

THE IMPACT OF ECO-CERTIFICATION ON INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' HOTEL CHOICES IN SRI LANKA

M. Weerakkody^{1,*} and K. Nissanka²

¹*Department of Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Sri Lanka.*

²*Finance and Administration, Colombo Stock Exchange, Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: minushaw@sjp.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

As the global tourism industry increasingly prioritizes sustainability, understanding the impact of eco-certification on tourists' hotel choices is essential, particularly in emerging markets, such as Sri Lanka, where eco-certification is voluntary. This study investigates how eco-certification influences international tourists' hotel choices in Sri Lanka, focusing on the direct role of green practices and social factors in shaping decision making. The specific objective was to determine the direct influence of eco-certification and related psychological and social factors on tourists' hotel preferences. Using a modified version of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this study explored key psychological and social factors, including collectivist orientation, internal locus of control, subjective norms, and environmental visibility. A quantitative approach was adopted, with data collected via a structured questionnaire from 392 international tourists, selected through convenience sampling, who stayed in both eco-certified and non-certified hotels across Sri Lanka. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analyses were employed to assess the impact of eco-certification on tourists' hotel choices. The findings demonstrate that eco-certification directly influences hotel choice, with specific green practices such as recycling, energy efficiency, and water conservation playing a significant role. Tourists with strong collectivist values and high internal locus of control showed a greater likelihood of choosing eco-certified hotels. Social influences, including subjective norms and environmental visibility, also positively impact tourists' decisions to select eco-certified accommodation. Hence, this study confirms that eco-certification is a key determinant of hotel choice for international tourists. These findings provide valuable insights for hoteliers and policymakers by emphasizing the importance of eco-certification in promoting sustainable tourism and attracting environmentally conscious visitors to Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Behavioral intention, eco-certification, hotel choice, Sri Lanka, sustainable tourism