

How Environmentally Responsible Management Impacts a Brand in the Hospitality Industry.

By

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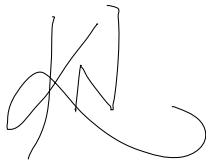
Declaration

I, Kayleigh Nichols, hereby declare that the work submitted for this thesis is my own and has not been plagiarised in any manner.

All sources in the research document have been referenced correctly according to the Harvard referencing technique. A thorough reference list has been provided with all authors mentioned and cited in the work, which has been included at the end of the research document. All hotel, resort and lodge respondents have remained anonymous as well as the brand associated to the particular respondent. Images, tables and figures have also been referenced adequately in text as well as in the reference list.

I further declare that this assignment is original work and has not been copied from another students dissertation, nor will I give others consent to copy this research document for their own benefit.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KN' with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the bottom right.

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List of Key Terms and Abbreviations

Green marketing – This type of marketing refers to the selling of product or service but particularly highlighting the environmental benefits of the product or service (Ward, 2017).

Green washing - Is the practice of making an unsubstantiated or misleading claim about environmental benefits of a product or service (Rouse, 2017).

Brand image – how consumers perceive the brand as a result of how it communicates itself.

Hospitality – is a broad category of fields of service, but primarily looking at lodging in this research study.

Green consumer – is a consumer who wants to buy products or services that have had no negative impact on the environment.

Abstract

In the past decade there has been a huge shift and increase in consumers adapting a new consumer consciousness towards the environment and adapting to environmentally friendly behaviour. In response, many brands have had to adapt to this to cater the new consumer demands, particularly in the hospitality industry.

The tourism industry remains a key driver and is the fastest growing part of the South African economy. South Africa has become a large attraction to tourists due to its mega diverse flora and fauna (Jackson, 2016). This then lends its self to a topic worth looking at.

The following study was conducted to explore the different marketing techniques a brand displays in the hospitality industry, particularly looking a hotel, resorts and lodge brands. The study makes strong reference and focuses on green marketing and environmentally friendly management. The study looks at possible ways to utilise the new consumer consciousness in a brands favour in order to increase brand credibility and equity. It also looks at ways to maintain competitive advantage and increase clientele in the fast moving and growing hospitality industry. The study follows a qualitative research method where data was collected through in-depth open ended interviews, telephonic open ended in-depth interviews and digital questionnaires which all followed the same template and questions.

The results indicate that majority of hotels, resorts and lodges have environmentally friendly management in place also there is a very blurred benchmark as to what these green standards are within the hospitality industry. While majority of respondents claim to have environmentally friendly management in place, majority of respondents had no proof to validate this claim. However, respondents expressed that there are benefits in employing this type of management. This then leads itself into concluding that this could be a way to sustain competitive advantage within the hospitality industry as well as attract more consumers, particularly international consumers.

Contents Page

Declaration	II
Acknowledgements.....	III
List of Key Terms and Abbreviations	IV
Abstract	V
Contents Page.....	VI
List of Tables and Figures	VIII
Chapter 1 – Introduction to Study	9
1.1 Introduction	9
1.2 Contextual Background of Study	9
1.3 Problem Statement.....	9
1.4 Research Questions	10
1.5 Research Objectives	10
1.6 Significance of Study	10
1.7 Chapter Outline	11
1.8 Limitations.....	11
1.9 Conclusion.....	12
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	13
2.1 Introduction to Literature	13
2.2 South African Tourism Industry	13
2.3 History of Green Consumers.....	14
2.4 Self-Completion Theory	17
2.5 Consumers Perception of Green Marketing	18
2.6 The Seven Deadly Sins of Greenwashing	20
2.7 Hotels Commitment to Green Marketing Strategies	21
2.8 Sustainable Development.....	23
2.9 Corporate Social Responsibility.....	24
2.10 Embedded Versus Bolt On Sustainability	25
2.11 Benefits of Hotels Going Green	26
2.12 Green Efforts Recognised in South Africa	28
2.13 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).....	30
2.14 Kevin Lane Kellers Brand Equity Model.....	31
2.15 Conclusion.....	33
Chapter 3 – Research Methodology	34
3.1 Introduction to Research Methodology	34
3.2 Research Methodology	34
3.3 Research Design.....	35
3.4 The Population and Sample	38
3.5 Data Collection Instruments	38

3.5.1 Research Tools.....	38
3.6 Validity and Reliability	39
3.7 Pilot Study	40
3.8 Delimitation and Demarcation	40
3.9 Anticipated Contribution	41
3.10 Ethical Considerations	41
3.11 Conclusion.....	41
Chapter 4 – Research Findings	42
4.1 Introduction	42
4.1 Methodology Adopted	42
4.2 Section A – Hospitality Category of Respondents	42
4.3 Section B – Qualitative Interview Responses.....	43
4.3.1 Objective One – Question 3, 6, 7, 9 and 11.....	43
4.3.2 Objective Two – Question 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.....	47
4.3.3 Objectives Three – Question 1 and 2	49
4.4 Section C – Observational research	52
4.5 Conclusion.....	55
Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations	56
5.1. Introduction	56
5.2. Findings and Recommendations.....	56
5.2.1. Objective One	56
5.2.2. Objective Two	58
5.2.3. Objective Three	60
5.3. Suggestions for Further Research.....	62
5.4. Concluding Remarks	62
6. Appendices	64
Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Letter.....	64
Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	65
Appendix C: Participation Form	66
7. References.....	67

List of Tables and Figures

Table 4.3.1. Number of accommodation type respondents.....	44
Figure 2.7.1 Green Marketing Matrix	22
Figure 2.13.1. Theory of Planned Behaviour	31
Figure 2.14.1 Kevin Lane Keller Brand Equity Model	32
Figure 4.1. Note 1	53
Figure 4.2. Note 2	53
Figure 4.3. Note 3	55
Figure 4.4. Note 4	54

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter forms the foundation for the paper by introducing the study and providing a background to the study, research objectives and research questions. This chapter provides a thorough rationale behind the study and a brief outline as to what is underlined in each chapter.

1.2 Contextual Background of Study

The world has entered into a new eco revolution, where the word green is not just a trend but also a major deciding factor into consumers buying behaviour. Adapting to a new consumer consciousness, companies need to develop a new marketing mindset and a different approach to marketing (Da Silva, 2010). As the public is becoming more concerned about different environmental issues. In turn green management and policies are rapidly becoming a strategic component that can enhance competitive advantage, specifically in hotels (Lee et al., 2010).

Although many hotels have already implemented large-scale green strategies in their operations, these strategies might not be tailored to the specific green attributes that effect a customer's hotel selection (Millar et al, 2012). Thus, It is important that companies make more informed decisions regarding spending on environmental initiatives and not be wasteful without first understanding what their customers want.

1.3 Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate the different aspects that make a hotel environmentally friendly. These hotels are often labeled green hotels. Green hotels are environmentally friendly lodging facilities, which employ management structure's that participate in and initiate environmentally sustainable programs. These programs include water saving techniques,

energy reduction, and waste consolidation (Green Hotel Association [GHA], 2008). This study will address the types of green marketing strategies used by green hotels. Furthermore, it will look address these strategies are important as well as effective components that are administered when engaging with their customers.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What makes green hotels different to commercial chain hotels?
2. Does becoming a green hotel/resort/lodge add more credibility and equity to a brand?
3. How do these hotels/resorts/lodges educate their guests through their marketing and advertising about being environmentally responsible?
4. Do hotels/resorts/lodges utilise embedded or bolt on sustainability in order to add credibility to their brand?

1.5 Research Objectives

To answer the research questions the following objectives have been set:

1. To explore and identify if environmental management adds more credibility to a brand in the hospitality industry
2. To investigate how brands in the hospitality industry particularly hotels, resorts and lodges market themselves as being green.
3. To establish the benchmark set for hotels in order to be deemed environmentally responsible.

1.6 Significance of Study

The research findings would be useful for:

1. Hospitality/Tourism marketers looking to market their hotel, resort or lodge
2. Hotel, resort or lodge managers to acknowledge the benchmark of what it takes to been deemed as environmentally friendly
3. Facilitates consumer's interests in staying at eco hotels/resorts/lodges.

1.7 Chapter Outline

Chapter one: Consists of the overview from the study and further presents the research problem, the research statement, questions, objectives, significance of study and limitations.

Chapter two: Creates a frame of reference for the study, and compiles secondary research that will form the basis of the data collection process. The literature discusses green marketing strategies, sustainability, corporate social investment and looks more in-depth into the every changing environment conscious consumer.

Chapter three: It deals with the research methodology adopted along with the particular research design that was adopted. It also addresses the population and sample that make up the study as well as the research techniques employed in the study. It further explains validity and reliability of research.

Chapter four: Looks at the findings gained from the qualitative research that was conducted, while applying the research methodology outlined in the third chapter.

Chapter five: This is the final chapter, which concludes the study paper as well as provides recommendations for further studies of the topic.

1.8 Limitations

While it would have been beneficial to base the research scope more broadly and focus not only on KwaZulu-Natal but the whole of South Africa, time and location provided a limitation as it only provided enough time to focus more efforts on looking at hospitality brands within my current region of residence.

While it was beneficial to interview respondents within a managerial or marketing position in the hotel, resort or lodge, it was difficult to get a significant amount of time with these respondents, as the hospitality industry is fast paced and busy 24/7. Majority of the respondents preferred digital questionnaires emailed to them, which constrained the answers, as the answers weren't open to discussion and looked into further detail.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has now created a brief background and contextualisation of the study; the second chapter will introduce and discuss the literature that is more relevant to the research study.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Literature

The literature discussed below relates to the research objectives and can be seen as the first set of data that informs the research findings. In order to gain an understanding of the research it was necessary to unpack the literature under certain headings. Namely green marketing practices and thus the relationship to the green consumer. The literature review is related to green marketing practices in the hotel industry, which begins with an overview of the South African tourism industry. In so doing, it relates to the evolving green consumer, the benefits of green marketing on South African hotels and how these strategies contribute to the increase in revenue.

The literature discussed further contextualises the study and will form the foundation on which the survey questions will be based. By focusing on and tailoring the literature to a South African context, the literature will show more accurate data relevant to the study.

2.2 South African Tourism Industry

Tourism in South Africa is the fastest growing part of the economy. Tourism remains a key driver of South Africans national economy and contributes a huge amount to job creation. The tourism sector contributes about 9% to the country's gross domestic profit (Gov.za, 2016).

A total of 8, 903 773 million foreign tourists visited South Africa in 2015. Over 1,6 million international tourists visited the Kruger National Park in 2015, which has been recorded as one of the most favourite destinations of travel (Gov.za, 2016). It will be beneficial to take note as to why the Kruger National Park is one of the most enjoyed tourist destinations.

“South Africa is one of the foremost responsible tourism leaders in the world, with dozens of gorgeous destinations where communities are uplifted and the environment is protected.” (Southafrica.net, 2017). Tourists will be sure to return home with a higher awareness of the interconnection between people and the earth.

There are only 17 countries in the world that are classified as mega-diverse in terms of its fauna, flora and the amount of species unique to that country. Mega diverse means these countries contain 70% of the planet's biodiversity. Most of these are very large countries that span vast areas in diverse topographical regions. South Africa is, in travel terms, manageably small, yet it is truly mega-diverse (Jackson, 2016). South Africa is the third most bio diverse country in the world. The country encompasses about 480,000 square miles (1,200,000 km²) and has about 10% of all plant species on earth (Monkeyland, 2017). South Africa's unique geography allows the country to support such a diverse population of plants and animals.

With the many reasons mentioned above, South Africa is significantly remembered for its flora and fauna. Therefore as a hoteliers providing accommodation for these tourists, it is important to realize the significance of preserving the environment. As this is what draws the international tourists to continually visit South Africa.

2.3 History of Green Consumers

The global hospitality industry has been increasingly getting worried about environmental issues. It has been said that 75% of the environmental pollution caused by hotels was due to over consuming energy, water, and material while operating the businesses/hotels (Ashrafi, 2014).

The waste that is emitted due to the over consumption is the cause of major environmental degradation. Therefore, without employing the effective green policies and marketing strategies, the environment will result in unwanted

environmental damage. This will be due to this over use of energy, waste and water.

If the hotel industry can enable operations of green management, it can benefit from environmental certain policies and procedures. This is put into place to ensure minimal environmental degradation, and this would also diminish hotel operation cost. Furthermore, green marketing can appeal to consumers who are in support of the identical idea, too.

A green consumer is concerned about the environment in their purchase behaviours, activities that are associated with the market place and consumption habits. These consumers are highly aware of the effect of their behaviour on the natural environment around them. Although these concerns are not only related when buying goods but this also influences their decisions on where they work and stay for vacation. In general, each consumer who shows environmentally friendly behavior is called a green consumer (Cometa, 2012).

Numerous surveys in the developing and developed world show high levels of environmental concern among the majority of the population. Many have investigated the level of knowledge regarding environmental issues, as the cognitive component of environmental attitudes; others have addressed more emotional variables, and some have concentrated on behavioural intentions (Hartmann and Apaolaza, 2006). The term “environmental consciousness” is used for the cognitive dimension of environmental attitudes, or environmental beliefs, while “environmental concern” refers to such emotional dispositions as individual indignation about the destruction of nature (Hartmann and Apaolaza, 2006).

Dimantopoulos et al (2003) studied the results of various demographics on knowledge, attitudes and environmental behavior of green consumers. Due to the results of the study and the review of several recent studies demographic

properties of green consumers were investigated (Shabani et al., 2013). The demographic properties of green consumers were investigated with regards to age, gender and education, which give a clear insight into potential target market for green hotels.

Age (over 35 years old)

Through research it is believed that older people are more sensitive to the environment and are more concerned about environmental problems. Due to the new green consumer being of an older age they are primarily hotel industry's target market. These are families wanting to go on holiday as well as business travellers (Shabani et al., 2013).

Gender

Several researchers believe that women more than men, because of the unique social and behavioral characteristics, carefully examine their decisions and behavior outcomes and avoid behaviors that cause damaging and hurting others and their environment and tend to green behaviors. (Shabani et al., 2013)

Education

Most researchers have concluded that the relationship between education and green purchase and behaviour are directly related to green behavior in consumers (Shabani et al., 2013). This could link to the hotels and indicate the importance of educating their customers of different environmental practices, therefore becoming more knowledgeable and will result in the efforts of being more environmentally concerned.

By using age, gender and education as primary categories for evaluating green consumers, which is investigated by Shabani et al (2013) one can see that these are suitable to a hotels target market.

The new green consumer has set the trend for the hotel industry in a positive way and customers are now developing more eco-friendly attitudes and will most likely favour a green hotel over a traditional hotel. This is a growing segment that exists in this industry and therefore encouraging the development of green hotels is beneficial.

2.4 Self-Completion Theory

The most obvious motivation for customers to stay in green hotels is due to their attitude towards being concerned about the environment. (Chen and Peng, 2012).

However, Longoni et al., (2014) state that the behaviour of customers who position themselves as environmentally concerned may be subject to the self-completion theory. The self-completion theory suggests that individuals are committed to attain a certain identity goal (for example, they want to be portrayed as a person who is green minded and a person who lives a green lifestyle) and they engage in a variety of activities to claim that image. All these activities qualify as an identity symbol, which allows the person to claim possession of the identity or to be associated to others within the same identity. According to, Longoni et al. (2014), a group of individuals were commended on their green practices and thereafter slowly started to recycle less, and then when the group was reprimanded, they then started recycling more. Therefore this example shows that once an identity is achieved, actions to maintain the identity slowly start to diminish.

A customer's decision to stay in a green hotel is dependent on the past experiences that the customer has faced. These past experiences include the satisfaction of service while staying at the green hotel and the frequency of past visits has a significant effect on customer's intentions. However, if customers have been completely satisfied with service and other aspects of the stay at a green hotel, they are more likely to revisit the same hotel (Han and Kim, 2010).

While there are many factors that influence a customer's revisit to a hotel, it is also related to past experiences of others and their trust within that person's opinion of the hotel. Chen and Peng, (2012) show that some tourists aren't entirely sure what green hotels are and often rely on the recommendations of their friends and acquaintances.

Furthermore an important role when deciding whether to stay in a green hotel is the price. Introducing green practices may require a considerable amount of funding which may lead to higher prices charged to customers. For example, Masau and Prideaux, (2003) mention that people that are passionately concerned about the environment are willing to spend more while staying at a green hotel.

2.5 Consumers Perception of Green Marketing

Green marketing refers solely to the promotion and advertising of various products, which highlight environmentally friendly characteristics. These terms include labels such as phosphate free, recyclable, refillable and ozone friendly which most consumers associate to green marketing tactics. Although green marketing is a broad concept, it is one that can be applied to almost all consumer goods, industrial goods and even services. An example of this are resorts that promote themselves as an eco-resort, specifically targeting eco tourists and they then have certain facilities that allow for experiencing nature in a way that reduces and minimises their environmental impact.

Green marketing can also be referred to as environmental marketing. It consists of activities that support the satisfaction of human needs or wants, whilst simultaneously ensuring that the satisfactions of their needs are done in the most environmentally friendly way.

Businesses are facing limited resources, they need to develop new and alternative ways of satisfying these unlimited wants. Ultimately, green marketing looks at how different marketing activities utilise these limited

resources while still satisfying consumers wants and still achieving the firm's objectives.

As these different firms, which include hotels, realise they are members of a wider community, they believe they have to behave in an environmentally responsible way. Corporate Social Responsibility within businesses is implemented and this leads them to believe that they must minimise environmental impact but still reach profit related objectives. This then results in different environmental issues forming part of the firm's corporate culture (McWilliams and Siegel, 2017).

This environmental approach can take on two perspectives. Firstly, they can use the fact that they are environmentally friendly as a marketing tool. Secondly, they can become responsible without promoting this fact (McWilliams and Siegel, 2017).

For the purpose of this study an example has been used with two brands explaining the two ways companies can adopt each of these strategies.

An organisation such as, The Body Shop promotes the fact that they are environmentally friendly, while simultaneously uses this as a competitive advantage. The main aim of the Body Shop is to provide consumers with environmentally friendly cosmetic alternatives. Although this strategy is tied in with their corporate culture rather than being a competitive marketing tool, it has by default given them a competitive advantage within the cosmetic industry (Roveda, 2016).

An example of a firm that doesn't promote its environmental initiatives is Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola has invested a lot of money with various recycling methods and they have also modified their packaging to minimise its impact on the environment. While Coca-Cola is concerned about the environment they don't use this as a competitive marketing tool. Thus many consumers

believe that Coca-Cola is not involved in any environmentally friendly initiatives (The Coca-Cola Company, 2017).

By exploring these two strategies, it is worth looking at which strategy would work the best for the hotel industry, and in which strategy would attract more customers and maintain current customers while still making the hotels desired profits. Whilst not falling prey to one of the green washing sins. Green washing is the act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company (firm-level green washing) or the environmental benefits of a product or service (product-level green washing) (Delmas and Burbano, 2011).

2.6 The Seven Deadly Sins of Green washing

Since there are very few major standards or certifications that needs to be adhered by for sustainable products, it is easy for companies to commit one or even more than one of the “seven sins of green washing” (Freeman, 2015).

- 2.6.1 Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off: this is committed by claiming that a product is green based on very narrow set of attributes. For example, paper might come from a sustainably harvested forest but may have not taken other environmental issues into account (Freeman, 2015).
- 2.6.2 Sin of no proof: this is an environmental claim that cannot be substantiated by a third party (Freeman, 2015).
- 2.6.3 Sin of vagueness: this is committed when terms are used yet they are very broad and poorly defined; this often misleads the consumers purchasing the product/service (Freeman, 2015).
- 2.6.4 Sin of irrelevance: products or services will mention information that is not relevant although it will sway the consumers into buying into the product or service (Freeman, 2015).
- 2.6.5 Sin of lesser of two evils: some companies argue that their product/service is more environmentally friendly than another product/service in the same category. This then causes distractions for

the consumers and leads them to believe something, that may not be true (Freeman, 2015).

2.6.6 Sin of fibbing: this is committed by making false claims on a product or service. Although this is the least frequent sin committed, there are still companies that commit this sin. (Freeman, 2015).

2.7 Hotels Commitment to Green Marketing Strategies

Through research many managers have employed green marketing strategies to their hotels, and their hopes and dreams of it being successful hasn't shown the desired results. It is important for businesses to realise that there are different types of green marketing strategies to implement with regards to current target market and the businesses ultimate goals and objectives.

Hotels need to keep in mind that customers are unlikely to compromise on traditional hotel attributes, which include aspects like price, services and convenience. It is important that when a hotel decides to employ green strategies it doesn't stray away from its traditional attributes, which customers favoured in the beginning. Although it is important to note that no single green marketing strategy is right for every hotel. These strategies work best under different target markets and competitive advantages and range from relatively passive and silent, "lean green" approach to a more aggressive and visible "extreme green" approach, with "defensive green" and "shaded green" being in between. Hoteliers that better understand these marketing approaches are more likely to benefit from green marketing (MIT Sloan Management Review, 2004).

2.6.1 Green marketing strategy

According to Ginsberg and Bloom (2004), there is not one single green marketing mix and strategy prescribed for all firms. Instead each firm needs develop an appropriate strategy based on unique goals, resources, target market and competitive conditions. Green marketing strategies must be

determined by size and importance of the green market in the given industry. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the green consumer within the hotel industry is increasing and therefore a green marketing approach for a hotel would be the best possible marketing approach to help capture this consumer

There are four aspects to the green marketing matrix and they include:

- 1) Lean Green, this is when companies following this strategy don't persist on their product or service promotion on the emphasis on the green features. The desire for this strategy is to improve efficiencies and reduce costs through environmental programs;
- 2) Defensive Green, this is a strategy used to tackle a market crisis as well as respond to competitors marketing activities;
- 3) Shaded Green, this strategy is done moderately and these companies participate in the long term, systemic environmentally friendly processes;
- 4) Extreme Green, these kinds of companies have been established with the philosophy of combining environment, profitability and product/service life cycle.

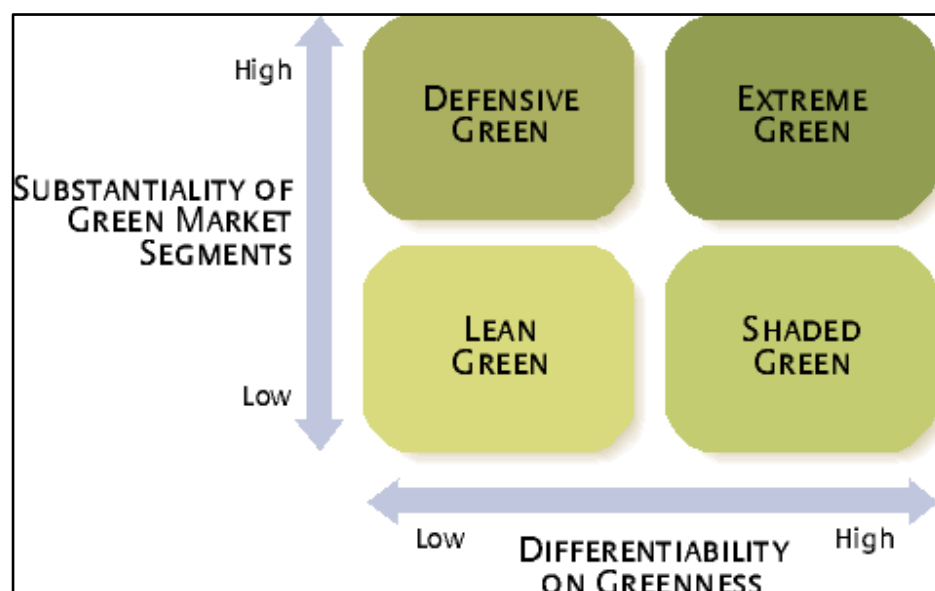


FIGURE 2.7.1 GREEN MARKETING MATRIX

Source adopted from (MIT Sloan Management Review, 2004)

2.8 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the world around us while still preserving resources for the future. The triple bottom line concept links and relates to the concept of sustainable development, and refers to the social, environmental and economical value of an investment (Stoddard, Pollard and Evans, 2012). The triple bottom line approach aims to accurately value assets and leverage resources, and will then result in the capital being employed as efficiently and effectively as possible. This concept may also be referred to the 3P's, this stands for; people, planet, profit.

Organisations are having an increased amount of attention put onto sustainability, which is provided by the normative institutional theory. This theory is a sociological perspective of an organisations behavior, which states that the logic of appropriateness actually guides the behavior of organisations. The logic of appropriateness entails that these organisations will react to environmental changes by initiating different behaviours and codes of conducts (Stoddard, Pollard and Evans, 2012).

There are three dimensions of The Triple Bottom Line, this is; the Economic Dimension, the Social Dimension and the Environmental Dimension.

The Economic Dimension is assessed through traditional financial performance indicators, such as sales revenue, profits, and return on investment and shareholder value. Within the tourism and hospitality industry this is measured by looking at the numbers of people checking in, and the percentage of visitation due to attractions (Stoddard, Pollard and Evans, 2012).

The Social Dimension can also be referred to as social capital. This involves the social well being, working with fellow employees and their families,

uplifting the community around them and consistently trying to improve societies quality of life (Stoddard, Pollard and Evans, 2012).

The Environmental Dimension, which can also be referred to as natural capital. This is measured through total energy use, use of recycled materials and the recycling of water (Stoddard, Pollard and Evans, 2012).

There is a very close link to the concepts of sustainability, the triple bottom line and sustainable hospitality and tourism. Manning and Dougherty (1995, pg. 29) suggested that sustainable tourism is the best way to preserve the golden goose of tourism. By embracing this it can become a viable tool to increase competitiveness with other organisations.

2.9 Corporate Social Responsibility

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) means unforbidden commitments towards development through business practice and involving the company's resources (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012). When a company is aware of the environmental changes, they then seek out success in a special way and then looks are operations that will not destroy the world for future generations. This decision starts by realising all the effects it has on the world with regards to the decisions and actions it makes as a company. This is not just cooperating with the external environment, which looks at sustainability but also how the company passes the message of its own responsibility towards the employees. This then allows employees to become proactive and involved partners in all decisions made by the company. Indirectly and in the long term, CSR can contribute to increase profit margins, although the primary aim of it is to increase the advantages for society and the community. Along with many other reasons, companies take part in CSR as it brings in potential customers, investors, market analyzers and business partners, participation in social issues always affects positively towards the brand and it looks good in the annual report and in the news (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012).

As stated above, there are advantages to a good CSR strategy for the Public Relations (PR) department. Public relations means a managing approach, it determines the relationship between the company and its inside and outside environment. It involves all kinds of communication between the activities of the company. A few examples of PR advantages of CSR are; consumers and investors increase their trust in the brand, they become a good example for others, motivate competitors for responsibility, inside communication is developing and possibility to start communication with some stakeholders (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012).

Some companies base their CSR through corporate philanthropy, which means that these companies support an issue by giving money. This is the most common way companies go about CSR although this is the ac hoc method. Although this is not enough to act responsibly, and in order to inform stakeholders it is important to communicate to society how the company feels about certain issues and ultimately voice their opinion, to show they care (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012).

2.10 Embedded Versus Bolt On Sustainability

In response to the mounting pressures of society, there is an overwhelming majority of managers who continuously try to adopt familiar approaches to sustainability in their organisations. Many organisations are treating the new social and environmental demands as a means to be addressed by corporate social responsibility programs. Most continue to “bolt on” their environmental strategies to existing operations (Zhexembayeva, 2011).

Although only a small amount are choosing the option of embedded sustainability, this then fully adopts this concept holistically through the organisation. Embedded sustainability requires an entire shift in the organisation and every dimension of the business system (Zhexembayeva, 2011).

In order to create stakeholder value, the traditional approaches to corporate social responsibility. Although this leads to bolt-on sustainability efforts producing fragmentary and symbolic wins at the fringes of the company (Zhexembayeva, 2011). Embedded sustainability offers a path towards competitive advantage, one that will grow as the global challenges today keep growing and therefore more organisations need to shift their business systems (Zhexembayeva, 2011).

2.11 Benefits of Hotels Going Green

The concept of a green hotel is articulated by the Green Hotel Association, which defines these hotels as environmentally friendly. Within these hotels managers and staff are eager to institute programs that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste, while saving money and ultimately help protect our one and only earth.

There are economic benefits that can be gained in hotels through implementing environmental and social initiatives many with little to no capital. In addition to the cost benefits, choosing green marketing strategies would also lead to gaining competitive advantage, gaining customer loyalty, employee retention, awards and recognition, regulatory and compliance, risk management and increased brand value (HotelsCombined.com, 2017).

Green programs can provide a competitive advantage as long as these green activities remain voluntary. Although, over time green practices in the hospitality industry will become a baseline requirement, particularly as the costs of non-renewable energy continues to increase, regulatory pressure increases, and consumers become more demanding. Therefore hotels that have business models that are revolved around green practices will have the strongest opportunity to achieve a competitive advantage by being ahead of the emerging sustainability curve (HotelsCombined.com, 2017).

Benefitting from employee retention is one of the greatest benefits of going green. Employees much like hotel guests are increasingly sophisticated and tuned into the current thinking of society and are far more likely to identify with their employer whose goals and values align with theirs. Environmental programs have proved to be an effective way to create enthusiastic employees and allow them to work as a team to achieve a common goal. Many hotels use environmental programs as a staff incentive, the financial savings from these programs are then translated into cash or other rewards such as in house events.

By utilising green marketing, customer loyalty will be increased. Over the past 25 years there has been a shift in the demands and expectations of customers. The typical hotel guest has become more sophisticated and more concerned about the environment and environmental issues such as recycling methods and making greener lifestyle decisions such as eating organic food. Although, many guests make their decision to stay at a hotel based on location, amenities, and service, the actual implementation of green policies might not have a huge impact on a guest's choice of hotel, although the level of awareness increases. Customer loyalty may increase once visited and they have then been able to experience a hotel that has demonstrated a level of environmental commitment.

Hotels need to make sure that they implement initiatives that will be up to date and comply with future regulatory changes. The more technological advanced hotels are aware that regulations don't have to be a negative restraint on their day-to-day operations, but rather an opportunity to gain advantage over their competitors. Some of the environmental regulations are monitoring waste, water and energy consumption and this is good for economic competition as they stimulate innovation that can offset the cost of compliance.

The hotel industry worldwide is increasingly being regulated for, water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and their overall energy use. By being aware of

certain pending rules will allow hotels to adopt measures in advance and avoid potential higher costs regarding compliance.

By minimising risk management it will increase good social responsibly and governance. Managing risk is much about minimising potential damages from decisions and actions taken from within a company. Traditionally, a hotels risk management strategy has been focused on health and safety concerns around water and land contamination, air and noise pollution, supply chain environmental practices and waste management. In recent years, environmental and social issues are emerging as a key risk issue for the lodging sector.

Lastly, environmental risks have an impact on the cost of capital for businesses and may affect the value of a company over the long term. In addition, the investment community is increasingly regarding excellence in environmental management and performance as an indication of the quality and aptitude of management in general. Businesses that integrate environment into their overall decisions and reduced environmental risk are in a better position to secure investment and reduce financial market exposure (Graci and Dodds, 2009).

2.12 Green Efforts Recognised in South Africa

There are three green certification organisations in South Africa

In South Africa there are currently many game lodges and other accommodation establishments that have introduced environmental initiatives to minimise their impact on the environment. While this is the new way of going forward for the hotel industry it is valuable to note which efforts are recognised in South Africa and how are these green efforts awarded. The Heritage Environmental Management Company (2016) recognises commitment to sustainability on three levels according to the effort being made to meet their standards. They provide business with effective

environmental management and certificate solutions. Performance and improvement is based on the percentage scored on each review and audit, and the ways in which the business has shown continual improvement. (Heritage Environmental Management and Certification, 2016).

The Green Leaf Environmental Standard assesses hotels, game lodges and country estates in the tourism sector. Its aim is to reduce the effects of consumption on the environment and improve on environmental management. It works with a series of modules that are specifically constructed and have certification tools for the performance management of any international organisation or property. In its name, “Green Leaf” stems from the symbol representing the philosophy of people and place in environmental leadership and conservation of the Wilderness Foundation (Greenleaf Eco Standard, 2016).

Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FFTSA) promotes sustainable tourism development and offers a Fair Trade certification. Business travelers, who stay at these FFTSA accommodations, are assured to know that their travel is benefitting local communities and economies and that the tourism is operating ethically and in an environmentally responsible manner (Fair Trade Travel, 2017).

Fair Trade Tourism is a non-profit organisation, which is leading the way forward in development of sustainable tourism in Southern Africa and beyond. Their label stands for fair wage and working conditions, fair purchasing and operations, equitable distribution of benefits and respect for human rights, culture and the environment. By having a Fair Trade Tourism certification it allows a business to promote themselves in the responsible tourism market and allows for the competitive benefit thereof. When becoming a Fair Trade Tourism-certified business, they will then join a diverse portfolio of tourism businesses that enjoy enhanced staff morale, greater staff retention and

improved operations as a result of ethically and economically sound business practice.

2.13 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

A theory that will be utilised for this study is the Theory of Planned Behaviour developed by Icek Azjen (1988, 1991), which relates to the predictions of human behavior. The Theory of Planned Behaviour allows the investigation of the influence that attitudes, personal and cultural determinants and volitional control have on consumers' intentions to buy into or pay for environmentally friendly accommodation. According to the TPB, intentions to perform behaviours can be predicted with high accuracy from attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavior control; these intentions, together with perceptions of behavioural control account for a considerable variance in actual behavior" (Kalafatis, Stavros P. et al, 1991).

This study explores the different green marketing strategies employed by hotels and how the various respondents (customers) act upon these green marketing strategies. Thus the theory will allow for a better understanding towards the behavioral intentions when buying green products or services. In so doing this, it allows hoteliers to better predict which green marketing strategies would be the best towards attracting more customers (Kalafatis et al, 1991).

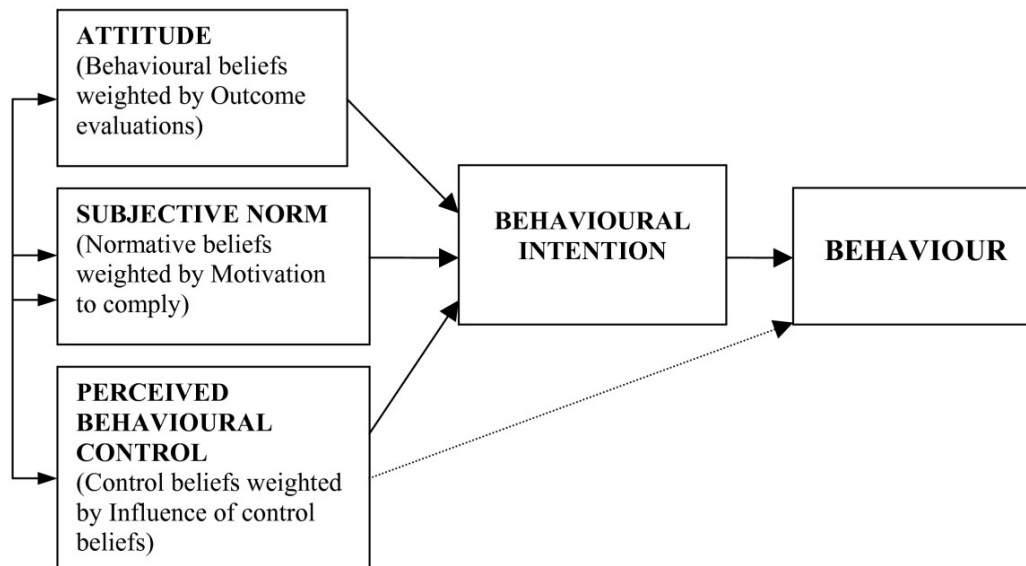


FIGURE 2.13.1 THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR

Source adopted by (Blogs.ntu.edu.sg, 2017)

2.14 Kevin Lane Kellers Brand Equity Model

There are two main elements in brand equity. Firstly, consumer's knowledge; and secondly, consumer's reaction. Consumer's knowledge is defined as the knowledge toward the brand and the brand image while the consumer's reaction is defined as customer's perception (Mindtools.com, 2017).

The concept behind Keller's Model is the ability to build a strong brand, by considering what customers think and feel about product or service. This has to be done by building the right experiences around the brand, so that customers have specific positive thoughts and feelings about the brand. When firms have strong brand equity, the customers will buy more into the brand, and the less brand equity a firm has, it is more likely the brand will lose its customers to competitors.

According to *Figure 3 page 32*, Kellers model works within a pyramid or various levels. The first level is to recognise the brands identity. This is ultimately for the brand to create brand salience or awareness in order for

customers to recognise the brand, opposed to the competitors' identity or image.

The second level is to decipher the brand meaning and to identify what the brand means and what it stands for. It has two fundamental blocks, which are performance and imagery. Performance is how the brand meets the customer's needs. Imagery refers to how well your brand meets the customers' needs on a social and psychological level.

The third level is brand response and this includes customer's feelings and judgments towards the brand. When customers make judgments about a product or service it usually falls within four key categories. Customers also respond to your brand according to how it makes them feel.

The fourth level is brand resonance, which sits at the top of the pyramid because it is the most difficult and most desirable level to reach. Once you have reached this level the customers have built a deep bond with the brand.

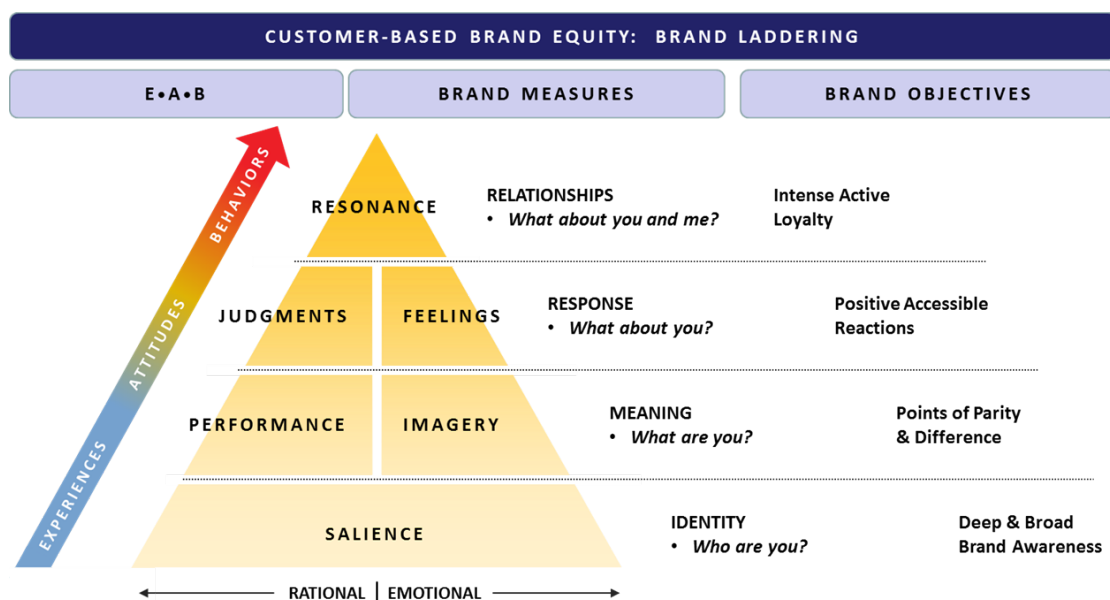


FIGURE 2.14.1 KEVIN LAND KELLER BRAND EQUITY MODEL

Source adopted by (The Verde Group, 2017)

2.15 Conclusion

From this literature review it has become apparent that South Africa's tourism industry is booming for example give some statistics again briefly, with South Africa being one of the top destination choices, particularly for its vast amount of flora and fauna. This gives hoteliers the opportunity to enforce green marketing policies within their hotels. This literature review addressed some important aspects of green marketing and its effects on a hotels brand but going forward, the research methodology will go in to more in depth research that is supported by the literature review.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction to Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodologies used to achieve these specific objectives. The chapter begins by discussing research methodologies and the motivation for the selection of a specific research design. Followed by this are a discussion of: the population and the sample, data collection techniques (looking at the research tools and survey questions), validity and reliability, delimitation and demarcation and ethical considerations of this study.

The aim of this study was to investigate the different aspects that make a hotel environmentally friendly and it addresses the types of green marketing strategies used by, hotels, resorts and lodges. Furthermore, the study looks at how they communicate and educate their green strategies to their green customer. Lastly, deciphering if these strategies are becoming more attractive to the new era of the green customer. This chapter discusses the research methodologies used to achieve the specific objectives of the study. This chapter begins with discussing the certain research methodologies used and the motivation behind the use of the specific research design. The discussion of, the population and sample, data collection instruments, validity and reliability, the use of a pilot study and ethical considerations of the study will then be further discussed.

3.2 Research Methodology

There are six types of research method designs, sequential explanatory, sequential exploratory, sequential transformative, concurrent triangulation, concurrent nested and concurrent transformative. This study followed a concurrent transformative research design, which is the use of theoretical perspective reflected in the purpose or research questions of the study to guide all the methodological choices (Research Rundowns, 2017). Therefore,

this research design is relevant as the study was guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour which helps look at consumers view points of green hotels and Kevin Lane Kellers Brand Equity Model which helps look at the brand equity of the green hotels.

3.3 Research Design

A research design is a blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data, based on the research questions of the study (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013, pg 77).

A theoretical framework represents your beliefs on how certain phenomena (variables and concepts) are related to each other (a model) and an explanation of why you believe that these variables are associated with each other (a theory). The theoretical framework is the foundation on which the entire deductive research project is based. It is a logically developed, described, and elaborated network of associations among the variables deemed relevant to the problem situation and identified through such processes as interviews, observations, and literature review. (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013, pg. 77)

The theoretical framework that the study is based upon is, Sustainable Development. "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Sd-commission.org.uk, 2017). Therefore sustainable development is used as the cornerstone to direct the research results to get the most accurate answers to the research questions. This framework will be used to provide a foundation of the research plan.

Sustainable development is comprised of three dimensions, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability. These three dimensions will be used as the variables for the theoretical framework of the study. Environmental sustainability refers to the ways in ensuring the constant

increase of value of the environment, while assuring the protection and the renewal of natural resources and the environmental patrimony (SOGESID, 2017). With regards to the aim of this study, it is important for hotels to continuously look at the impact the hotel has on the environment. Economic Sustainability is the continuous generation of incomes and employment in order to sustain populations (SOGESID, 2017). Hotel managers need to ensure that they are acting responsibly by employ the right people and ultimately uplifting the community in which the hotel is situated, this then all falls part of the hotel acting responsible towards the environment in which it operates. Social Sustainability is defined at the ability to guarantee welfare, equitably distributed among social classes and gender. Social Sustainability means the capacity of the different social actors (stakeholders), to interact efficiently, to aim towards the same goals, encouraged by the close interaction of the Institutions, at all levels (SOGESID, 2017). It is important that all stakeholders within the hotels have the same goal and belief system. It is important to be authentic, and that the authenticity is reflected to the hotels customers.

This study uses qualitative research methods. This falls under an interpretivist paradigm. Data collected from interpretive research is 'rich' data (Patel, 2015). Qualitative research methods have the potential to provide information that is contextual, subjective and detailed (Black, 2006: 320). The study began with in-depth research in the form of literature reviews, which looked at tourism and hotels trends becoming more aware of green initiatives and marketing as well as the ever-changing 'green' customer. Questionnaires and interviews consisting of open-ended questions will also be conducted with willing respondents in managerial positions in the hotels, resorts and lodges.

An important part of the qualitative research was drawn from content analysis, which is a "research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" defined by Berelson (1953, cited in Franzosi, 2007). Through the use of content analysis, all points

of content can be analysed, such as the advertising, customer service, online, publications, etc. Guest reviews from guests will also be an aspect looked at when conducting content analysis.

The study will also follow a descriptive research design process. A descriptive research design is usually used to describe some group of people, phenomena or other entities. Descriptive research tends to be primarily concerned with finding answers to 'what' questions (Maree, 2016: 54). This type of research will help gain in depth understanding of the reasoning behind hotels, resorts and lodges having environmentally friendly management and if this may be the reason customers are more frequently checking in green hotels, resorts and lodges.

The descriptive component of this research will attempt to answer the questions of how many or to determine if a relationship exists between variables for example if there is there a positive correlation between a green image marketing and the guest per a room rate.

Secondly as a result of investigating the nature of green hotels marketing strategies it was deemed necessary to also use elements of exploratory research. An exploratory research design will also be used. The main aim of this research is to identify key issues and key variables and to gain greater understanding of the phenomena, group of people or social setting (Maree, 2016: 54). This will address what are the key factors or distinguishing features of an effective green communicator. In the case of this research, it will show answers as to if greener image marketing tools are beneficial to hotels, resorts and lodge and will this effect guest return. It will also look internally at the hotel, resort and lodge and how they project themselves as a brand.

3.4 The Population and Sample

Population plays an important role when conducting research; the population refers to, “the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate” (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013, pg 240). A sample is then taken for the population; a sample is “a subset or a subgroup of the population and it comprises some members selected from it” (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013, pg. 241). Through studying the sample, a researcher is able to draw conclusions that are generalised to the population of interest.

Sample designs can be categorized into probability and non-probability sampling. The nature of this study will require using both probability and non-probability sampling in order to get the most accurate data.

Non-probability sampling are when the elements in the population do not have any probabilities of being included in the sample (Welman et al. 2004: pg. 67). Non-probability design can be classified into convenience and purposive sampling, for this study purposive sampling will be utilised. Purposive sampling is confined to specific types of people who can provide the desired information, either because they are the only ones who have it or they conform to some criteria of the researcher (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013: p 252). This type of sampling allows for qualitative data and therefore interviews with respondents in managerial or marketing positions will be conducted.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The following research instruments used to collect the data for this study will be discussed in this section.

3.5.1 Research Tools

In order to gain the most relevant and accurate data the following tools were utilised:

- Internet access from a laptop

- Gathered data on green consumers perceptions of green hotels and the South African tourism industry.
- Send out emails to relevant interviewees
- Learn about the different green marketing techniques hotels possess
- Pen and Notepad
 - Record notes from hotel, resort and lodge visits and observations
- Voice Recorder
 - Record interviews with hotel, resort and lodge managers

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity is the issue concerned with authenticity of the cause and effect relationships and their generalizability to the external environment (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013, pg 226). When looking at validity one needs to ask themselves, are we looking at the right thing? In this study validity is apparent as the instruments and population were carefully chosen and constantly referred back to the research questions in order to get the most accurate results. In order to test the other elements and check for validity a pilot study will need to be conducted.

According to Sekeran and Bougie (2013), the reliability of a measure indicates the extent to which it is without bias and hence ensures consistent measurement across time and across various items in the instrument. It is the stability and the consistency in which the instrument measures the data. Reliability needs to be measured from 0 -1, with scores closer to one indicating a higher reliability (Kimberline and Winetrstein, 2008). To ensure valid and reliable responses it is important that the hotel, resort or lodge respondents are relaying correct and accurate data that is not coming from a bias point of view, therefore to support this information triangulation will be conducted in order to validate the respondents answer. Triangulation will be done by looking at websites and customer reviews of the hotels, resorts and lodges.

3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study can be used as a “small scale version or trial run in preparation for a major study” (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001: p. 467). The advantage of running a pilot study is that it can give advance warning regarding weakness in the proposed study, such as various research protocols might not be followed or proposed methods or instruments are not appropriate or too complicated (Simon, 2011).

The pilot study will be administered to about 15 people, to test if the questions on the interview and questionnaires are formulated in a clear and simple way that is easy to understand. It will help determine flaws and point out if there are any validity issues faced. The respondents for this pilot study will be randomly selected and will have an interest in being environmentally friendly.

3.8 Delimitation and Demarcation

Due to the nature of this study, having to interview hotel, resort and lodge respondents within a managerial position on their full operation systems and asking confidential questions might be seen as a delimitation to the study. Analysis on specific green hotels, resorts and lodges might have an extensive time constraint as well as these respondents don't often have a lot of time of their hands to fill out surveys or be present for an interview this might also be seen as a delimitation to the study. A formal interview date and time will need to be set in order to speak to the managers of these places.

Although the hospitality industry is at large, this study only pertains to the sector in which is operating as environmentally friendly and can be deemed as a 'green' hotel.

Location limits may also restrict the study, due to living in KwaZulu-Natal; the scope of the study will be from the South Coast to Umhlanga, if there is

any hotel further than these perimeters Skype meetings or phone calls will be made.

3.9 Anticipated Contribution

The anticipated contribution for this proposed study is that it will help determine a brand strategy for current and up and coming hotels, resorts and lodges within South African tourism. It will clarify qualitative data about green marketing strategies but will be from a tourism perspective.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In qualitative research, ethical considerations are primarily centered at protecting the participants of the research. There are core ethical principles that are important when conducting qualitative research; these are respecting the autonomy and dignity of each participant. Minimise the risks and maximize the benefits to each participant. Participants should be selected from groups of people whom the research will benefit (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2000). It is important to note that hotel, resort and lodge managers will be relaying confidential information, and they will need to consent to this information being used within this study.

3.11 Conclusion

As shown, the research methodology is a key part within the study. Within the next chapter, research findings will be discussed from the research methodology implemented.

Chapter 4 – Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results from the qualitative telephonic, email and in person interviews will be discussed and analysed. These will generate a deeper understanding of the findings. The results will be shown in accordance to how each question in the interview and questionnaire answered the specific objective mentioned in chapter one. This will then be followed by findings gathered from observational research that took place in the hotels and lodges.

4.1 Methodology Adopted

A total of 18 respondents took part in my primary research. This comprised of five in-depth open-ended interview, five in-depth open-ended telephonic interviews and eight in-depth open-ended emailed questionnaires.

This primary research was conducted with people who work within either a hotel or lodge and are currently placed in a managerial or marketing position. These people were able to provide valuable insight into my research topic.

4.2 Section A – Hospitality Category of Respondents

This table represents the amount of people that were working within a hotel, resort or lodge. As this will then support the comparative findings, as it clearly states into what type of accommodation was researched and how each type of accommodation is different.

Table 4.3.1 Number of accommodation type respondents

Accommodation Type	Frequency	Percentage
Hotel	8	44,44%
Lodge	6	33,33%
Resort	4	22,22%

4.3 Section B – Qualitative Interview Responses

Below the survey responses will be discussed in relation to how they answer the research objectives and questions mentioned above. The responses will be discussed in detail following each question that was asked.

4.3.1 Objective One – Question 3, 6, 7, 9 and 11

Questions 3, 6, 7, 9 and 11 have designed to answer the research objective of exploring and identifying the specific green marketing strategies in the hospitality industry and if it is more favourable to the green consumer.

4.3.1.1 Question 3 – How does being environmentally friendly impact a brand within the hospitality industry and specifically your brand?

Hotels

Ultimately the goal for most hotels is to try and reduce negative impact on the environment, while still maintaining and improving overall experience for guests. While deducing to the fact that most hotels believe that there is little impact on the brand from being environmentally friendly, as most guests don't query about this. As concluded that many guests that visit these hotels are corporates, and are ultimately there for a one or two nights in order to attend a conference. This then leaves little time for them

to think about the initial impact the hotel has on the environment.

Resorts and Lodges

The common theme found in the resorts and lodges is there is a huge impact on their brand in terms of being environmentally friendly. As there are certain policies that need to be adhered to, specifically with the presence of wildlife in the resorts and lodges.

- 4.3.1.2 Question 6 - To what extent do guests book at your resort/hotel/lodge due to them liking your environmentally friendly practices? How are you certain of this?

Hotels

Most of the hotels interviewed had concluded and said that there isn't a lot of emphasis placed by guests by only checking in to the hotel due to the environmentally friendly practices. Most of the time guests are there for a comfortable luxurious experience.

Resorts and Lodges

There is an incremental amount of people starting to check into resorts and lodges due to their environmentally friendly practices. Due to these resorts and lodges appealing to the upper market and exclusive clients, majority of the time the guests are educated on the current environmental matters and therefore becoming more conscious on their decisions to stay at a certain place.

- 4.3.1.3 Question 7 - Does the resort/hotel/lodge attract more local or international guests? Why do you feel this is the case?

Hotels

The common thread found in hotels were that majority of the guests were local guests all around South Africa. As most of

their guests are part of large business and often stay at the hotels due to big conferences and meetings.

Resorts and Lodges

The common threads found within resorts and lodges were that majority of their guests were international tourists. As most of these tourists are wanting to explore South Africa, and these resorts and lodges display South Africa's flora and fauna in the most magnificent and untouched way. "These tourists are keen to seek an immersive experience, which is more likely at an environmentally-friendly establishment," stated Paul (2017). This then becomes more appealing to the international tourist. International guests and primarily coming from developed, first world countries which then results in them being conditioned on environmental issues and are more willing to pay the extra cost as they know that their money is going to places that conserves and looks after the environment, holistically.

- 4.3.1.4 Question 9 – Has being environmentally friendly added more credibility and equity to your brand?

Hotels

In terms of being fully engaged in Corporate Social Investment this has indeed added more credibility and equity to the brand. "Although most hotels go about promoting a luxurious experience, rather than an environmentally friendly one", stated Skye (2017).

Resorts and Lodges

While resorts and lodges completely agree that being environmentally friendly has definitely added more credibility to the brand, due to the fact that they are speaking to another

higher category of consumer. It can be deduced that majority of these guests value honesty and transparency in terms of the holistic approach the resort or lodge has put in place to preserve the environment.

- 4.3.1.5 Question 10 – Do you feel that eco resorts/hotels/lodges are more expensive? Please elaborate on your response.

Hotels

The general response deduced from hotels was that eco resorts are not more expensive and most believe that the brand speaks volumes when it comes to costing. Therefore stating that hotel brands are seen as more premier as they are more likely to be internationally recognised. Hotel respondents believe that if there is a higher average room rate, there is a higher consumption, which then results in a higher cost. Although when there is a high cost it then results in a higher expectation.

Resorts and Lodges

Respondents from this category believe that while there are increased costs involved in order to be environmentally friendly; there are also savings and increased amount of revenue that comes with that. While most of the operations are harder to maintain, the operations are in place to maintain certain key attractions and therefore they receive more guests who are specifically keen to see them.

- 4.3.1.6 Question 11 – As a brand, what is your goal to be known as in your customers mind?

A general response can be deduced from all the respondents from all three categories, that most don't primarily want to be known as environmentally friendly but rather home

away from home and an unforgettable experience. While a few respondents expressed that one of their goals to be known as, to be a resort that respects the environments and minimises harmful impact to the environment.

4.3.2 Objective Two – Question 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

Questions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have designed to answer the research objective of investigating how hotels, lodges and resorts market themselves as being green.

4.3.2.1 Question 4 - Do you emphasise an environmentally friendly approach in your marketing material and website? (Printing, Recycling, etc.)

Hotels

From summarising the answers for the hotel respondents it can be seen that not a lot of emphasis is put onto actually marketing their brand as environmentally friendly to the general public. Although a lot of emphasis is put on Corporate Social Investment, and this can then be seen on most of the hotels websites. The hotels promote themselves more as uplifting the community and focusing their efforts in that regard rather than promoting themselves as saving the environment through conservation.

Resorts and Lodges

The resorts and lodges respondents have said that marketing themselves as environmentally friendly has impacted positively for the brand. It has increased attention and engagement from green websites, tourist organisations as well as international tourists, particularly from European countries. More and more people are looking for accommodation that values the environment and reduces their carbon footprint.

Marketing material for hotels, resorts and lodges have been purely focused through digital promotion and this is done through their websites, email signatures and newsletters.

4.3.2.2 Question 5 - How do you educate and inform your guests on being environmentally friendly?

Hotels

In order to educate and inform guests on being environmentally friendly in the hotels there are friendly reminders put in the hotel rooms. This was done particularly during the time where there was a water shortage, and notes were put up in the bathrooms stating there is a water shortage and guests need to lower consumption of water. Hotels are also prompting guests to now download the DSTV show programs application on their phone as there will slowly be no more DSTV magazines in hotel rooms. This is essentially cutting down use of paper and costs. Notes are put into reception, educating the guests on this matter.

Many hotels have censored air cons, therefore when people close the door behind them the aircon automatically switches off as well as when a window is opened the aircon will automatically switch off. As much as there is an energy saver, there is not much education on the hotels behalf to the guest.

Resorts and Lodges

A common theme found in when interviewing respondents from resorts and lodges is that place a lot of emphasis on educating their guests on being environmentally responsible.

The common acts of informing from these resorts and lodges were:

- Talks about the environment, specifically on game drives or upon arrival
- Friendly reminders about ways to conserve water and electricity
- If an environmental operation has been emplaced it is explained way. For example, the removal of plastic straws and bottles and this is then explained why to the guests.
- Provide environmental and litter programs that guests can take part in and encouraged to join.

4.3.2.3 Question 8 - How do you use being environmentally friendly to promote the brand?

Hotels

At present most hotels don't actively push this as a feature in regards to promoting their brand as this is due to a minimal of urgency placed on the subject from guests.

Resorts and Lodges

There is a significant amount of promotion done on being environmentally friendly to promote the brand. This is primarily done on their website and within their email signatures. When respondents who has stated that they are in the process of gaining eco accreditation, there are plans to then add this into their logo as well as put it on all of their marketing material.

4.3.3 Objectives Three – Question 1 and 2

Questions 1 and 2 have designed to answer the research objective of establishing the benchmark set for hotels in order to be deemed environmentally responsible.

4.3.3.1 Question 1 - Do you consider your resort/hotel/lodge environmentally friendly? If so, have you received a green

certification for this? If not how do you achieve environmentally friendly targets and what are they?

4.3.3.1.1 Discussion and Findings

A 100% of the respondents had said that their hotel/resort or lodge was environmentally friendly. Although only two respondents had said that they are in the process of applying for the green certification from Fair Trade. Another had gone through stringent environmental checks and is in the process of getting eco accreditation. This result in only 3 respondents are in the process of gaining accreditation, which then alludes to the fact that South Africa does not place enough emphasis on the hospitality industry to act environmentally responsible. It is ultimately left as a choice for a manager to decide if they want to conserve the environment or not.

4.3.3.2 Question 2 - What operations are in place to save water and electricity? In addition to this, what green power and water saving methods do you use?

4.3.3.2.1 Discussion and Findings

Hotels

The common theme found when question two was asked to people working within hotels, was that a lot of emphasis is placed on recycling in terms of waste disposal, saving energy in terms of electricity and finally saving water. This can be deduced to the fact that hotels have a high guest rate coming through their hotels, which ultimately results in a high consumption rate. Waste was disposed in separate bins, one for paper, glass and food. There is a very strict policy at hotels that food has a very short expiration date and fresh food is made each day, anything that is left over is thrown away. In one hotel a respondents had

mentioned that the fruit and vegetable peels are recycled to create compost for the greenhouse. This produces lettuce, herbs and edible flowers.

In terms of saving electricity all hotels have energy saving light bulbs, and they all have manual air conditioners in the hotel rooms allowing guests to determine whether they want aircon on or not.

Saving water has become a huge movement for South Africa, as there has been major water scarcity and therefore a lot of places had to control water usage. All hotels have now low flow shower heads to conserve water, and most hotel rooms doesn't have baths fitted in the bathrooms but rather showers as this minimizes water usage. A rainwater harvesting system was considerations for the future for an additional water supply; this was also being implemented by sightings of JOJO Tanks seen on the property.

Resorts and Lodges

The common theme found when interviewing people working within resorts and lodges was that a lot of emphasis is placed on holistically trying to conserve the environment and its resources and as much as saving water and electricity is a mutual benefit, it is not looked at in this way. The efforts stem from embedded sustainability and ensuring everything that is done has been well thought in terms of the effects the decision has for the future.

An all round holistic approach has been utilised starting with the environment around them. A lot of the resorts have animals, and there for a certain amount of hectares of land needs to be available to these animals. This then relies on immense amount

of maintenance with the environment.

The environmental targets could be deduced to:

- Aim to achieve 100% renewable electricity.
- Aim to achieve 100% eradication of alien invasive species
- Aim to recycle majority of waste. Although this becomes dependent on the local municipality.
- Aim to achieve 100% of soakage of black water and therefore releasing zero e-coli bacteria into the environment
- Aim to achieve 100% grey water to grow vegetables.
- Aim to source ongoing supplies from local communities.

Electricity is conserved through solar power panels, gas stoves, and LED energy saving light bulbs. A lot of the resorts and lodges aim to reduce the consumption of light during the day and making use of natural light.

In order to conserve water a lot of the time resorts and lodges have boreholes, which recycles the rainwater and is then used to water the gardens. “An average of 100,00 liters is saved through rain harvesting”, claims Hugh Morrison. Boreholes are installed for serving garden irrigation, for bathrooms to flush toilets, etc. There is also a strict policy of introducing more showers opposed to baths, and all the showers are fitted with low flow showerheads.

4.4 Section C – Observational research

The following research was conducted in order to substantiate what was being said in the in-depth interviews and questionnaires. These pictures are taken from various resorts and lodges to prove that there is notes put up in guest rooms, informing and educating guests on being responsible to the environment

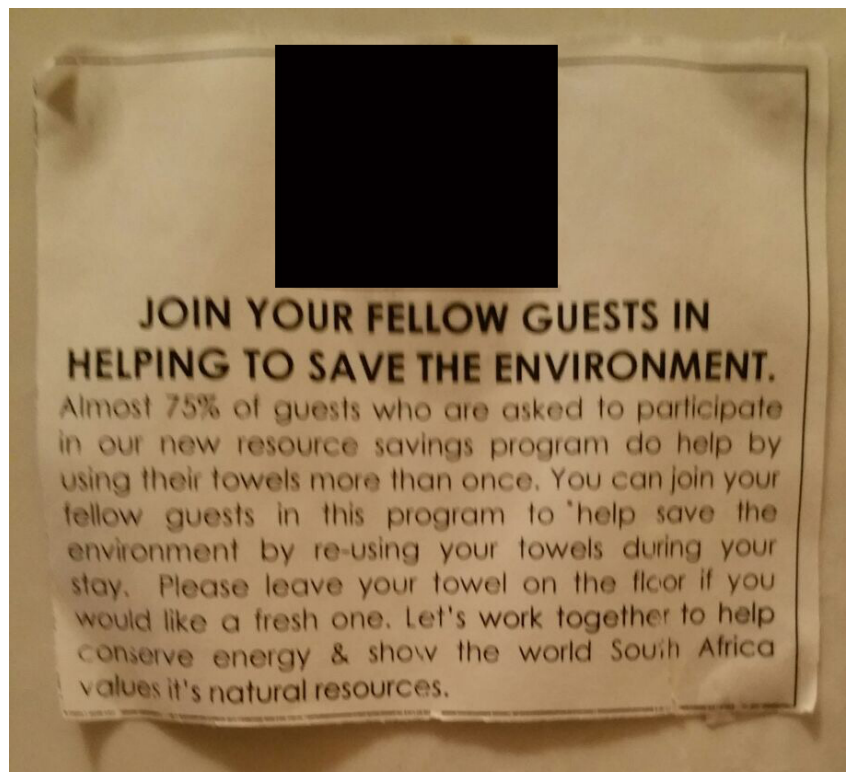


FIGURE 4.4.1 NOTE 1

Source taken by (Kayleigh Nichols, 2017)

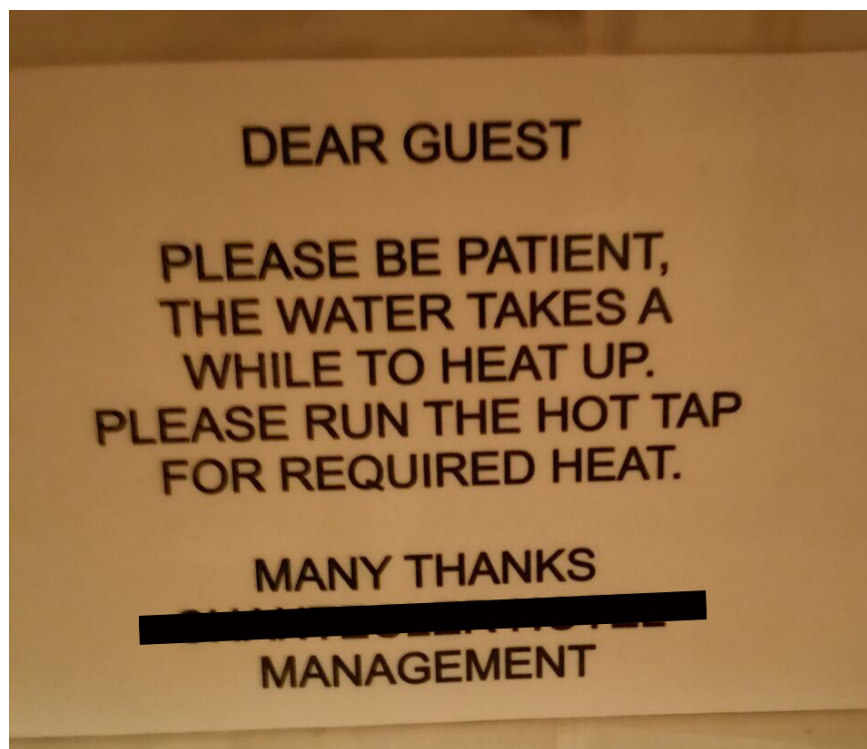


FIGURE 4.4.2 NOTE 2

Source taken by (Kayleigh Nichols, 2017)

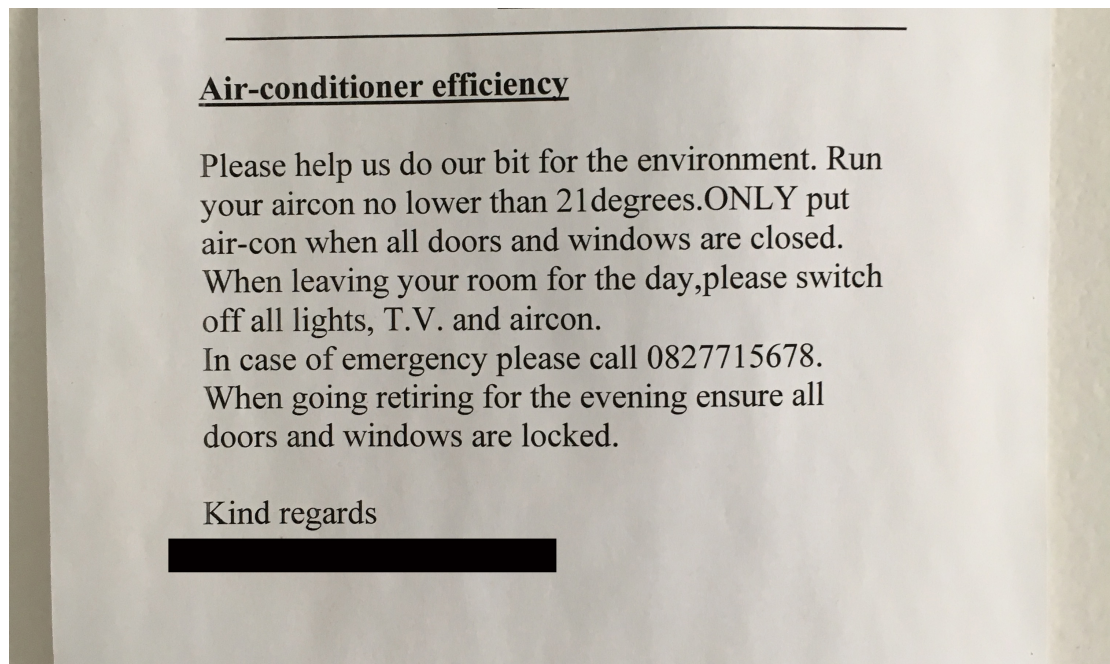


FIGURE 4.4.3 NOTE 3

Source taken by (Kayleigh Nichols, 2017)

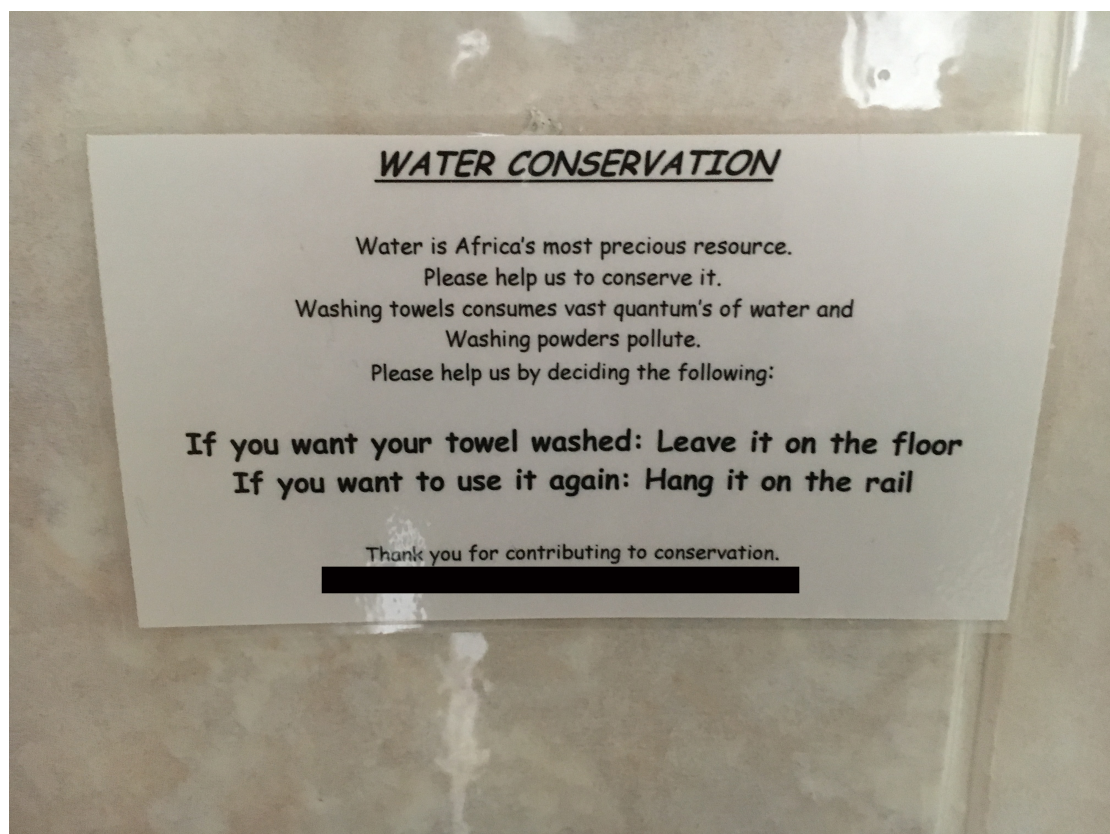


FIGURE 4.4.4 NOTE 4

Source taken by (Kayleigh Nichols, 2017)

4.5 Conclusion

As is evident it clear that there are very different approaches towards environmentally responsible hotel management and resort/lodge management. This inevitably effects each of these brands differently which will be further discussed and concluded in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will elaborate on the findings presented in the previous chapter before making conclusions and recommendations for these findings. The data will be presented under each of the three research objectives and will draw on information obtained from both the literature reviews as well as from the fieldwork conducted. The chapter will end with final concluding remarks as well as with suggestions for further research.

5.2. Findings and Recommendations

5.2.1. Objective One

The first objective of the study was to explore and identify if environmental management adds more credibility to a brand in the hospitality industry.

5.2.1.1. Findings

5.2.1.1.1. Literature

Crometa (2012) state “a green consumer is concerned about their purchase behaviours, and a highly aware of their effect of their behavior on the natural environment.” The literature further states that one of the benefits of going green is, employee retention, more people are tuned into the current thinking of society and far more likely to start being more concerned on environmental issues.

5.2.1.1.2. Field Work

Interview questions 2, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11 addressed this objective. Respondents support this literature, stating that most of the respondents felt that employing some sort of environmental management has added more credibility to the brand. Although respondents state that South African guests are less concerned about

this matter opposed to the international guests. This then plays a role in that fact that South Africa is a developing country, and there is still a lot more to learn and be educated on, in terms of the environment.

5.2.1.2. Conclusion

As interview respondents partially support the literature, it is evident that there is slowly increased demand in customers wanting to stay at a hotel, resort or lodges that employ environmentally friendly responsible management. This is due to the fact that tourism in South Africa is the fastest growing part of the economy, the tourism sector contributes to about 9% to the country's gross domestic profit (Gov.za, 2016). It can be deduced that majority of respondents confirmed that there is generally a 50/50 split in terms of local guests versus international guests. Although in there was a 70/30 split and there was a higher percentage of international guests visiting these resorts and lodges. This then concludes that more brands in the hospitality industry should be going 'green', as this is seen as more favourable to the international guest. In time, South Africa guests will be conditioned to these environmental concerns.

5.2.1.3. Recommendations

These findings point to the fact that brands in the hospitality industry must have a positive impact on the environment in order to start building sustainable relationships with their customers. More brands need to move from a bolt on sustainability model to an embedded sustainability model. This then looks at being sustainable as a brand holistically, internally and externally. This then needs to be communicated to the customers in a transparent way, which will then start increasing the amount of returned guests due to the fact that they trust the brand. There needs to be a clear brand voice communicated to the guests which results in a stronger brand resonance. When

customers can relate with certain aspects of a brand they feel more connected to the brand. As most resorts and lodges are built within environments that display flora and fauna in the most natural way, it is important to communicate these efforts more. Although hotels have an increase amount of consumption due to the size, and therefore it is more important for hotel brands to employ an embedded sustainability model.

5.2.2. Objective Two

The second objective was to investigate how hotels, lodges and resorts market themselves as being green.

5.2.2.1. Findings

5.2.2.1.1. Literature

McWilliams and Siegel (2016) state that, “an environmental marketing approach can take on two perspective. Firstly, they can use the fact that they are environmentally friendly as a marketing tool or secondly, they can become responsible without promoting this fact.”

5.2.2.1.2. Field Work

Interview questions 4, 5 and 8 addressed this objective. Respondents have clarified in saying that there aren't focused efforts placed onto promoting the brand as specifically environmentally friendly as many other current guests; particularly hotel guests are not as concerned about the matter as opposed to the resort or lodge guests. While being environmentally friendly as a resort or lodge does influence guest's perceptions and decisions, it's not primarily marketed this way. It can be deduced that very little is done within hotels in terms of educating and informing guests on certain environmental concerns, while resorts

and lodges have an increased level of awareness and informing guests on the concerns.

5.2.2.2. Conclusion

As all the facets discussed in this question, namely how these brands emphasis an environmentally approach in marketing, to what extent does these guests book at the hotels/resort lodges due to it being environmentally friendly, and has being environmentally friendly increased brand equity and credibility. In conjunction with the findings from objective two it can be deduced that there is little education on behalf of the hotel, resort or lodge on environmental issues. With hotels having body-censored air conditioners, the hotel guests don't need to switch an aircon on or off, as it does for them. This then leads them to not be informed on the immense amount of energy that is burnt from an air conditioner. While there are friendly reminders in the rooms, this is done due to the fact that it implicates costing's for the hotels, resorts and lodges.

5.2.2.3. Recommendations

As previously stated, South African tourists are less informed and educated about environmental concerns, it then becomes more important for hospitality brands in South Africa to better inform their guests. This can be done before check-in through a brochure or pamphlet that informs the guests on what the brand currently does to alleviate negative environmental impact. There can also be constant reminders around the room on how to act responsibly, particularly in the bathrooms. Notes can be put up stating that one should only shower for one to two minutes, turn the tap off when you brushing your teeth, turn the lights off when you leave the room, turn the plugs off when you not using them. All of these notes then can be substantiated by a statistic or reason as to why guests have to do this, this then

urges guests to think before they act as they know the current damage it is doing to the environment. In order for the guests to start thinking like this there needs to be a holistic approach to this, where not only are the guests acting responsibly but so are the employees. Further environmental programs can be offered to the guests to be a part of, as well as environmental talks can be done during game drives particularly in the resorts and lodges that have wildlife on the property.

5.2.3. Objective Three

The third objective of the study was to establish the benchmark set for hotels in order to be deemed environmentally responsible.

5.2.3.1. Findings

5.2.3.1.1. Literature

Literature states that there are various types of eco and green certifications in South Africa that certain businesses within the hospitality and tourism industry can apply for. Although applying for a certification is an option and not a requirement. By looking at Kevin Kellers Brand Equity Model it can be deduced that brand response and brand resonance plays a huge role in consumer decisions. Consumer's brand response and brand resonance is influenced by their beliefs and how it resonates with them.

5.2.3.1.2. Field Work

Interview questions 1 and 2 have been designed to fulfill the third research objective. Interview responses shows that there is a large amount of water and electricity saving with regards to hotel, resorts and lodges. Although most of these reductions from water and electricity stem a lot from cutting costs rather than being environmentally friendly. Research shows that majority of hotels impose a bolt on sustainability

method, which could partially refer to their constant push of Corporate Social Investment. While the resorts and lodges follow a more embedded sustainability method, where there is a holistic approach to having environmentally friendly management. All hotels, resort and lodge respondents had said that they don't have an eco certification and only three out of the respondents had said that they are in the process of applying for this certification. These three respondents happen to be from resorts and lodges.

5.2.3.2. Conclusion

As is evident by the responses, there is no strict benchmark in place for hospitality brands in South Africa. It is left as a decision for managers and CEO's of these brands to apply for these certifications. As most respondents state that they are environmentally friendly, they don't necessary have anything to prove this. There is more emphasis placed on Corporate Social Investment within hotels and this may be seen as a more bolt on sustainability method, as this doesn't look at the brand internally but more how the brand positively impacts its external environment. It can be deduced that resorts and lodges employ environmental friendly operations internally and externally and therefore are urging to get the accreditation for this.

5.2.3.3. Recommendations

While all respondents have concluded in saying that they have no certification to prove their environmental efforts, it is proven that there is no strict policies or benchmarks in place for this, particularly for a brand in the hospitality industry. Therefore a benchmark and targets needs to be set for each brand, that starts internally and the leads into its external environment. As more consumers are starting to think this way, there are many benefits that can be gained from getting an eco certification. This certification can then gain validity for the brand as it

stands as proof for the brands efforts. This validity can then be put onto all marketing material such as the website, pamphlets, business cards and email signatures. It can also be further implemented into the logo of the brand to show the instant connection to the consumer.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Research

It is suggested that in order to create a more accurate representation of hotels, resorts and lodges, another study can be conducted on a larger scale not only looking at primarily KwaZulu-Natal but across South Africa. It could also be profitable to interview more than one person within a particular hotel, resort or lodge as this will give broader and more diverse answers to the questions. This study should also have quantitative data, which stands as a validation of the qualitative data. The quantitative data can primarily look at the consumer's opinion and thoughts of brands in the hospitality industry, as this study focuses on the internal perception of the brand. It could also become profitable to visit and interview organisations involved in accrediting brands with the eco certification, as this will give more reasoning as to why it is not seen as a strict policy in South Africa.

5.4. Concluding Remarks

The study explored the different types of environmentally responsible management that hotels, resorts and lodges have in place. The study further aimed to ascertain the benchmark South Africa places on brands within the hospitality industry and how achieving certain benchmarks can retain employees and bring an increased amount of guests to these hotels, resorts and lodges. It further discovered that hotels in comparison to resorts and lodges are more focused on achieving higher corporate social investment. CSI can be partially seen as a bolt on sustainability, which is supported by previous literature. Majority of resorts and lodges have an embedded sustainability method in place, with a more thoroughly implemented environmental

management in place. Environmentally responsible management can be utilised as a great tool to maintain competitive advantage as well as increase brand resonance with current and future customers. It is important to note that there is relevance and importance to communicate being environmentally friendly within a brand voice.

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Letter

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Do you consider your resort/hotel/lodge environmentally friendly? If so, have you received a green certification for this? If not how do you achieve environmentally friendly targets and what are they?
2. What operations are in place to save water and electricity? In addition to this, what green power and water saving methods do you use?
3. How does being environmentally friendly impact a brand within the hospitality industry and specifically your brand?
4. Do you emphasise an environmentally friendly approach in your marketing material and website? (Printing, Recycling, etc.)
5. How do you educate and inform your guests on being environmentally friendly?
6. To what extent do guests book at your resort/hotel/lodge due to them liking your environmentally friendly practices? How are you certain of this?
7. Does the resort/hotel/lodge attract more local or international guests? Why do you feel this is the case?
8. How do you use being environmentally friendly to promote the brand?
9. Has being environmentally friendly added more credibility and equity to your brand?
10. Do you feel that eco resorts/hotels/lodges are more expensive? Please elaborate on your response.
11. As a brand, what is your goal to be known as in your customers mind?

Appendix C: Participation Form

By completing the following interview/questionnaire, I hereby consent to the following:

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially in terms of a university dissertation.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous, unless stated otherwise.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in my dissertation.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researchers possession as well as the researchers lecturers and examiners.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information. Clive Greenstone (Supervisor) cgreenstone@mweb.co.za. Alec Bozas (Lecturer) mwbozas@mweb.co.za.

Signature of research participant

Date:

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