

## The Readiness of Consumers to Adopt Green Hotels in Indonesia: Does Trust Matter?

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**Abstract:** The number of hotels and consumers that are concerned about the green concept has been increasing, on the other hand, consumers are also becoming skeptical towards the practice of greenwash. Due to the limited availability of research regarding trust in green hotels in developing countries, the purpose of this study is to examine how the influence of attributes on green hotels can affect attitude, intention to stay, and willingness to pay a premium price, as well as how trust can mediate this relationship. The data were collected through a purposive sampling survey of 152 hotel consumers in Indonesia who could identify 5 of the 15 features of green hotels. The data were analyzed using the partial least squares method. The results confirm that the green hotel attributes do not affect the willingness to pay premium prices either with the existence or the absence of trust as a mediating factor. However, this research reveals that consumer trust is essential because it can be a mediating factor that can raise the willingness to stay at green hotels. This research is valuable to provide insight for hotel managers to develop strategies to increase the trust and sales of targeted green customers.

**Keywords:** attitude, green hotel, intention to stay, mediation, willingness to pay.

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## INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is an industry whose operational activities can have a negative impact on climate change, global warming, and environmental damage (Chan et al., 2020). This is due to the operational activities of the hotel requiring a very high level of energy and water consumption (Rini & Hasim, 2021). Thus, the existence of hotels can also cause problems and conflicts related to the reduced supply of water sources of surrounded residents (Antonova et al., 2022) and increase the amount of food waste, solid waste, plastic waste, and detergents (Chen & Chen, 2012; Deraman et al., 2017). The pressure from external stakeholders such as hotel guests (green travelers), business partners (e.g. event organizers and travel agents), environmental groups, and shareholders in their holding companies regarding issues of environmental damage is a challenge for the hotel industry which ultimately prompted the emergence of an environmentally friendly hotel concept or known as the Green Hotel concept (Chan et al., 2020). In a survey conducted by Trip Advisor in 2022, 71% of Trip Advisor respondents



said that they prefer eco-friendly hotels when they travel. Green hotels, basically are profit-oriented, like other hotels in general (Ali Nisar et al., 2021). However, in carrying out their economic activities, these hotels give very serious concern and attention to the principles of environmental sustainability. Although the implementation of green hotels is believed to increase the complexity and high operational costs of hotels (Hou & Wu, 2021), the implementation of green hotels can also provide benefits such as reducing energy use which affects the company's competitive advantage (Novitasari et al., 2021), and increasing the reputation of the hotel (Chen et al., 2018).

The application of green practices cannot be promptly carried out by several hotels because it requires a sizeable investment to adjust existing resources and buildings and installations into green attributes (Ratnamiasih et al., 2022), and very few hotels are certified as green hotels (Ahn & Kwon, 2020). In addition, there is price sensitivity from consumers due to the negative stigma that green hotel concepts have high rates. Besides that, there is a phenomenon of "greenwashing" carried out by several hotels that have led to consumer skepticism that makes them reluctant to visit, share and recommend green hotels. There is a view from some consumers that acting 'green' is only used as a marketing trick to charge higher prices. Furthermore, the issue of greenwashing is increasingly common where the implementation of green hotels only at particular parts of their businesses can influence consumer perceptions without making a significant contribution to green goals (Chen, 2020). Several green product studies also show that more consumers are getting skeptical of the policies and goals pursued by green entrepreneurs (Chen, 2020; Rahman et al., 2015)

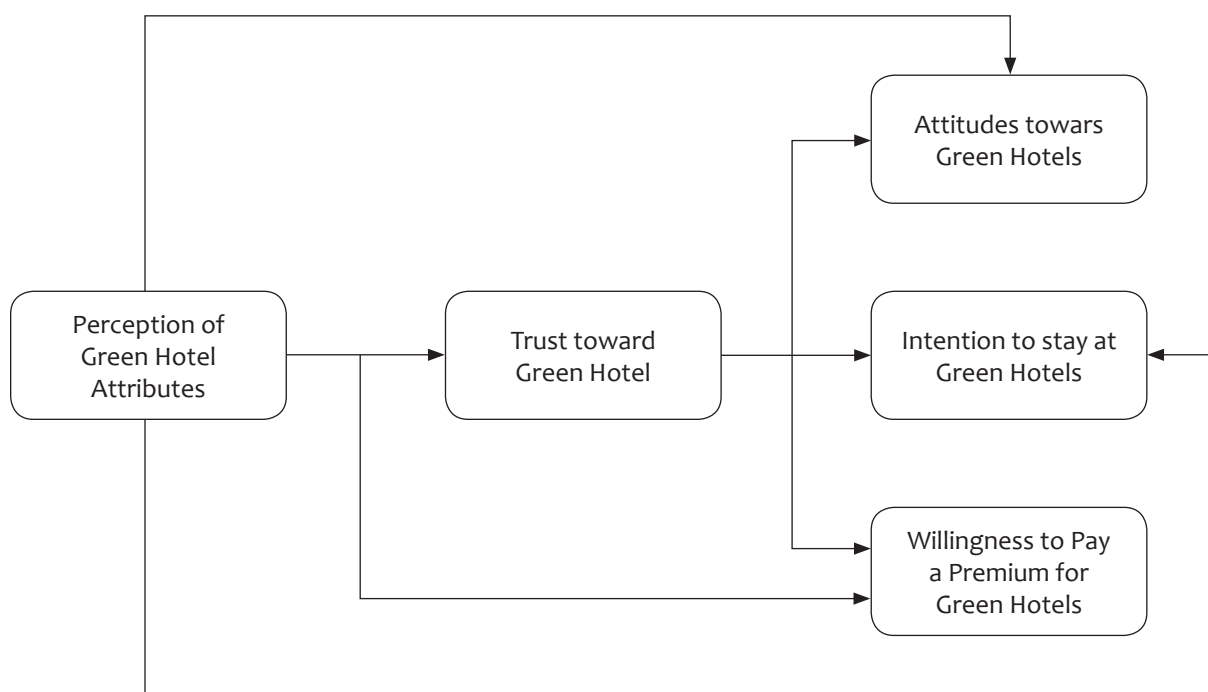
Taking the above consideration, this research aims to understand how green hotel attributes implementation can develop consumer trust, ultimately leading to an increase in attitude, intention to stay, and willingness to pay a premium price in green hotels. Compared to the previous study, the novelty of this study is to comprehend the theory of planned behavior from the sight of trust. Previous studies have not placed trust as an important element to increase attitudes, intentions, and willingness to pay premium prices for green hotels (Chairunnisa & Perdhana, 2020). In the field of green hotel research, certain studies concentrated on examining the specific human behavioral factors that influence tourists' perceptions of the hotel quality and their inclination to stay in green hotels but trust has not received significant attention in previous research studies (Chia-Jung & Chen, 2014; Hendarto et al., 2021; Hou & Wu, 2021; Sultana et al., 2022). Trust is also closely related to the outcome of behavior, when trust has been formed, it will lead to favorable attitudes that can influence their behavioral intention to choose eco-friendly hotels (Choi et al., 2015). Nevertheless, Verma & Chandra (2016) examined what influences hotel guests' intentions to stay at green hotels and engage in green programs while staying at the hotel but trust has not been investigated. Ahn & Kwon (2020) studied customers' attitudinal loyalty toward green hotels, specifically the cognitive-affective-conative framework. However, the element of trust from consumers toward green hotels has not been further examined. Therefore, to fill the existing gap in the literature, this study examines the readiness of consumers to adopt green hotels in Indonesia regarding their trust in green hotels. Several research questions are investigated in this study: 1) To what extent is the trust of Indonesian customers might mediate the green hotel attributes to attitudes towards green hotels? 2) To what extent is the trust of Indonesian customers might mediate the green hotel attributes to intention to stay in the green hotels? 3) To what extent is the trust of Indonesian customers might mediate the green hotel attributes to their willingness to pay a premium price in the green hotels?

Previous studies have shown that tourists generally have a positive attitude towards green hotels (Chen & Peng, 2012; Chia-Jung & Chen, 2014; Millar & Baloglu, 2011). An attitude is a form of opinion, belief, feeling, and knowledge possessed by someone that can be also represented emotionally, thus attitudes will influence

the behavior of an individual and society. Attitudes toward green hotels will show people's behavior related to awareness and responsibility for the environment, concern for environmental problems as well as for the benefit of the next generation (Liao et al., 2020; Panichpathom & Thamburanawit, 2016).

Consumers who have a high concern for the environment will choose to use environmentally friendly products. In this case, attitude is a component of TPB (Theory of Planned Behavior) (Wang et al., 2019). Attitude is closely related to desire, a guest's propensity to stay at a green hotel because the desire is encouraged by a positive attitude towards a green hotel (Ahn & Kwon, 2020). The basic theory used to support this is TRA (Theory of Rational Behavior) where the concept of TRA is an intention, which means that the individual is willing to make an effort to implement a specific behavior (Jiang & Gao, 2019). How a person behaves is closely related to intention. Intention reflects the willingness of the person to carry out certain behaviors planned or intentionally based on the knowledge possessed, including moral factors and personal norms that cause a person to carry out behavior based on personal responsibility (Chen & Tung, 2014). Someone who has a responsibility to care for the environment tends to have behavior to stay at a green hotel.

Understanding the guest's willingness to pay a premium price is important in the context of green hotels. Services or products that are eco-friendly generally have a higher price compared to conventional products. Price is a crucial determining factor in consumer purchasing decisions and can be a barrier to consumer adoption of green hotels (Yadav et al., 2019). The high price level may occur because the costs incurred by a hotel to implement a green concept or to make changes towards implementing a green hotel are also estimated to be quite high. However, price sensitivity can still occur in society, even for consumers who claim to have concern for the environment, there is still the possibility that consumers will not adopt pro-environmental enactment because the price of green products is higher compared to similar products (Yue et al., 2020).



**Figure 1 The Research Model**

Consequently, green hotels need to enhance public trust which ultimately convinces the community to participate in eco-friendly hotels. Trust refers to the words or commitments made by the other party that can be trusted, leading to the expectation that they will fulfill their obligations in a reciprocal relationship (Khoiruman & Haryanto, 2017). Referring to this definition, trust is also defined as the extent to which a company or individual wants to believe that its exchange partner is honest, reliable, integrity, credible, and/or kind (Geyskens et al., 1996; Lee, 2020). Therefore, trust is a construct that contains beliefs, feelings, or expectations about exchange partners, which can be assessed from the expertise, reliability, and intentions of partners that can influence the relationship between partners and in the next stage affect the purchase intention of partners (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Trust is important for consumers to choose green hotels over conventional hotels based on the belief that the green hotels they choose consistently and actively participate in protecting the environment (Yadav et al., 2019). This level of trust allows companies to attract environmentally conscious consumers (Almajali & Tarabieh, 2020). By increasing green trust, companies can strengthen consumers' willingness to purchase products while reducing the perceived risk associated with them. If the level of trust is low it can lead to unfavorable attitudes and poor communication (Leonidou et al., 2015).

Furthermore, green business concepts are gaining increasing attention in developing countries. However, the decision-making process regarding the selection of green hotels in developing countries like Indonesia remains limited. This is due to the fact that existing literature on green concepts in the hospitality and tourism industry predominantly focuses on developed countries (Kwon & Ahn, 2021; Lee et al., 2019). Further, the research is required to comprehend the perspectives of consumers in Indonesia, as consumers may have distinct interpretations of the same attribute (Peter & Olson, 2013).

## METHODS

The sample size for this study was determined using a purposive sampling technique. In this approach, the researcher intentionally selected respondents that had complete data available in the form of published reports (Butt et al., 2020). The respondents of this study were hotel consumers at least 18 years old and based in Indonesia who could identify 5 features out of 15 features of a green hotel. There were 203 respondents who participated in filling out the questionnaire, then a screening (selection) process was carried out to obtain a sample of 152 respondents who met the criteria.

The background 152 sample size are female and male respondents 56.6% and 43.4% respectively. Based on the age category, most of the respondents are in the age range of 18-49 respondents (79.4%) and 90 respondents' occupations (59.3%) are private/state employees. Based on the purpose of stay, 96 respondents (63.2%) are for tourist visits, 51 respondents (33.6%) are for business/official visits, 51 respondents (33.6%) are for both tourist visits and business/official visits, and the rest are for other purpose. Regarding the average length of stay in one visit, 72 respondents (47.4%) stay for 1-2 nights, 70 respondents (46.1%) stay for 3- 4 nights, and the rest are for other length of stay. The data were processed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) statistical method with a Partial Least Square (PLS) approach.

In Table 1, the convergent validity test can be seen from the loading factor values for each construct indicator. The commonly used rule of thumb to assess convergent validity is based on its loading factor, where the value should be equal to or above 0.6 (Aiken et al., 1991). Convergent validity is also measured by using the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value, which should be greater than 0.5. The test of Composite Reliability (CR) also shows the values of CR are above 0.7. This means that the construct and indicators are considered valid. These indicate that all reflective indicators and latent variables are considered suitable for the outer model. Thus, the convergent validity test meets the qualifications.

Table 1 Measurement Model

Variable	Dimension	Item	Loading Factor	CA	CR	AVE
Green Hotel Attributes (GHA)	Customer Benefit	CB1	0.723	0.823	0.876	0.586
		CB2	0.811			
		CB3	0.799			
		CB4	0.791			
		CB5	0.696			
	Energy Efficiency	EE1	0.791	0.709	0.817	0.530
		EE2	0.615			
		EE3	0.794			
		EE4	0.696			
	Recycling Policy	RP1	0.644	0.703	0.818	0.531
		RP2	0.744			
		RP3	0.744			
		RP4	0.775			
	Water Efficiency	WE1	0.694	0.726	0.828	0.547
		WE2	0.692			
		WE3	0.753			
		WE4	0.813			
	Green Landscape	GL1	0.885	0.852	0.910	0.771
		GL2	0.887			
		GL3	0.863			
Green Trust (GT)		GT1	0.811	0.789	0.864	0.615
		GT2	0.864			
		GT3	0.739			
		GT4	0.716			
Attitude Toward Green Hotel (AG)		AG1	0.751	0.870	0.899	0.562
		AG2	0.797			
		AG3	0.731			
		AG4	0.764			
		AG5	0.816			
		AG6	0.699			
		AG7	0.680			
Intention to Stay at Green Hotel (IS)		IS1	0.857	0.841	0.903	0.756
		IS2	0.874			
		IS3	0.878			
Willingness to Pay (WP)		WP1	0.937	0.885	0.929	0.814
		WP2	0.926			
		WP3	0.840			

**Table 2 Correlation Ratios**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Customer Benefit	0.765								
2. Water Efficiency	0.374	0.728							
3. Recycling Policy	0.480	0.723	0.728						
4. Water Efficiency	0.444	0.716	0.702	0.740					
5. Green Landscape	0.531	0.502	0.460	0.473	0.878				
6. Green Trust	0.663	0.441	0.394	0.412	0.500	0.784			
7. Attitude Toward Green Hotel	0.453	0.402	0.427	0.405	0.400	0.585	0.750		
8. Intention to Stay at Green Hotel	0.567	0.275	0.330	0.262	0.288	0.584	0.519	0.870	
9. Willingness to Pay	0.335	0.167	0.107	0.183	0.120	0.287	0.364	0.426	0.902

In the Fornell-Larcker Criterion measurement, the construct values in their respective indicator blocks should exceed the values of constructs in other indicator blocks. The test results in Table 2 show valid values. An indicator's cross-loading factor on its representative latent variable should exceed 0.7. The calculation results show that the cross-loading factor values for all indicators have a high level of correlation, with values above 0.7. Thus, there are no correlation values between indicators and other latent variables that exceed the value of their representative variable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Table 3, the direction of the relationship between perceptions of green hotel attributes and guest attitudes has a positive relationship. The results of the analysis and data processing show that the value of  $t\text{-test} > t\text{-table}$  ( $3.529 > 1.96$ ) with a  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  ( $0 < 0.05$ ). The path coefficient value for partial direct relationships shows a positive value and indicates a medium effect size (0.277).

**Table 3 Structural Model**

Direct Effect	Path Coefficient (Direct Effect)	t-Statistic	t-Table	P Value
Perception of Green Hotel Attributes → Attitude Toward Green Hotel	0.277	3.529	1.96	0.000
Perception of Green Hotel Attributes → Intention to Stay at Green Hotel	0.174	1.216	1.96	0.224
Perception of Green Hotel Attributes → Willingness to Pay	0.120	1.025	1.96	0.306
Perception of Green Hotel Attributes → Trust	0.647	13.388	1.96	0.000
Trust → Attitude Toward Green Hotel	0.406	4.662	1.96	0.000
Trust → Intention to Stay at Green Hotel	0.471	4.339	1.96	0.000
Trust → Willingness to Pay	0.209	1.875	1.96	0.061



From the Table 3, the perceptions of green hotel attributes are not significant to guest attitudes. Data processing shows that the value of  $t\text{-test} < t\text{-table}$  ( $1.216 < 1.96$ ) with a  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$  ( $0.224 > 0.05$ ). Then, results show that perceptions of green hotel attributes have no significant effect on guest willingness to pay a premium fee. The value of the  $t\text{-test} < t\text{-table}$  ( $1.025 < 1.96$ ) with a  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$  ( $0.306 > 0.05$ ).

The results in Table 4 show that trust in green hotels mediates the influence of green hotel attributes on guest attitudes. The data processing for indirect relationships shows that the value of  $t\text{-test} > t\text{-table}$  ( $4.202 > 1.96$ ) with a  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  ( $0 < 0.05$ ). The indirect effect value for the relationship through the mediating variable is 0.263 and indicates a medium effect size. Thus, The influence of the mediating variable of trust in green hotels in mediating perceptions of green hotel attributes on guest attitudes falls into the category of partial mediation.

The test show that trusts in green hotels mediates the influence of green hotel attributes on guest intentions, which the value of  $t\text{-test} > t\text{-table}$  ( $3.738 > 1.96$ ) with a  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  ( $0 < 0.05$ ). The indirect effect value for the relationship through the mediating variable is 0.305 and indicates a large effect size. The influence of the mediating variable of trust in green hotels in mediating perceptions of green hotel attributes on guest intentions falls into the category of full mediation. Furthermore, trust in green hotels does not mediate the influence of green hotel attributes on guest willingness to pay a premium. Indirect relationships show that the value of  $t\text{-test} < t\text{-table}$  ( $1.764 < 1.96$ ) with a  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$  ( $0.078 > 0.05$ ).

**Table 4 Mediating Effect**

Indirect Effect	Indirect Effect	t-Statistic	t-Table	P Values	Mediating Effect
Perception of Green Hotel Attributes → Trust → Attitude Toward Green Hotel	0.263	4.202	1.96	0.000	Partial Mediation
Perception of Green Hotel Attributes → Trust → Intention to Stay at Green Hotel	0.305	3.738	1.96	0.000	Full Mediation
Perception of Green Hotel Attributes → Trust → Willingness to Pay	0.135	1.764	1.96	0.078	No Mediation Effect

Accordingly, the findings show that consumers have a positive attitude toward the efforts made by hotels to adopt the green concept. The more green atmosphere is felt or seen, the stronger the positive attitude the consumers have. It means that when a hotel has decided to adopt the green concept, it must be reflected thoroughly in their daily business activities. It will also eliminate the perception of the greenwashing practice. This is consistent with previous research which suggests that environmental implementation will have a stronger influence on the positive and supportive attitudes of consumers toward green hotel practices (Jiang & Gao, 2019; Millar & Baloglu, 2011).

The result of our study confirmed that consumer perceptions of green hotel attributes did not affect consumer intention to stay. This can be inferred that consumers might have knowledge about the environment but they do not always practice environmentally friendly habits, as indicated by their relatively low level of concern for the environment. Therefore, staying in a green hotel is not considered a primary concern for consumers in Indonesia. It is evident from one of the questionnaires, which shows that only 19.08% of consumers strive to stay in a green hotel. Thus, the perception of the implemented green hotel attributes is not sufficient to influence consumer intention to stay in a green hotel or to be viewed as a significant factor. This is consistent

with research by Brian (2019), who explained that low consumer awareness of environmental concerns will have no effect on consumer behavior and intention to visit green hotels. Additionally, cultural factors in developing countries such as Indonesia, the implementation of environmentally friendly practices is still relatively new compared to developed countries (Gunawan et al., 2016).

The results also indicated that trust in a green hotel significantly mediates the influence of perceptions of green hotel attributes on consumer intentions to stay. Therefore, as consumer trust in a green hotel increases, so does the influence of perceptions of its green attributes on guest intentions. Trust can be formed because consumers have sufficient information about the hotel's green programs, which are reliable and consistent with actual practices, thus increasing trust in the hotel's performance. Likewise, the commitment to implementing green hotel practices is crucial in building consumer trust. Hotels need to effectively communicate their green hotel image to consumers. This is consistent with research by Eid et al. (2021) indicated that hotels must first understand the factors that influence consumer intentions to increase their purchase decisions, build the hotel image and reputation, service quality, and upsell environmentally friendly products during their stay.

This study confirmed that the consumer's perception of the green hotel attributes has no significant impact on the willingness of guests to pay a premium price for staying in a green hotel. Although high prices are relative to each individual, there are still many consumers who are unwilling or refuse to pay more for environmentally friendly products. This is also in line with research by Sugianto & Kurniawan (2017) hotels are still seen as solely responsible for adopting environmentally-friendly practices, rather than expecting consumers to bear the burden of increased costs. The situation may also be attributed to consumers' perception that hotel is primarily a means of accommodation only, so the implementation of green hotel programs does not add value to the price paid.

The research results including the aspect of consumer trust in green hotels also did not have a significant effect on willingness to pay a premium price for staying at a green hotel. It shows that for Indonesian consumers, price considerations are still a sensitive matter for them to pay green hotels' tariffs. Consumers' perceptions of green hotel attributes and trust in green hotel practices are not enough (González-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Relatively few respondents indicated their willingness to pay extra for staying in an environmentally-friendly room (Millar & Baloglu, 2011).

Consumers assess the monetary value of a product or service based on its price, and this assessment is closely associated with the perceived quality and functional advantages it offers. As mentioned earlier, hotels that adopt green hotel programs often charge higher prices, and this is a significant factor that influences consumers in their decision to choose or not a particular hotel.

Trust is something that must be maintained by showing consistency in the promise of green hotel attributes and deliverables. Trust that green hotels are committed to protecting and being responsible for the environment is very important to strive for because it can increase consumers' attitudes and intentions to visit green hotels in Indonesia. Although trust has not been able to increase consumer willingness to pay a premium price. But the number of environmentally conscious consumers is increasing. Although the number of green consumers in Indonesia is still relatively low, the trend is expected to increase as the middle-class population in Indonesia is predicted increasing and the percentage of consumers who are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products is also showing an increasing trend (Gunawan & Ferdhian, 2020).

Regarding the results of this study, the hotel management needs to increase consumers' awareness, consciousness, and participation in environmental issues at the hotel. In addition, placing information related to the hotel's environmental concerns in strategic areas, adding real information about the hotel's green programs



on the hotel website, and running green advertising can help increase guest awareness, which will ultimately lead to increased trust and intention to choose a green hotel.

This research finding suggested that it is essential for hotel managers to build trust in green hotels. There are several ways to enhance customer trust such as having green hotel certification, delivering educational movements that involve environmental activists, and brand ambassadors, especially educating people about green hotels. Besides winning the trust of customers, the implementation of green hotels also has implications for environmental protection and sustainability goals, reducing carbon emissions, reducing water consumption, managing waste effectively, and preserving natural resources for future generations which may promote sustainable lifestyles for both guests and the community. Additionally, this study can provide a point of view for policymakers. The result of the study may help the government to develop and implement strategies to win the trust of green consumers and to promote Indonesia as a sustainable tourism destination.

## CONCLUSION

This study is focused on the exploration of the readiness of consumers to adopt green hotels in Indonesia, regarding how trust might mediate the green hotel attributes to attitudes towards green hotels, intention to stay in the green hotels, and customer willingness to pay a premium price in the green hotels. The results confirmed that the perception of green hotels has a significant and positive effect on attitudes towards green hotels and it becomes better when trust exists as the mediating variable. It means that the stronger or more positive the consumer's perception of implementing the green hotel attributes, the stronger the consumer's attitude towards liking the eco-friendly hotel. However, the perception of green hotel attributes implementation is not sufficient to influence consumer intention to stay in a green hotel. But when the trust variable is added as a mediating factor, it can raise the intention to stay. It reveals that the trust factor is crucial to overcome skepticism toward greenwashing practices. As consumer trust in a green hotel increase, so does the influence of perceptions of its green attributes on guests' intentions to stay at a green hotel. This study had practical implications for green hotel managers to increase consumer trust in green hotel attributes and increase a positive attitude towards green hotels by having green hotel certification, conducting education from environmentalists, and brand ambassadors, and direct education in green hotels. Furthermore, enhancing guest intentions to stay can be achieved through the dissemination of guest experiences through word-of-mouth and social media. Finally, to overcome premium costs, the green hotel should analyze the ERRC concept from the Blue Ocean Strategy: (Eliminate things that are not needed, reduce things related to waste-related factors, Raise factors that can increase the quality of green hotels, and Create additional value not yet done by competitors). In this study, the researchers carefully chose the sample for this study. The respondent in this study is limited customers in the big cities in Indonesia, the rural area has not been recognized in this study. The scope of this research is focused on the theory of planned behavior and trust in green hotels. Thus, future research might be conducted on various marketing strategies, and social context on many other interesting variables for green hotels such as hotel brand image, environmental awareness, customer loyalty, and different consumer demographics.

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