective marketing tools regarding their green practices and cause behavioral changes. In order to make behavioral changes first there was a need to identify problem behavior and then target the actions which are results of visitors' personal choices. One of the ways to change unwilling behavior is to use various messages to convince the visitors to behave appropriately. Final results will help hoteliers to more successfully communicate their practices to the public, and therefore attract more consumers. More specifically, this research intended:

- To explore and identify behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs of hotel guests' underlying visitors decisions to choose, or not to choose a green hotel.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is used in this research in order to understand and identify beliefs underlying guest's intention to visit a green hotel. More precisely, a semi structured elicitation procedure is used to collect new sets of beliefs and important referents.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a theoretical model constructed to predict and explain human behavior in specific contexts (Ajzen, 1991). A central component of the TPB is the individual intention to perform a certain behavior, which is considered to be an immediate antecedent of behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2011; Kim & Han, 2010). Even though the relationship between behavioral intention and behavior is not perfect, behavioral intention can be perceived as the best predictor of behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Lam & Hsu, 2004). In other words, the stronger intention should lead to an increased possibility the behavior will be performed (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). The TPB takes into account three conceptually independent determinants:

- attitude toward behavior
- subjective norm
- perceived behavioral control

Perceived behavioral control will influence behavior directly and is reflection of actual control that individuals possess over performing the behavior (Madden et al., 1992). The more favorable attitude and social pressure, together with the greater control over behavior should direct to individuals stronger intention to perform willing behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Lam & Hsu 2006).

However, the relative importance of these three variables vary from one population to another and from one behavior to another (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). More specifically, behavior is a function of information or most important beliefs, and they are predominant determinants of a person's intentions and activities (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). There are three types of beliefs (Figure 1): behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, performance of the human behaviors can be predicted from behavioral intention and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991, 2011).

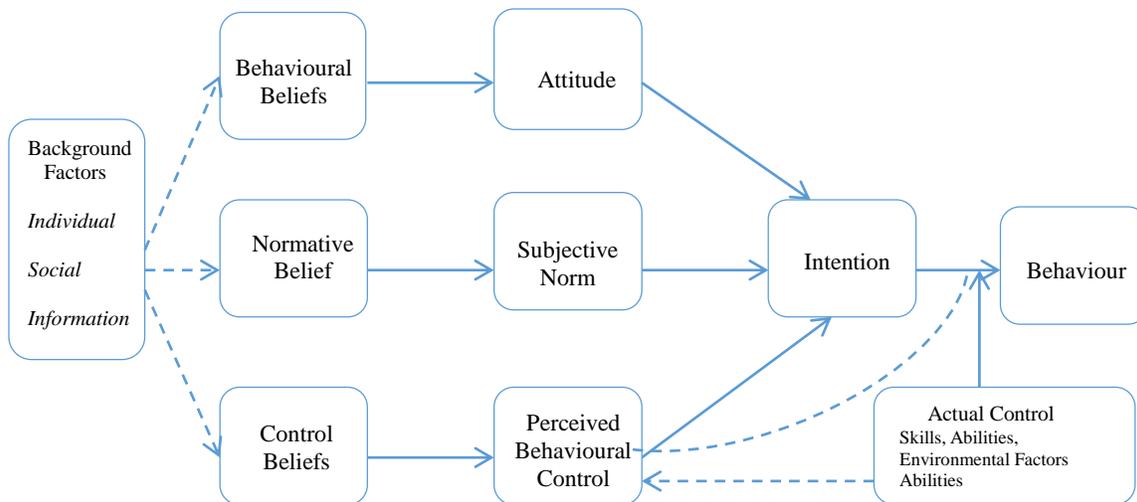


FIGURE 1. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

The TPB has successfully been used to predict and explain various environmentally friendly behaviors (Ferdous, 2010) and in many tourism studies such as: behavioral intentions of choosing a travel destination (Lam & Hsu, 2004, 2006; Hsu & Huang, 2012; Quintal et al., 2010), independent travelers' behavior patterns (Tsai, 2010), willingness to pay more for green hotels (Kim & Han, 2010), selecting eco-friendly restaurants (Kim et al., 2013), and adopting green practices in the Taiwanese restaurant industry (Chou et al., 2012).

Attitudes: The first determinant-attitude toward a behavior speaks of the point to which an individual has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior she is planning to perform (Ajzen, 2001). For example, Kim and Han (2010) explored guests' decision-making processes when paying similar conventional-hotel prices for a green hotel, and found that attitude had the strongest impact on behavioral intention. Lam and Hsu (2004) found that attitude and perceived behavioral control impact travel intention. Attitude toward the behavior has two constructs- behavioral beliefs which are formed by linking the behavior towards a certain outcome, and evaluation of the significance of the consequences - outcome evaluation (Ajzen, 1991). When the outcomes are positively evaluated we tend to form favorable attitudes (Ajzen, 1991), and therefore Kim & Han (2010) claims that green hotel marketers should actively inform their current and potential visitors about environmental degradation while highlighting positive changes and the ability of every individual to diminish its negative impact on the environment. On the other hand, Quintal et al. (2010) pointed that only Japanese travelers showed a positive

relationship between attitudes and behavioral intentions while examining Chinese, South Korean and Japanese travelers' intentions to visit Australia. The explanation is potentially hidden in their cultural differences; Japan is a more individualist culture, while China and South Korea have more collectivist cultures (Quintal et al., 2010). Lam & Hsu (2006) found that Taiwanese travelers attitudes, positive or not, do not affect their intention to visit Hong Kong. This is similar to the results of Hsu & Huang (2012) who found that the attitude had a positive, yet minor role in behavioral intention. The reason is due to the fact that Hong Kong is a transit destination on travelers' way to China chosen because it is convenient and not a conscious decision based on attitude (Lam & Hsu, 2006).

*Subjective Norm:* Subjective norm is influenced by normative beliefs, and refers to individual's perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991). Normative beliefs are concerned with probability that significant others, individuals or groups, who are important to the individual such as family, relatives or co-workers, will approve or disapprove certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991). For instance, subjective norm together with perceived behavioral control was a significant predictor of travelers' intentions to visit Australia (Quintal et al., 2010). Subjective norm was also the most significant predictor of behavioral intention to visit an eco-friendly restaurant in one of the first studies to examine TPB predictive power in customers' decision-making process (Kim et al., 2013). When significant others think favorably toward certain behaviors, an individual's perceived social pressure would increase with his/hers motivation to comply (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, Kim et al (2013) believes that eco-friendly restaurant benefits should be presented to the public through diverse information channels in order to increase favorable referents perceptions. Lam and Hsu (2006) and Hsu and Huang (2012) also found subjective norms had the strongest effect on behavioral intention, which is not a surprise because China is a collectivist culture where opinions of important others are more influential than in the individualistic cultures (Hsu & Huang, 2012). Subjective norm and attitude positively influenced marketing managers' intention to practice sustainable marketing in Bangladesh (Ferdous, 2010). On the contrary, Lam and Hsu (2004) did not find a correlation among subjective norm and behavioral intention because overseas travel is a new occurrence in China that only affluent members, also seen as early adaptors, can afford, so social pressure from family and friends does not affect them. Social influence had no significant influence on behavioral intention towards adopting green practices

in the Taiwanese restaurant industry possibly due to: consumers' low demand for green restaurants, lack of institutional pressure within the hospitality sector, newness of green innovation ideas which are therefore considered non-essential by society and by restaurants (Chou et al., 2012).

*Perceived Behavioral Control:* Perceived behavioral control refers to the way that individuals perceive the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior, and it is reflected in past experiences as well as the expected barriers (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioral control has two components, control beliefs refer to the presence or absence of resources and opportunities (e.g. time, money and skills) for performing a given behavior, and perceived power refers to the personal evaluation of the impact of such resources in facilitating or constraining the specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Madden et al., 1992). Greater perceived control over the behavior is connected with individuals' perceptions that they have more resources and opportunities than barriers (Ajzen, 1991; Lam & Hsu, 2006). Perceived behavioral control has been shown to have the strongest positive influence on behavioral intention (Chou et al., 2012; Tsai, 2010) and on attitude when TPB was used to explore Taiwanese independent travelers' behavior patterns (Tsai, 2010). Tsai (2010) recommends forming favorable perceptions of independent travel and sharing more information with potential travelers to increase independent travel. Perceived behavioral control was found to have significant impact on behavioral intention in some other studies (Lam & Hsu, 2006; Hsu & Huang, 2012). Lam and Hsu (2004, 2006) found that travel barriers can diminish but not exclude behavioral intentions among travelers. On the other hand, perceived behavioral control had a non-significant relationship with costumers' intention to choose eco-friendly restaurants (Kim et al., 2013) and with marketers' intentions to engage in sustainable marketing practices (Ferdous, 2010). The significance of the TPB antecedents varies, and that is in line with Ajzen's (1991) claim that the relative importance of the TPB variables when predicting behavioral intentions can change, depending on situations and behaviors. In the situations where an individual does not have enough information about a behavior, when circumstances and resources have changed, or some new and unknown elements emerged, perceived behavioral control may not be objective and accurate (Ajzen, 1991). However, when perceptions of control are accurate, and the behavior is not under complete volitional control, perceived behavioral control can be very useful in predicting targeted behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Madden et al., 1992).

The TPB has been shown to explain travelers' behavioral intentions moderately well; attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control have direct and or positive impacts on behavioral intention (Lam & Hsu, 2004, 2006; Hsu & Huang, 2012; Kim & Han, 2010; Tsai, 2010; Quintal et al., 2010). Moreover, some studies confirmed that the extended TPB model has a better predictive power than the original one (Kim & Han, 2010; Kim et al., 2013). However, when tourism behavior is heavily influenced with various factors and when reasoned thought is not present, the TPB cannot be sufficient and applicable (Miller et al., 2010). Therefore, the sufficiency of the model when predicting tourists' behaviors is still being questioned (Hsu & Huang, 2012) and exposed to various critics (Curtis et al, 2010).

### **Studies that Used TPB in a Green Hotel Setting**

Additional constructs have been used in conjunction with the TPB to provide a better understanding of behavioral intention, and increase TPB's predictability (Ajzen, 1991; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Han et al. (2010) first applied the modified TPB in a green hotel context while exploring what is influencing hotel guests' behavioral intentions to visit a green hotel and has since been used by others (Chen & Tung, 2014; Teng et al., 2013; Wu & Teng, 2011; Han & Kim, 2010). These scholars found additional constructs such as: altruism, environmentally friendly activities, service quality, customer satisfaction, overall image, perceived moral obligation, environmental concern, and frequency of past behavior. Findings from previous studies confirmed that these additional constructs are important factors in the decision-making process, and can potentially increase the TPB ability to predict behavioral intention (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Therefore, once when the original variables have been taken into account these variables have been added to the original TPB model. The additional constructs significantly improved the predictive power of the TPB (Chen & Tung, 2014; Han & Kim, 2010; Wu & Teng, 2011). It is confirmed that attitude toward behavior, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control have a positive influence on behavioral intention to visit a green hotel (Chen & Tung, 2014; Han et al., 2010; Han & Kim, 2010; Teng et al., 2013; Wu & Teng, 2011), and that subjective norm notably influenced visit intention through attitudes (Han et al., 2010; Han & Kim, 2010; Teng et al., 2013; Wu & Teng, 2011). Attitude is the principal driver of behavioral intention according to some scholars (Han et al., 2010; Wu & Teng, 2011). On the contrary, some other scholars found that subjective norm had the strongest direct influence on behavioral

intention which implies that hoteliers should increase favorable perceptions of individuals significant others such as friends, family and relatives (Han & Kim, 2010; Teng et al., 2013). However, Chen & Tung (2014) highlighted perceived behavioral control as the crucial variable. They believe if green hotels were more accessible potential visitors would have more intention to stay at those hotels (Chen & Tung, 2014).

In line with Ajzen (1991), frequency of past behavior is found to be a significant predictor of intention (Han & Kim, 2010; Wu & Teng, 2011). The frequency of past behavior should be included in the original TPB model to improve the model's decision-making process predictability once the original model constructs have been examined since there is some indication that behavior performed in the past positively affects later actions (Ajzen 1991, 2001).

Han et al (2010) found that consumers' everyday environmentally friendly habits are not necessarily linked to the decision making process when buying an eco-friendly hotel product. Chen & Tung (2014) found environmental concern influenced all TPB variables including perceived moral obligation. In other words, more environmental concern means a more favorable attitude towards patronizing green hotels (Chen & Tung, 2014).

In order to attract more potential guests, hotel managers need to work on promoting their environmental efforts and to affect guests' positive attitudes toward a stay at a green hotel by increasing their environmental knowledge and awareness (Han et al., 2010; Wu & Teng, 2011). The results of these studies showed that TPB has a strong predictive power, and therefore it can be successfully used as a research framework to predict guests' beliefs and intentions to visit green hotels.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

### Study Area

This research was undertaken in Vancouver, the largest urban center of British Columbia, located on a peninsula between mountains, sea, and river (Berelowitz, 2005). Greater Vancouver has more than two million residents, while the City of Vancouver has around six hundred thousand residents (Berelowitz, 2005). It is known as the city of immigrants with a cosmopolitan appeal. In 2012 it was declared to be the third most livable city in the world (City of Vancouver, 2014) due to its mild climate, coastal position and ethnic and linguistic diversity.

Vancouver is one of the warmest cities in Canada and the geographic position between mountains and sea provides spectacular views and breathtaking beauty. Numerous parks, outdoor trails, various cultural events, and rich night life are just some of the things this coastal city has to offer its visitors. In 2010 Vancouver hosted the Olympic Games, which positively influenced the socio-economic life of the city, and helped it to establish its image as a premiere destination. Moreover, this mega-event provided Vancouver with the opportunity to promote its tourist attractions and new infrastructure (Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012). The environmental aspects of the Olympic Games were found to be the most important factor for the Vancouver residents' quality of life (Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012). Every year, nearly 9 million people visit the region; more than 60 percent of them are domestic visitors (Vancouver Economic Commission, 2012). The Vancouver region has excellent road and rail connections with the rest of North America, and yearly attracts two million visitors from the USA (Vancouver Economic Commission, 2012). The US is Canada's most important international tourism market (Smith, 2003). The number of visitors from other parts of the world, particularly from Europe and Mexico, is growing every year (Vancouver Economic Commission, 2012). Forecasts for 2012 expected increases in the number of visitors from the emerging markets such as China, Australia and India (Tourism Vancouver). Vancouver can also be regularly found among several top ten destinations lists (Vancouver Economic Commission, 2012). In 2008, conventions and business meetings visitors spent \$600 million, and brought 1.9 million hotel nights to Vancouver and were expected to increase by over 50% by 2015 (Vancouver Economic Commission, 2012). The Government of British Columbia has a goal to double tourist revenues by 2015, and to make Vancouver the most accessible, and friendliest city in North America (Vancouver Economic

Commission, 2012). When it comes to the hotel industry, the Vancouver region has more than 24,000 hotel rooms, plus hostels, bed and breakfast and seasonal rooms (Vancouver Economic Commission, 2012). It was expected that by 2011 an additional 2,500 rooms would be available (Vancouver Economic Commission, 2012).

Vancouver, plans to become the greenest city in the world by 2020 (City of Vancouver, Green Vancouver, 2014), sustainable tourism development is a vital component that requires better understanding of the green hotels and their visitors. The Greenest City 2020 initiative was born as a result of the city's efforts to address various environmental challenges (City of Vancouver, 2014). The idea is to become more sustainable through a set of different goals while developing a stronger economy, and to enhance Vancouver's international reputation as a green city (*Greenest City 2020 Action Plan*, City of Vancouver, 2014). One of the goals is to encourage businesses and organizations to implement diverse environmental measures while developing and improving their operations (*Greenest City 2020 Action Plan*, City of Vancouver, 2014).

This research took place at the Tourism Vancouver Visitors Center in Vancouver. Tourism Vancouver Visitors Centre is the official place providing free tourism information and reservation services across British Columbia (Tourism Vancouver, 2014). It is located in the downtown core, close to the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre (Tourism Vancouver, 2014). Numerous tourists visit this place daily to gather information from multilingual and knowledgeable staff. They are open every day from 08:30 am till 6:00 pm (Tourism Vancouver, 2014). Given the city's plans for future tourism expansion and its goal to be more sustainable, this research will be useful to Vancouver's tourism and hospitality industries.

### **Data Collection: Belief Elicitation**

This study used semi-structured interviews based on TPB methodology (Apps et al, 2014; Curtis et al., 2010; Ham et al., 2008; Middlestadt et al., 1996) to collect data in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Semi-structured interviews were designed to elicit visitor's behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs about choosing a green hotel when visiting Vancouver. The belief elicitation process is a qualitative method which can stand alone, but also can be used as a theoretical base for all subsequent phases of research based on TPB (Curtis et al., 2010). The personal contact between interviewer and respondent, among other things, provides a researcher

with an opportunity to offer clarification if the respondents are reluctant or unclear about something (Salant & Dillman, 1994). The elicitation procedure is a starting point in order to identify and define the behavior of interest since it is context specific (Curtis et al., 2010; Ham et al., 2008; Middlestadt et al., 1996). The result is a pool of salient beliefs from a convenience sample of the target audience (Curtis et al, 2010). A small convenience sample of visitors is appropriate as long as it covers a comprehensive range of salient beliefs because of theoretical saturation (Curtis et al, 2010). According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) theoretical saturation is the point where additional information does not provide much more information.

All interviews were conducted the in Tourism Vancouver Visitors Centre over a 5 day period in April 2015. The interviews were not scheduled, but happened spontaneously depending on the number of visitors with hotel experience that visited the Vancouver Visitor Centre that day, and their willingness to participate in the research since many of them were in the rush and Vancouver Visitor Centre was just a short stop for them. At the beginning of the each interview I introduced myself as a Masters student from Vancouver Island University and briefly presented the purpose of the study. When the visitors would confirm that they are staying at one of the hotels in Vancouver I would politely ask them if they are willing to participate in the study. Those who agreed were verbally provided with an introduction that explained the behavior in question. The participants were provided with a detailed description of green hotels and their environmental measures, a green hotel infographic (a graphic visual representation of data or knowledge intended to clearly present complex information), and a list of green hotels in Vancouver. They were informed what a green hotel was, and what measures are hotels taking to diminish their negative environmental impact. Respondents were also asked to name the hotel in which they were staying.

Once when the respondents got the consent form, confidentiality was ensured and they were asked for permission to audio record the conversation to ensure no information would be missed. In order to minimize response bias I informed the participants that their responses would be completely anonymous and that there is no right or wrong answers. For the purpose of this study a green hotel was defined as the environmentally healthy property with programs that reduce solid waste, save energy and conserve water in order to protect the environment. I also explained that green hotels, in order to protect the environment, are undertaking various measures such as: use of fluorescent bulbs, towel and linen reusing program, light out cards, low

flow toilets, low flow showerheads, limiting the disposable toiletry supplies, dispensers for soap/shampoo, using less detergent, using greywater from showers and sinks for landscaping, well-educated staff about green practices, donations to charity, and locally grown food. The list of green hotels was based on the Green Key Eco-Rating Program which is a graduated rating system designed to recognize hotels, motels and resorts that are trying to reduce their negative environmental impact. The Green Key Eco-Rating Program has a rating system from 1 to 5 Keys based on the results of the lodging facilities' environmental self-assessment, where 5 Keys is considered the highest attainable. The Green Key Eco-Rating Program assesses the five main operational areas of a lodging facilities including: corporate environmental management, housekeeping, food & beverage operations, conference & meeting facilities and engineering. For the purpose of this research, the hotels that are awarded with the 4 or 5 Keys and are actively following green programs and ideas were considered to be green hotels

Ham et al (2008) claims that the researcher should conduct interviews with approximately an equal number of participants who are performing the preferred behavior and participants who are not performing the behavior. Therefore, I intended to have half the participants be visitors with green hotel experience in Vancouver and the other half without green hotel experience in Vancouver in order to provide some preliminary analyses and identify discriminating beliefs that differentiate guests that stayed at green hotels from guests that didn't stay at green hotels in Vancouver.

The semi-structured elicitation interviews lasted between 10 and 15 minutes, depending on how much participants had to say. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. A TPB elicitation procedure is composed of three pairs of questions, each pair belonging to one of the three categories of behavior beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs (Ham et al, 2008).

The behavioral belief questions were:

- “What do you see as the advantages or good things that could occur by staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?”
- “What do you see as the disadvantages or bad things that could occur by staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?”

The normative belief questions were:

- “Who (individuals or groups) do you think would support or approve of you staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?”

- “Who (individuals or groups) do you think would object or disapprove of you staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?”

The control belief questions were:

- “What factors or circumstances enable or make it easy for you to stay at a green hotel today in Vancouver?”
- “What factors or circumstances make it difficult for you to stay at a green hotel today in Vancouver?”

Interviews also assessed age, gender and level of education to provide insight into socio-demographic variables that may affect the decision-making processes.

### **Data Analysis**

The aim of the analysis was to: identify behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs underlying visitor’s decisions to stay at a green hotel when they come to Vancouver. All semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were analyzed via content analysis as specified by the TPB methodology (Middlestadt et al, 1996; Ham et al, 2008; Curtis et al, 2010). To avoid artificially inflating the percentage of each labeled category in the situations when participant/hotel guests stated the same belief more than once, it was combined as a one single statement (Ham et al, 2008). The next step included reviewing raw data, classifying the responses for each questions, grouping similar responses to each question together, recognizing and establishing common themes of meaning according to the responses, and therefore developing universal categories or “codes”. In other words, each response was assigned to one of the universal categories based on their meaning. The categories developed in that way reflected all relevant aspects of the message while trying to keep exact wordings from the statements. To ensure the reliability of the group labels and to make sure that the beliefs targeted in the future messages will be precisely expressed, labels assigned to each group of responses were reviewed by three authors, my mentors Dr. Pete Parker, Dr. Rick Rollins and myself, until consensus was reached (Middlestadt et al., 1996). It was followed by the identification of the most frequently mentioned salient beliefs that distinguish performers from non-performers of the behavior in question. Curtis et al (2010) claims that if it is possible to distinguish performers from non-performers of the target behavior preliminary analysis can be conducted. The beliefs that are most different for visitors who stayed at a green hotel in

Vancouver and those who didn't stayed at a green hotel in Vancouver would be best to include in persuasive messages.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

### **Profile of Respondents**

A total of twenty-two participants (11 women and 11 men) who were staying in one of the hotels in Vancouver were interviewed. A small convenience sample of visitors is appropriate as long as it covers a comprehensive range of salient beliefs to approach theoretical saturation (Curtis et al, 2010), which is according to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) the point where additional information fails to provide additional information. Every day after the interviews I would review raw data to found out that there was little further information from the collected data after 22 interviews. In other words, the saturation point was reached after 22 interviews with domestic and international visitors who stayed in a Vancouver hotel. Nationalities of interviewees included five Canadians, five Australians four Americans, three British, and one each from New Zealand, Chile, France, Germany and Ireland.

The sample consisted of equal number of man and women. The age of respondents ranged from 20 to 71, and their mean age was 48.5 years. Most of the respondents had a higher education degree (72%) followed by the college degree group (13%) and a high school diploma group (13%). The first table presents socio-demographic information including number of respondents, perceived and actual type of hotel where visitors stayed. About 54% of the visitors stayed at a non-green hotel, while 45% of the visitors stayed at a green hotel (Table 1). However, only 22% of the respondents thought they are staying at a green hotel, 40% thought they are staying at a non-green hotel, and 36% of the visitors didn't know if the hotel in which they are staying is a green or a non-green hotel (Table 1). Many of the respondents, about 40% previously stayed at a green hotel, about 31% of the respondents didn't ever stay at a green hotel and about 27% of the respondents weren't sure if they have ever stayed at a green hotel. About 36% of the respondents reported that they stay at a hotel 2-5 times a year, about 36% of them indicated that they stay in a hotel more than 10 times a year, and 9% of the respondents reported they stay at a

hotel 6-10 times a year. Lastly, about 18% of the respondents stated they stay at a hotel at least once a year.

Table 1

*Types of hotels respondents stayed in (n=22)*

Gender	Perceived type of hotel	Actual type of hotel
Male 11 (50%)	Green hotel 5 (22%)	Green hotel 10 (45 %)
Female 11 (50%)	Non-green hotel 9 (40 %)	Non-green hotel 12 (54 %)
	I don't know 8 (36 %)	

### **Behavioural Beliefs**

This category includes data that relates to questions regarding the behavioural belief advantages and behavioural belief disadvantages and includes responses to the following research questions: “What do you see as the advantages or good things that could occur by staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?” and “What do you see as the disadvantages or bad things that could occur by staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?”. When it comes to advantages or good things that could occur by staying at a green hotel in Vancouver seven beliefs emerged. The top four were: “reducing negative environmental impact and increasing environmental awareness” (72%), “helping the city/community you are visiting” (27%), “benefits people” (13%), and “I feel good about it” (9%). The most frequently mentioned advantages are represented in the following statements:

*Just more of the awareness of the environment and less waste. Recycling! It's an effortless practice when you are staying there, we turn off the lights, we reuse our towels, and we don't need housekeeping every day. We recycle all our things. (Respondent 4)*

*Oh, it's for future generations, we take care of our environment because we are such a throw away environment. I think it's about time we become green, this is a change that is very positive. (Respondent 13)*

*It is ethically correct. You get better satisfaction where you are staying, you know you are helping the community. It is being more environmentally friendly and reducing your carbon footprint. (Respondent 22)*

The belief advantages such as “it is healthy” (4%), “I am not sure” (4%) and “it is good for society, for nature, for the economy” (4%) were mentioned only once by the respondents. When it comes to disadvantages of staying at a green hotel, the most frequently mentioned belief was “I don’t see any disadvantages” (36%), followed by the “green hotel is more expensive” (22%) and “I don’t know” (22%). Regarding the green hotel cost respondents stated:

*Well, going back to the cost there might be increased cost if it’s a green place, because they say they are charging more to keep the environment safer. They might increase their fares, it could be a negative that I could see. (Respondent 1)*

*Only thing I would assume is perhaps it may be slightly more expensive at this point but maybe not in the future. (Respondent 14)*

*It could be more expensive, green hotel has been more expensive. (Respondent 22)*

Lastly, 18 % of visitors believed that lower quality of the service is the negative outcome when it comes to staying at a green hotel. That is stated in the following statement:

*I know we have stayed in some hotels they’ll have a sign up like if you want to reuse your towels or something like that, that’s your choice , and as long that is your choice than that’s fine, if it wasn’t my choice than I might not like it. Like, I might want a clean towel today, but maybe not tomorrow, so if I decide that I want that, if they say you have one towel for the whole week you know maybe that wouldn’t be so good you know. (Respondent 9)*

### **Normative Beliefs**

In terms of normative beliefs respondents were asked: “Who (individuals or groups) do you think would support or approve of you staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?” and “Who (individuals or groups) do you think would object or disapprove of you staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?” The most frequently mentioned beliefs when it comes to social referents who would approve staying at a green hotel were: “family” (45%) and “friends” (40%). That is expressed in the following statements:

*Oh, everybody, family and friends. I mean, we do the same thing at home, like everyone is trying to be more green, recycling you know. I mean, I guess everyone is starting to think that perhaps it's a good idea to stop killing the planet. (Respondent 14)*

*I think most people would approve. I am thinking about friends and family. I think most of people we associate with kind of think it's a good idea to conserve. (Respondent 18)*

22% of visitors believed that “no one” would approve, while others mentioned that “no one” would disapprove (91%). That is summarized in the following statement:

*I don't think anybody would disapprove of it. I don't see any reason why would they disapprove of it. (Respondent 2)*

9% of visitors believed that “nobody cares” when it comes to disapproving, while some visitors didn't know if anyone would approve of them staying at a green hotel in Vancouver (4%). Other mentioned social referents who would approve included: “environmentally friendly groups” (18%), “Trip Advisor” (4%) and “Australians” (4%).

## **Control Beliefs**

In terms of control beliefs visitors were asked: “What factors or circumstances enable or make it easy for you to stay at a green hotel today in Vancouver?” and “What factors or circumstances make it difficult for you to stay at a green hotel today in Vancouver?” The most frequently mentioned control belief was “location” (59%), when talking about factors that makes it both easy and difficult to stay at a green hotel in Vancouver. Regarding the location respondents stated:

*We have to be in convenient location because we are without a motor vehicle, we want to be able to get around, see the things that we came to see. (Respondent 1)*

*I think if the location wasn't convenient, I think really like cost and location are the main things that we consider, so I think if all the green hotels were in the part of the city that we didn't want to stay in, or they were so expensive that we didn't want to stay there I think that those would be the things. (Respondent 18)*

Several visitors believed that “price” (45%) would make it easy, while others believed “price” (54%) would make it difficult.

*I would go back to price. You know, you spend so much time on you vacationing that, you know, it might be deciding factor where you stay if it's, you know, 20 dollars extra on night that could be a huge factor. So price would be the biggest thing. (Respondent 2)*

*If it's really expensive , than that wouldn't be you know in the running, that mean it could be the greenest most wonderful thing and they can give you a package when you leave, if it's too expensive is not going to matter. (Respondent 9)*

40 % of visitors believed that “good advertising” would make it easy to stay at a green hotel followed with “facilities/amenities” (22%).

*If they actually promoted it. It is pretty hard if you're looking from 15 thousand miles away which hotel is a green hotel and which isn't. I am not aware that too many of them that I have seen actually promote the fact, so that might be it-influencing factor! (Respondent 17)*

*It's position, amenities- I would like to have a pool, a really good position, I would like to have a car parking and quality of hotel, I generally wouldn't stay if it's not 4 star or above. (Respondent 7)*

The others believed “lack of advertising” (9%) and “lack of amenities” (9%) would make it difficult.

*When we were researching I didn't come across a lot of advertising for green hotels. (Respondent 1)*

*If there is no gym or swimming pool, if it's far away, location, facilities, amenities and price. (Respondent 22)*

Visitors also mentioned “hotel ranking” (13%), “getting the loyalty points” (4%), “easy access to check in” (4%), and “having a recycling bins” (4%) as a facilitators to a green hotel stay. 13 % of visitors “don't know” what would make it easy for them, while others believed it would make it easy “if it's economical” (4%). In terms of barriers visitors also mentioned: “lower quality of

service” (4%), “if it isn’t family friendly” (4%), “ if they supported something against being green and environmental” (4%), and “ restrictions because they are green” (4%).

### **Comparing Beliefs among Green Hotel and Non-Green Hotel Visitors**

The next step was to conduct a preliminary analysis of the beliefs and distinguish between performers and non-performers of the behavior, in this case visitors from non-visitors to a green hotel. The results are presented in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4. The second table presents perceived consequences elicited by asking visitors to name advantages and disadvantages of staying at a green hotel in Vancouver, the third one presents the list of salient social referents elicited by asking visitors who would approve or disapprove of them if they stay at a green hotel in Vancouver, and the last one presents the facilitators and barriers of staying at a green hotel in Vancouver that were collected by asking visitors about circumstances that make stay at a green hotel in Vancouver easy or difficult. The biggest differences in terms of behavioral beliefs (Table 2) were that green hotel visitors reported they don’t see any disadvantages (60%) compared to non-green hotel-visitors (16%) when it comes to staying at a green hotel. Non-green hotel visitors have been more aware of the benefits for people associated with the stay at a green hotel, and slightly more believed that staying at a green hotel would make them feel good. Moreover, visitors that stayed at a non-green hotel believed that green hotels are more expensive (33%) and reported they don’t know (33%) if there are any disadvantages related to stay at a green hotel, compared to visitors that stayed at a green hotel (10%).

Table 2

*Comparison of green hotel visitors and non-green hotel visitors' behavioural beliefs*

Green Hotel Visitors (n=10)	%	Non-Green Hotel Visitors (n=12)	%
<b>Behavioural Belief Advantages</b>		<b>Behavioural Belief Advantages</b>	
• Reducing negative environmental impact/increasing environmental awareness	70	• Reducing negative environmental impact/increasing environmental awareness	75
• Helping the city/community you are visiting	30	• Helping the city/community you are visiting	25
• Benefits people	-	• Benefits people	25
• I feel good about it	-	• I feel good about it	16
• It is healthy	-	• It is healthy	8
• I am not sure	10	• I am not sure	-
• It is good for society, for nature, for the economy	-	• It is good for society, for nature, for the economy	8
<b>Behavioural Belief Disadvantages</b>		<b>Behavioural Belief Disadvantages</b>	
• I don't see any disadvantages	60	• I don't see any disadvantages	16
• Green hotel is more expensive	10	• Green hotel is more expensive	33
• I don't know	10	• I don't know	33
• Lower quality of the service	20	• Lower quality of the service	16

In terms of normative beliefs (Table 3), if ignoring beliefs mentioning “no one” because they don't have a value in terms of intervention, there were minor differences between green and non-green hotel visitors. Non-green hotel visitors slightly more cited “family” (50%) as the important social referents, compared to green hotel visitors (40%). Moreover, non-green hotel visitors more often cited “environmentally friendly groups” as people who would approve of them staying at a green hotel compared to green hotel visitors (25% versus 10%).

Table 3

*Comparison of green hotel visitors and non-green hotel visitors' normative beliefs*

Green Hotel Visitors (n=10)	%	Non-Green Hotel Visitors (n=12)	%
<b>Normative Belief Approve</b>		<b>Normative Belief Approve</b>	
• Family	40	• Family	50
• Friends	40	• Friends	41
• No one	10	• No one	33
• Environmentally friendly groups	10	• Environmentally friendly groups	25
• I don't know	10	• I don't know	-
• Trip Advisor Users	10	• Trip Advisor Users	-
• Australians	10	• Australians	-
<b>Normative Belief Disapprove</b>		<b>Normative Belief Disapprove</b>	
• No one	90	• No one	91
• Nobody cares what I do	10	• Nobody cares what I do	8

An analysis of the control beliefs differences among visitors to green hotels and non-green hotel visitors showed that the “price” was the most noticeable difference (Table 4). 66% of non-green hotel visitors said that price could make it easier for them to stay at a green hotel compared to green hotel visitors (20%). Moreover, price (66%) was considered to be a barrier from the non-green hotel visitors' perspective in contrast to 40% of green hotel visitors. Half of the green hotel visitors (50%) mentioned “good advertising” as the important facilitator when it comes to stay at a green hotel, compared to 33% of non-green hotel visitors. From the non-green hotel visitors perspective “convenient location” (66%) was a slightly more important factor in terms of positive circumstances compared to a green hotel visitors. Non-green hotel visitors considered “inconvenient location” (66%) as a barrier compared to just half (50%) of the green hotel visitors. Green hotel visitors more frequently reported “lack of advertising”, “lack of amenities”, and “lower quality of the service” as a factor that would make it difficult to stay at a green hotel, compared to a non-green hotel visitors. In terms of other beliefs, all other differences between green and non-green hotel visitor were minor.

Table 4

*Comparison of green hotel visitors and non-green hotel visitors control beliefs*

Green Hotel Visitors (n=10)	%	Non-Green Hotel Visitors (n=12)	%
<b>Control Belief Easy</b>		<b>Control Belief Easy</b>	
• Convenient location	50	• Convenient location	66
• Good advertising	50	• Good advertising	33
• Price	20	• Price	66
• Facilities/Amenities	20	• Facilities/Amenities	25
• Hotel ranking	10	• Hotel ranking	16
• I don't know	-	• I don't know	25
• Getting the loyalty points	-	• Getting the loyalty points	8
• Easy access to check in	-	• Easy access to check in	8
• If it's economical	-	• If it's economical	8
• Having a recycling bins in the room	-	• Having a recycling bins in the room	
<b>Control Belief Difficult</b>		<b>Control Belief Difficult</b>	
• Inconvenient location	50	• Inconvenient location	66
• Price	40	• Price	66
• Lack of advertising	20	• Lack of advertising	-
• Lack of amenities	10	• Lack of amenities	8
• Lower quality of service	10	• Lower quality of service	-
• If it isn't family friendly	-	• If it isn't family friendly	8
• If they supported something against being green and environmental	10	• If they supported something against being green and environmental	
• Restrictions because they are green	10	• Restrictions because they are green	8

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Salient beliefs are influenced by many factors and if “imported” from previous studies they can be irrelevant to new population and behavior under study (Curtis et al, 2010). Beliefs cannot be transferred between different research contexts with different populations (Brown et al, 2010). Salient beliefs in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews based on the TPB methodology. This type of qualitative, formative research in the form of the elicitation procedure collected a pool of salient beliefs regarding participants’ intention to visit a green hotel. The study findings provides both theoretical and practical implications since little is known about guests’ decision-making process to visit a green hotel.

Socio-demographic data results showed that 36 % of visitors didn’t know if the hotel where they stayed is a green, or a non-green hotel. Moreover, 27% of visitors mentioned they are not sure if they ever stayed at a green hotel. This finding is consistent with previous research (e.g., Han et al, 2010; Han et al, 2011) and implies that hotel guest awareness of hotels trying to reduce their negative environmental impacts is low and that green hotel marketers should educate their visitors. Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) found that better understanding the seriousness of environmental degradation positively affects eco-friendly services demand. Therefore, green hotel marketers should find ways to inform their current and potential visitors about their environmental practices and encourage them to stay in green hotels (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Han et al., 2010; Han et al., 2011). For example, Han and Kim (2010) believe that recycling, water and energy conservation should be advertised through various media sources.

According to the TPB, behavioral beliefs are influencing visitors’ attitudes towards performing a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). If visitors believe staying in a green hotel will have a positive outcomes their intention to stay at a green hotel will be stronger. Behavioural beliefs collected in this study reflected visitors’ positive and negative evaluations of staying at a green hotel in Vancouver. The visitors are aware they are: “reducing negative environmental impact/increasing environmental awareness”, “helping the city/community they are visiting” and “benefiting people”. They also “feel good” and know “it’s healthy” when staying at a green hotel. These findings are in line with the previous studies which indicated that as a way to influence visitors favorable attitudes green hotel marketers should keep informing their visitors about environmental degradation and highlight positive changes that are results of individual

green efforts (e.g., Han et al., 2010; Kim & Han, 2010). Promoting green campaigns, communicating through various media, using window displays, information cards or brochures and eco/green labeling are just some of the ways to attract green visitors (Han et al., 2009; Teng et al., 2013). As a marketing strategy, hoteliers should keep informing current and potential visitors about enjoyable outcomes of their stay at a green hotel such as: eating healthy foods, staying in a clean environment, using environmental sensitive cleaning products for laundry and non-chemical base amenities (Han et al., 2009; Kim & Han, 2010). Moreover, as a way to increase visitors' positive attitudes hoteliers should ensure high visitor satisfaction levels (Teng et al., 2013). Participants of this study also reported staying at a green hotel is "more expensive" and they fear that a "lower quality of service" will negatively affect their stay at a green hotel. As a way to deal with that, Kim & Han (2010) suggest hoteliers improve the general product performance as a way to justify the price guests are paying for a green hotel.

The primary social referees mentioned in this study were "family" and "friends." Teng et al. (2013) suggest informing family and friends about positive changes that are results of individuals' green actions, in order for them to positively influence visitors to stay at a green hotel. Research on TPB measures showed that subjective norm questions proved to be particularly problematic for participants, and one of the potential solutions is to encourage participants to admit that they don't have an opinion (Darker & French, 2009).

The control belief category indicated that "price", "location" and "advertising" could make staying at a green hotel potentially easy or difficult. In other words, affordable price, central location and green advertising are the factors that could encourage visitors and make them more confident that they could stay at a green hotel.

Distinguishing visitors from non-visitors of green hotels provided a better understanding of visitors' salient beliefs. This study findings showed that non-green hotel visitors more frequently mentioned price as a factor that could make it both easier and more difficult to stay at a green hotel compared to a green hotel visitors. The results also indicated that non-green hotel visitors more frequently mentioned price as a disadvantage of a green hotel stay, than a green hotel visitors. That is in line with the findings of Han et al. (2011) who verified, when comparing a green hotel visitors to a non-green hotel visitors that green hotel visitors are willing to pay more and their intention to visit a green hotel is higher.

Laroche et al. (2001) claim there is an increasing number of environmentally friendly costumers willing to pay more for eco-friendly products and services. Contradictory to that, from this research it can be inferred that the belief of green hotels being pricier than non-green hotels is potentially holding visitors away from staying at environmentally healthy properties. Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) also claim that despite their environmental concerns, visitors are not willing to pay premiums for green initiatives. That is contradictory to Kang et al. (2012) who found that guests with higher environmental concern are more willing to pay a premium for a stay at a green hotel. However, in reality, there is a minimal price difference between green and non-green hotels (Han et al., 2009; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). Therefore, the information that green hotels are not pricier than non-green hotels should be used in a persuasive communication intervention.

The preliminary insights of this study can be used for persuasive communication messages and as a foundation for the subsequent phases of the research. This study highlights the importance of the elicitation procedure and implies that green hotel marketers should work on their marketing strategies to improve visit intentions. This qualitative study helped better understand green hotel guests' willingness to stay at a green hotel and identified which beliefs should be targeted in a persuasive communication intervention strategy. In communication messages hoteliers should target family and friends, inform their current and potential visitors about minimal price difference between green and non-green hotels, and improve their green advertisement.

### **Weakness and Limitations of this Research**

The current study has several limitations that offer opportunities for future research. First, this study data was collected at Tourism Vancouver Visitor Centre and the sample included guests that have and guests that haven't had experience staying at a green hotel. The broad sample of the guests' was used to enhance the generalizability of the study findings. However, to enhance the validity connected with sampling and generalizability future studies should include a more heterogeneous and representative sample in an actual consumption setting. Second, many respondents did not know whether the hotel where they stayed was green or not. That should be taken into consideration when talking about the results of the preliminary analysis and of the beliefs that distinguish visitors from non-visitors. Third, the general hotel guests were examined

in this study but there are different types of hotels such as economy and luxury hotels, and the perspective of their guests towards the intention to visit a green hotel can be different. Therefore, it is suggested to examine their eco-friendly practices in different types of hotels. Fourth, this study examined guests' intention to stay at a green hotel not the actual behavior, and it doesn't necessarily mean that the intention will turn into actual behavior. Future studies should explore this issue and provide a more extensive understanding of guests' decision-making process when staying at a green hotel.

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## **APPENDIX A. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**

The goal of this study is to explain and better understand what is influencing green hotel guest behavioral intentions to stay at a green hotel, and I would like to hear your views on this topic. When I say green hotels, I mean the hotels which are diminishing their negative impact on the environment. Green hotels are environmentally healthy properties with programs that reduce solid waste, save energy and conserve water in order to protect the environment. In order to protect the environment green hotels are undertaking various measures such as: use of fluorescent bulbs, towel and linen reusing program, light out cards, low flow toilets, low flow showerheads, limiting the disposable toiletry supplies, dispensers for soap/shampoo, using less detergent, using greywater from showers and sinks for landscaping, well-educated staff about green practices, donations to charity, locally grown food etc.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Which hotel are you staying at? Is that a green hotel?

- If not, have you ever stayed at a green hotel?
- How many times a year you stay at a hotel?

### **THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR**

(behavioral belief questions)

- What do you see as the advantages or good things that could occur by staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?
- What do you see as the disadvantages or bad things that could occur by staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?

(normative belief questions)

- Who (individuals or groups) do you think would support or approve of you staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?
- Who (individuals or groups) do you think would object or disapprove of you staying at a green hotel today in Vancouver?

(control belief questions)

- What factors or circumstances enable or make it easy for you to stay at a green hotel today in Vancouver?
- What factors or circumstances make it difficult for you to stay at a green hotel today in Vancouver?

### **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

How old are you?

What is your level of education?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Do you have any questions for me? Thank you for participating in this project!

## APPENDIX B. INFOGRAPHIC

