

# Green Consumption Attitudes of the Tourists Lodging in the Resort Hotel – The Case of Alishan

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the resort hotel tourists' green consumption attitude. Questionnaires were used in this survey research and were distributed to subjects derived from non-probability convenience sampling. 240 tourists in resort hotels of Alishan area were surveyed, 182 questionnaires were given back with return rate of 76%. Descriptive statistics, independent t-test and One-way ANOVA are further used to analyze collected data.

The results showed that no significant difference exists between different genders regarding green consumption attitude. However, the significant difference did exist among different age and marital status groups ( $P < .05$ ). After further afterward comparative analyzes knowing that 30~39 and 40~49 age level greater attention to "green concept" than 20~29 age group.

Finally further suggestions are made according to the research results, This research suggestion environmental protection government apartment should strengthen promotion and the guidance about the concept regarding the green and should face the formulation related laws, and so strengthens the consumers' cognition of environmental protection.

**Keywords** : Green consumption attitudes, Consumer behavior, Resort hotel

## 1. Introduction

Taiwan is now becoming one of the developed countries due to its social economy performance. Citizens here, therefore, demand a better living quality and feel great concern about the environment. Green consumption is no doubt a must in this trend.

Recently, international hotel entrepreneurs have been expressing a growing attention to this issue. They build green hotels or green buildings to offer tourists a new alternative of accommodations.

Taiwan government is aggressively promoting the ecological tour. In the Outline of Sustainable Development of R.O.C. in 2000, it indicated that government should present a



Tourism White Paper and Eco-Tour Development Policy, and build an Eco-Tour Accreditation System to point out a direction for eco-tour work. However, it was discovered that a perfect plan and execution is still not available to the environmental management, regulations, and system of hotels (Su & Liao, 2005). For domestic hotel enterprises particularly, the concept of Green Hotel is still sprouting. Only a few hotels go into the green hotel procession by saving energy or reducing the utilization of chemical detergent. Their purpose is to lower the management costs. Therefore, for hotels which have been in business for years, to realize the concept of Green Hotel is actually difficult.

The year, 2004, was named by Executive Yuan the Taiwan Tourism Year to promote the international tourism. Based on the principle of target management, government presented tourism products which met target tourists' needs and unified all the available sources to do the international marketing in order to leave people a brand new and deep impression of Taiwan. Moreover, in accordance with a survey on tourists' visiting Taiwan, their consumption and movement had showed that the domestic accommodation rate was upgraded from 61.30% in 2002 to 72.24% in 2007, with the increasing rate reaching 17.85%. The accumulated visitors to Taiwan were 3716.063 people (Tourism Bureau, 2009). The demand for hotel accommodation is immense.

A hotel is a big place for living. Its energy consumption and pollutant quantity are both massive. To follow the trend of eco-tourism and sustainable tourism, the system of Green Hotel and accreditation means is now built, including environmental hotels guide published by Green Seal in America, environmental hotel evaluation system built by Canada, and green hotel leveling regulations provided by Mainland China. Taiwan, however, has not yet had any plan and preparation with related policy. Therefore, to assure the hotel service and management corresponding to the spirit of sustainable tourism, building hotel management policy, setting up a hotel environment protection valuation system and promoting the accreditation assistance work are a must.

Since 1950, human beings have greatly raised their concern about the global environment. Until 1970s, people in educational fields increased their studies on environmental cognition, attitude, and behavior. As soon as people have knowledge, attitude, and skills, they start to take actions and solve environment problems of different kinds. Hence, to study the attitude of consumers toward reserving the natural environment can effectively predict their behaviors are environment-friendly, such as recycling sources, purchasing green products or staying in a hotel with Green Seal.

Alishan is an area surrounded by natural scenery, which attracts a large number of tourists every day. They have a high demand for accommodation. In this study, the primary purpose was to discuss tourists' green consumption attitude. In addition, the researchers intended to test if there is any significant difference found in the different personal variables like gender, age, marital status, and educational background.



The research findings could effectively predict tourists' option of hotel accommodation. They could provide a foundation for hotel entrepreneurs to evaluate the possibility of running a green building as well. What is more, the results could be a good reference for government authorities to be engaged in the green marketing.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Green Consumption Attitude

According to a report by United Nations on the human development in 1996, each person in industrial countries consumed energy nine times more than one did in the commercial ones, even though the number of people was only one of fifth of world population. World Wild Fund for Nature (WWFN), the most well-known environmental conservation organization, made an announcement one day before the world environment day of 2000. In the report on earth life, it pointed out that in Taiwan individual average consumption in putting pressure on the earth environment was so as high as 3.42 times of the average of global consumption. Taiwan ranked the second place. This tells Taiwan people one thing that Taiwan's environmental problems are more serious than other countries'. The consumption amount in America was large but the ranking was six. Its pressure value was less than two thirds of Taiwan's. Mainland China ranked 60 with pressure value 0.86. This report was mainly to analyze the pressure caused by consuming the environment resources. It measured the consumption of food, materials, and energy and forced countries to reflect through the indicators (Ming Shen News, June 6, 2001).

In 1977, Environment Bureau of Germany was first to promote the German Blue Angel Greenmark project. Until now there have been 50 countries joining in the procession and promoting over 30 kinds of greenmarks. Taiwan, however, promoted the environment Greenmark at the end of 1977, and began to instill citizens ideas of green consumption (Lai, 2000). German Blue Angel Greenmark project helps start the global green consumption. To implement the project, German government raised people's eco-awareness and changed consumers' purchasing typologies. However, such a campaign was not widely accepted by other countries. It was only a domestic environment protection activities and the situation was not improved until 1987. Later, United Nations brought up an idea of sustainable development in its environment and development report. This report drew attention of many countries. In this report, a request was made to limit the impact on the environment from activities and technologies and also to care the needs of developing countries and future generation.

Therefore, a great concern of many environmentalists was how to reduce the impact of excessive manufacture and consumption types of industrial countries. With the term



“sustainable development” is gradually and widely applied. “Green consumption” is frequently called “sustainable consumption.” However, these two terms actually have the same meaning; that is, they are consumption behaviors under the premise of sustaining (Yu & Lai, 2000).

Recently, Taiwan government has been devoted to a promotion that consumers purchase goods with Greenmark. It is hoped that green commodities can reduce the environmental pollution. In Lee & Gan’s (2007) study, the center idea of green consumption can be divided into principles of 4R & 3E. 4R stands for refuse (Do not use goods that hurt environment. Use goods recyclable, with low pollution, less wrapping, resource saving and repetitive use), reduce (Save resources and decrease unnecessary consumption), reuse (Life necessities which can be used repeatedly), and recycle (Recycle resources and use renewable commodities). 3E represents Economic, Ecological, and Equitable. A consumer’s behavior can be regarded as green consumption if he keeps environment protection in mind all the way through his consumption (Elkington, J., Hailes, J., & Makower, J., 1990; Shrum, L. J., McCarty, J. A., & Lowrey, T. M., 1995, Gilg, A., Barr, S., & Ford, N., 2005).

The results of a study on the American consumers by Roper Organization (1990) classified consumers into 5 different Green consumer typologies. In Lu’s (1994) study on the topic “Behaviors of Green Consumers-Members of Married Women Association”, he cited Maslow’s Hierarchies of Needs and Behavior from Coddington’s (1993) study to explain the above five typologies. Coddington thought the five needs supposed by Maslow from the lower level to the higher level are correlated to 5 consumption typologies presented by Roper Organization. For example, Greenism believers are consumers who pursue self-actualization. Bill supporters are consumers who pursue Esteem. Cognition embracing green consumers are those who pursue needs of Safety and Ostrich attitude green consumers are those pursue physiological needs.

Regarding the definition of attitude, Lee & Gan (2007) pointed out it is a psychological status and evaluation of people, events, and objects. A person reveals his inclination of like or dislike in learning them. Attitude has three constructs: cognition, affection and conation (Ajzen, 1988; Weber, 1991). In this study, cognition refers to a consumer’s knowledge, perception, belief, and thought; affection stands for an individual’s feeling after experiencing the products; conation means a person’s action and behavior tendency. It is a process in which consumers pursue the target and it is a prior position for consumers’ trial of the products (Engel, J. E., Blackwell, R. D., & Miniard, P. W., 1995). Since conation covers the discussion of motivation, attitude, therefore, can be used to predict a person’s behavior.

Green consumption attitude is a combination of special environmental characters and a belief coming from a direct connection of the entire environment with people and objects.



Such a combination includes cognition of the environment and an overall evaluation and leads to a sustainable behavior inclination (Hines, J. M., Hungerford, H. R., & Tomera, A. N., 1987). Accordingly, attitude toward green consumption means an individual conception value of the overall environment and his viewpoints of the human responsibilities and roles in the environment. Earlier studies on the behaviors of the environmental responsibilities usually hypothesized that knowledge affects attitude in a linear model and attitude will influence the thought of the behaviors (Cottrell & Graefe, 1997).

## **2.2 Consumer Behavior**

The study of consumer behavior as a separate marketing discipline began when marketers realized that consumers did not always act or react as marketing theory suggested they would. (Leon G. & Leslie Lazar, 2000) Despite a sometimes “me too” approach to fads and fashions, many consumers rebelled at using the identical products that everyone else used. Consumer behavior was a relatively new field of study in the mid- to late 1960s. Because it had no history or body of research of its own, marketing theorists borrowed heavily from concepts developed in other scientific discipline, such as psychology, anthropology, and economics to form the basis of this new marketing discipline. (Kotler, 1997) Many early theories concerning consumer behavior were based on economic theory, on the notion that individuals act rationally to maximize their benefits (satisfactions) in the purchase of goods and services. Later research discovered that consumers are just as likely to purchase impulsively, and to be influenced not only by family and friends, by advertisers and role model, but also by mood, situation, and emotion. All of these factors combine to form a comprehensive model of consumer behavior that reflects both the cognitive and emotional aspects of consumer decision making.

The study of culture is the study of all aspects of a society. It is the language, knowledge, laws, and customs that give that society its distinctive character and personality. In the context of consumer behavior, culture is defined as the sum total of learned beliefs, values, and customs that serve to regulate the consumer behavior of members of a particular society. Beliefs and values are guides for consumer behavior; customs are usual and accepted ways of behaving. (Leon G. & Leslie Lazar, 2000)

## **2.3 Resort Hotel**

With the increasing of senses of global environmental protection, the concept of environmental protection hotel and eco-hotel is gradually forming worldwide. Tourism Council Australia (1998) claimed that green hotels are tourism hotels depending on the



nature, run in an environment-sensitive way, and maintaining an environment where green products and green services are provided for tourists. Moreover, they are an eco-like environment, making tourists feel healthy, fresh and comfortable. Tourists, during their stay in the hotel, can enjoy nature itself, and the process and education of nature protection (Guo & Chen, 2003). Another position from xxx in Japan about the green hotel is the construction of a hotel should care about both environment and nature and should not place any heavy burden on the environment so that the abundant nature can co-exist peacefully with the tourism (Su & Liao, 2005). Green Mountain State (2002) argued a green hotel is attempting to create an environment with the participation from staff members and tourists. Therefore, it is necessary to have a careful observation into every operation procedure to make a lowest impact on the environment, to search ways to educate tourists and hotel staff and faculty, and to remind everybody to work hard and stick to the promise to offer a service which tourists expect and desire. A definition from the *China Green Hotel Grading Rules* (2004) says that the ideas of environmental protection, health, and safety are used to support hotels with green consumption, ecology protection, and reasonable use of sources. The purpose is to provide tourists with comfortable, safe, beneficial, and healthy green accommodation and green food and drinks. Besides, in the production process, environment protection is emphasized and sources are used intelligently. EcoMall (2000) thought Green Hotels offer a temporary housing. Runners and managers of green hotels devote themselves to saving water and other resources, reducing any waste of resources, helping keep the earth from being destroyed. Green Hotel Association (2002) defined the Green Hotel as a hotel run by an active manager to save water and resources and decrease the solid waste to maintain the earth (Wang, 2005). Yeh, P. H., Cai, J. F. & Huan, T. C., (2003) found that hotels which are engaged in environment protection can upgrade their reputation, save expenses and costs, and increase tourists' consumption willingness. Shen & Wan (2001) also pointed out that it can save costs, upgrade entrepreneurs' images, increase consumption willingness, extend environment life. Therefore, it is trendy for hotels to promote environment protection conception and it in turn will bring more concrete benefits for hotels.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research participants and sampling method**

Ten resort hotels in Alishan are chosen, Alishan House, Gau Shan Ching Hotel, Alishan Shermuh International Tourist Hotel, Ho Fong Villa Hotel, Gau Shan Ching Hotel, Dafeng Hotel, Alishan Youth Activity Center, Alishan Gou Hotel, and Ying Shan Hotel. Research participants were 40 hotel residents in each resort hotel. Questionnaires were



distributed to them from June 21, 2010 to July 20, 2010. 360 questionnaires were filled out in total. After disregarding the invalid ones, only 274 copies were analyzed. The valid return rate was 76%. Convenience sampling of Non-probability sampling method was adopted in this study.

### 3.2 Research tools

#### 3.2.1 Questionnaire designing and scoring

Questionnaires were used to collect data in this survey research. After reviewing literature, the researchers compiled a questionnaire entitled “Questionnaire of Resort Hotel Tourists’ Attitude toward Green Consumption.” There were two parts. The first part was the personal background of resort hotel tourists, such as gender, marital status, and occupation. The data were measured according to the nominal levels. As for educational background, age, and individual income, the data were measured based on the ordinal levels. The second part was about tourists’ attitude toward green consumption. It was a modified version of Peng’s (2002) , Lee and Gan’s (2007) questionnaires. 14 questions were asked and answered on a five-point Likert scale: 5 points for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral position, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. Participants filled up the questionnaire based on their situation. The higher scores they received on the scale, the more positive attitude participants held or vice versa.

#### 3.2.2 Factor analysis

After compiling the questionnaire, it was distributed to 90 tourists as a pre-test. Then an item analysis and factor analysis were conducted to modify inappropriate statements before a formal questionnaire came out. In the factor analysis of tourists’ attitude toward green consumption, statements were categorized into three factors: green conception, purchasing behaviors and negative disappointment. The total explanation variance was 60%. With the analysis of the first factor, results indicated that tourists’ attitude toward green consumption is to maintain the natural resources of the earth and sustain the environment. Human being should protect the environment, economize on the resources on the earth and practice the green consumption in their daily life. The first factor was therefore named green conception, and the factor explanation variance reached 30.1%. The second factor covered the tourists’ green attitude of their purchasing behavior. For example, when staying in a hotel, tourists would take environment protection into their consideration to make or reject a purchase. The explanation variance in the factor “purchasing behavior” was 16.9%. As for the third factor, the statements in this category were more negative ones. They were used to inquire of tourists whether traditional hotels or green ones had little influence on the environmental pollution, whether tourists were unwilling to maintain the environment, and whether it was hard to bring the success of environmental protection without everyone’s effort. The explanation variance in this category, negative



disappointment, was 13%.

### 3.2.3 Validity and reliability

After compiling the questionnaire, to assure its appropriateness, it was given to 8 environmental educators and scholars to review the content validity. Moreover, the three sub-scales, green conception, purchasing behavior, and negation & disappointment were analyzed the internal consistence of each item to test its reliability. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient is 0.845, 0.676, and 0.612 respectively.

## 3.3 Data processing

Of the returned questionnaires, invalid ones were discarded. Then the collected data were input into the computer for statistical analysis (SPSS 15.0 for Windows). Below are the statistic methods used.

### 3.3.1 Descriptive statistics:

It applied to the personal background of participants. The frequency distribution allowed the researchers to understand the sample distribution.

### 3.3.2 Independent t-test:

It was applied to test the differences between genders and marital status.

### 3.3.3 One-way ANOVA test:

It was applied to test the differences of green consumption attitude among different age levels and educational backgrounds. If significant difference was found, Scheffe was conducted for post-hoc test between ranks.

### 3.3.4 Significant difference value is set as $\alpha=.05$

## 4. Research Results

### 4.1 A description of the personal background of tourist interviewees

Results of descriptive statistic analysis revealed that female visitors (N=161, 59%) are more than male visitors (N=113, 40.4%); married tourists (N=181, 64.6%) are more than the single ones (N=93, 35.4%). Regarding the age distribution, there are 56 tourists (20.2%) from age 20-29; 101 people (36.6%, the highest percentage) from age 30-39; 78 tourists (28.0%) from age 40-49; 39 people (15.2%) from age 50- over. As for the tourists' educational background, it was found that 171 people are university or college graduates with the highest percentage of 61.3%. Followed are high school graduates or below (N=92, 32.9%). Then graduates above university level are 11 people with 5.8% of the whole participants.

### 4.2 Tourists' green consumption attitude

#### 4.2.1 A significant difference test on different genders of tourists' green consumption





attitude

Table 1 summarizes the difference test on different genders of tourists' green consumption attitude on three categories, green conception, negation & disappointment, and purchasing behaviors. No significant difference is found.

Table 1. Attitude toward green consumption of different genders

Green consumption attitude	Sex	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
Green conception	Male	113	4.65	.42	-.611	.542
	Female	161	4.67	.39		
Negation & disappointment	Male	113	2.74	.87	1.677	.094
	Female	161	2.59	.84		
Purchasing behavior	Male	113	4.11	.55	1.253	.211
	Female	161	4.03	.60		

\*p<.05

#### 4.2.2 A significant difference test on different marital status of tourists' green consumption attitude

Table 2 summarizes the difference test on different marital status of tourists' attitude toward green consumption on the three categories, green conception, negation & disappointment, and purchasing behaviors. Significant differences are found in the category of green conception (p<.05).

Table 2. Attitude toward green consumption of tourists of different marital status

Green consumption attitude	Marital status	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
Green conception	Married	181	4.69	.35	2.217	.034*
	Single	93	4.60	.47		
Negation & disappointment	Married	181	2.60	.88	-1.554	.121
	Single	93	2.74	.81		
Purchasing behavior	Married	181	4.10	.57	1.542	.124
	Single	93	4.00	.59		

\*p<.05

#### 4.2.3 Attitude toward green consumption of tourists of different ages

Table 3 summarizes the attitude toward green consumption of tourists of different ages. Significant differences are found still in the category of green conception (p<.05) among three factors. The post-hoc test reveals that people ranging from age 30 to 39 hold stronger attitude than those ranging from age 20 to 29, and tourists ranging from age 40 to 49 hold stronger attitudes than those from age 20 to 29.

Table 3. Attitude toward green consumption of tourists of different ages

Green consumption attitude	Age	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value	Post-hoc test
Green conception	20-29	56	4.50	.51	5.574	.001*	2>1 3>1
	30-39	101	4.73	.35			
	40-49	78	4.68	.38			
	over 50	39	4.67	.33			
	total	274	4.66	.40			
Negation &	20-29	56	2.80	.84	1.147	.330	
	30-39	101	2.58	.89			
	40-49	78	2.62	.82			



<b>disappointment</b>	over 50	39	2.65	.85			
	total	274	2.65	.86			
<b>Purchasing behavior</b>	20-29	56	4.03	.59	.444	.721	
	30-39	101	4.10	.59			
	40-49	78	4.03	.60			
	over 50	39	4.2	.51			
	total	274	4.06	.58			

\*p<.05

#### 4.2.4 Attitude toward green consumption of tourists of different educational background

Table 4 summarizes attitude toward green consumption of tourists with different educational background. No significant difference was found in the three factors.

Table 4. Attitude toward green consumption of tourists of different educational background

Green consumption attitude	Educational level	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
<b>Green conception</b>	Below high school	92	4.67	.39	1.81	.835
	Univ. or college	171	4.66	.40		
	Graduate school	11	4.61	.45		
	Total	274	4.66	.40		
<b>Negation &amp; disappointment</b>	Below high school	92	2.65	.81	1.114	.320
	Univ. or college	171	2.62	.90		
	Graduate school	11	2.92	.64		
	Total	274	2.65	.86		
<b>Purchasing behavior</b>	Below high school	92	4.02	.62	.604	.547
	Univ. or college	171	4.09	.55		
	Graduate school	11	4.00	.67		
	Total	274	4.06	.58		

## 5. Conclusion

This study investigated into the personal background differences of tourists visiting Alishan. Similar to Chen’s (2001) research results, no difference was found regarding genders. It implies that gender difference will not lead to different green consumption attitude.

The results of the study on the influence of marital status on the green consumption indicated a significant difference between married and single people in the factor of green conception (p<.05). This means people of different marital status will hold different green conception. The attitude of the married is more positive than that of the single. This can be due to the fact that the married have a family and children. They have to play a role of parents and educators. Therefore, their attitude is stronger than the single. Concerning the influence of age differences on the attitude, there is also a significant difference found, especially in the factor of green conception (p<.05). The result of the post-hoc test is also consistent with Chen’s (2001) research findings: the attitude of people with age from 30-49 is stronger than that with age from 20-29. The possible reason may be attributed to life habits, family education and school education. Tourists at the age of 30-49 seem to more emphasize green conception since they were still under school education when government was highly promoting environmental protection.



Besides, the results show that there is no significant difference found in the different educational background toward the attitude of green consumption. Thus, educational background will not affect tourists' green consumption attitude.

The research findings point out the age and marital differences do cause the significant differences of tourist attitude, green conception in particular. Consequently, it is suggested that authorities of environmental protection should strengthen their promotion. Knowledge of environmental protection should be included in the school curricula by educational authorities to build citizens a correct green consumption attitude. Through the promotion of green consumption, environment pollution can be improved. Moreover, legislative authorities should make laws and regulations to enhance citizens' environmental protection consciousness.

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