

The Role of Green Promises in Influencing Tourists' Choices in the Post Pandemic Era: Evidence from the Hotel Industry in Anuradhapura District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of green promises in influencing tourists' accommodation choices in the hotel industry of the Anuradhapura District in the post-pandemic era. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry has experienced a significant shift in customer expectations, with increasing emphasis on sustainability, environmental responsibility, and health-conscious travel decisions. In this context, hotels have begun to communicate "green promises" such as eco-friendly operations, waste reduction, energy efficiency, and sustainable service practices to attract environmentally conscious tourists. The main objective of this research is to examine the extent to which green promises influence tourists' decision-making behavior when selecting accommodation. The study also explores the impact of green practices, environmental consciousness, and tourist awareness on tourist choice. A quantitative research approach was adopted, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 263 tourists visiting the Anuradhapura District. The data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal that green practices, environmental consciousness, and tourist awareness have a significant positive impact on tourist choice. However, green promises alone do not show a statistically significant influence on tourists' decisions, indicating that tourists prioritize actual environmental actions over promotional claims. Among all variables, tourist awareness emerged as the strongest predictor of accommodation choice. The study concludes that in the post-pandemic tourism context, authenticity and real sustainability practices are more influential than mere marketing claims. It highlights the importance for hotels to implement genuine green initiatives rather than relying solely on promotional strategies. The research provides valuable insights for hospitality managers, policymakers, and future researchers in promoting sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Green Promises, Tourists' Choices, Post Pandemic Era, Hotel Industry.*