

Consumers' Perception of Green Marketing as a Source of Competitive Advantage in the Hotel Industry

Margareta Nadanyiová, Lubica Gajanová

University of Žilina

Abstract

Many companies know that the essence of business success lies in a responsible approach to entrepreneurship. Smart companies therefore not only focus on financial issues and economics, but also on the environmental and social issues related to their business activities. Green marketing is a modern tool with which to adopt current environmental trends across a broad spectrum of business activities, including those of the hotel industry, and is increasingly being perceived as providing a competitive advantage.

The aim of this article is to find out consumers' perceptions of green marketing as a source of competitive advantage in the hotel industry. It includes a literature review of both domestic and foreign sources on the issue of green marketing and its usage within the hotel industry. The main part of the article is an analysis of the principles that underly the use of green marketing in the hotel industry, which is based on the results of a questionnaire survey conducted among Slovak consumers. On the basis of the analysis, proposals are put forward for the effective implementation of these principles in the hotel industry.

Keywords: green marketing, ecolabel, competitive advantage, hotel industry, consumers' perception.

Introduction

At present, green hotels are on-trend. However, in Slovakia, the number of hotels identifying themselves as being eco-friendly is almost negligible compared to foreign countries. This reflects the fact that many hoteliers only utilise green marketing activities to a marginal or extremely limited extent and do not seek to acquire an ecolabel. This is unfortunate, given that ecolabels help consumers gain confidence in the green claims of

hotels, and that they help exclude greenwashing by hotels, which may therefore provide a competitive advantage.

The main advantage of being identified as an eco-friendly hotel is not only the prestige and the better image that is associated with the environmental labelling, but also the low negative impact on the environment. Within this context, it is understood that carrying out marketing activities has, among other things, an adverse impact on the environment, but that the role of green marketing is to not completely exclude these activities, but to do so with respect to the environment. If hotels want to continually move forward and improve the quality of their services, they therefore need to implement the principles that underlie green marketing.

Materials and Methods

The issue of the use of green marketing in the hotel industry has been researched and analysed by many foreign and domestic authors, and remains actual.

Green marketing was first mentioned by Lazer (1969) as the societal dimension of marketing in relation to finite environmental sources, the societal and environmental impacts of conventional marketing, and the greening of different aspects of traditional marketing.

Over the years, further definitions have been created and the concept has evolved and become more structured.

According to Polonsky (2011), green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including modifications to production processes, products and packaging, as well as advertising, whereby meeting these needs is achieved with minimal negative environmental impact. He also responded to how experts define green marketing with a number of concepts, such as green marketing, environmental marketing, and even responsible marketing. These definitions collectively focus on the process of exchange, i.e. selection and decision, subject to the consideration that the exchange takes into account and minimises damage to the environment.

Grant's (2007) definition of green marketing emphasises its basic attributes which, according to him, are: intuitiveness, integrity, innovation, initiative and awareness.

Groening, et al. (2018) created a definition of green marketing that contains the basic elements of marketing, such as price and promotion, combined with the goal of reducing environmental impact. However, the goal was not necessarily to reduce levels of consumption, rather to persuade consumers to purchase green products and services. Green marketing therefore consists of a wide range of marketing activities directed at all consumers that incorporates elements such as price, planning, process, production, promotion and people, of which the purpose is to demonstrate a company's goal of minimising the impact of its products and services on the environment.

Krizanova, et al. (2013) believe that the main goal of green marketing is to present consumers with the importance of protecting the environment within the context of

product consumption, placing emphasis on building long-term relationships based on communication not only with consumers, but also other stakeholders and to create a natural need to be environmentally responsible.

Xia and Zhang (2017) claim that the concept of green marketing requires businesses to protect the environment as their leading business ideology. This requires companies to fulfill the principle of linking their own interests in business to consumer and environmental interests, i.e. the principle of linking the business from design to recycling (Wu 2013).

Environmental issues are now a core competitive factor in product markets. In all sectors of industry, there is a much broader adoption of environmentally friendly behaviour compared to the ecological marketing era (Papadas et al. 2017).

Another aspect of green marketing is the demands of green consumers. Green consumers are at the epicentre of environmental marketing strategies. As a result, a large part of green marketing literature focuses on the determinants of their environmental behaviour, green purchasing behaviour and post-purchasing behaviour (Rypakova et al. 2015). Several studies of green consumers have shown that consumers who protect the environment, respond to the behaviour of environmentally responsible companies and this fact influences their purchasing behaviour (Willness et al. 2012).

The concept of green marketing in the hotel industry first emerged in the late 1980s. Since then, many hotels have implemented a variety of green marketing strategies, including the adoption of the "green hotel" label to project a green image and to attract potential customers. However, some companies that launched environment-based promotional activities have been accused of greenwashing by their customers (Chan 2013).

According to Nurdin (2017), green tourism marketing strategies play an important role in the sustainability of the tourism industry. He suggests that the potential of green tourism is an effective tool for sustainable development and that this provides good reason for developing countries to apply the concept in economic and conservation development strategies.

Against the background of a maturing hotel market, growing international competition and globalisation, the green marketing of hotels has become the bright spot among today's social marketing concepts. It has enriched the content of hotel marketing and management, promoted hotel marketing activities in new ways, and is indicative of the fact that hotel marketing is entering into a rationally advanced stage of industry and social responsibility (Jiang and Zhang 2007).

He (2010) states that green marketing is not only a strategy for the long-term development of hotels, but also the only optimal solution with which to achieve an equilibrium between the interests of government, society, guests and hotels alike.

According to Chan (2013), although the internet is an effective channel for marketing the environmental activities of a hotel directly to customers, environmental claims in advertisements are often met with criticism from competitors and consumer

organisations. He claims that hotel customers would be willing to pay a higher price if they knew that part of the amount paid was put towards green activities. He goes on to suggest that such green hotels could increase the image and reputation of the industry by attracting like-minded customers who are looking for such accommodation.

Rahman et al. (2015) discovered that hotels need to be mindful of what they say and do so that consumers do not become sceptical. Hoteliers need to put more effort into implementing comprehensive green programmes and making honest green claims by perpetually keeping the potential consequences of greenwashing in mind. Hoteliers also need to seek out third-party certifications that require a hotel to meet certain standards, in order to help them maintain their credibility in the eyes of consumers.

The reasons why companies, including hotels, should embrace green strategies, include the continuous rise in prices of non-renewable energy sources, the growth in demand for green products and services, the increasing pressure on the environmental liability of companies, and the resistance of consumers to globalisation, resulting in a strengthening of the influence of non-governmental organisations in the field of ecology (Danciu 2012).

Product labelling and environmental impact assessments are used as some of the many possible elements in a comprehensive environmental strategy that seeks to solve environmental problems and to motivate manufacturers to produce more environmentally friendly products and consumers to purchase particular services (Hajník and Rusko 2004). In order for such ecolabels to carry weight and be credible, consumers need to have confidence in those companies that designate their products accordingly. Unfortunately, this confidence may be limited or lacking.

The aim of this article is to define the theoretical basis of green marketing and its usage in the hotel industry from the viewpoint of domestic (Slovak) and foreign authors. This includes an analysis thereof based on the results of a questionnaire survey, whereby the benefits of the application of green marketing as a source of competitive advantage are highlighted and proposals are put forward for the effective implementation of the underlying principles within the hotel industry.

The secondary data for the analysis was obtained from annual company reports, statistical tables, published professional publications – both in print and electronic media - and the results of a questionnaire survey conducted among Slovak consumers on the perception of green marketing in the hotel industry. General scientific methods were applied for the processing of the data e.g. description, comparison, analysis, synthesis, deduction and induction, as well as mathematical-statistical methods to evaluate the data collated from the results of the questionnaire survey (descriptive statistics, etc.). When examining and identifying the utilisation of the principles of green marketing in the hotel industry, the definitions of the approaches and concepts that are mentioned above were maintained.

The aim of the questionnaire survey – both electronic and personal - was to determine to what extent Slovak consumers perceive green marketing to be a source of competitive advantage in the hotel industry.

The sample size was determined using the Sample Size Calculator that forms part of Creative Research Systems' survey software and which is provided as a public service. The calculator determines how many respondents need to be interviewed in order to get results that reflect the target population as precisely as possible. This is necessary to avoid any distortion in the survey information. The process requires a base file to work from, which in this case consisted of population data for the Slovak Republic, and in particular data on those aged 18 and above, i.e. 3,932,092 people. The age limit of 18 years was selected because this is considered the age at which people become financially independent and can make personal choices within the hotel sector. The confidence interval was set at 5%, with a confidence level of 95%. This means that for the questionnaire survey a 5% margin of error is assumed. The sample size calculated by the calculator was determined to be 384 respondents. In total, 407 respondents participated in the questionnaire survey.

The questionnaire survey was conducted during 2018. The selection of the respondents in the sample set took place at random and was based on the number of Slovak inhabitants aged 18 years and above that represent the target groups of the hotel industry. The quantitative assessment method was applied to the processing of the information obtained from the questionnaire survey. The data were processed empirically in the form of absolute numbers and percentages in relation to age (specifically the following generational groups: Baby Boomers and Generations X, Y and Z), with additional written comments and comparisons.

Results

The phenomenon of eco-friendly hotels has had an impact on many countries, with the Slovak Republic being no exception. Although people are still not fully aware of this trend and the Slovak Republic has fewer eco-friendly hotels than in neighboring countries, it can compensate for this through the quality of the services provided.

Analysis of principles underlying the use of green marketing in the hotel industry

The first eco-friendly hotel in the Slovak Republic was the MaMaison Residence Hotel Sulekova in Bratislava, which belongs to the international network of MaMaison Hotels & Residences. It was initially certified in 2008, but lost its certificate in 2009 because it did not comply with the changed conditions in terms of building modifications. This reflects the ease with which ecolabels could be obtained in the past, and the difficulty of maintaining them in the future.

The eco-friendly Hotel Dalia in Kosice can be proud of obtaining the EU Ecolabel. Its goal is to minimise waste production and to install new, innovative technologies to help both employees and guests save resources.

Hotel Bojnack & Vinny Dom is also the holder of the EU Ecolabel since April 2016. Since then, it has been constantly developing its ecological activities. One of the main reasons

why the hotel sought to obtain the ecolabel was the management's interest in bringing the environmental issue closer to the general public.

Although the Danubia Gate Bratislava is neither a holder of the Slovak Ecolabel nor the EU Ecolabel, it still belongs to the group of eco-friendly hotels. Since 2012, it is an official member of The International Ecotourism Society, whose main objective is to associate businesses to minimise adverse impacts and increase environmental awareness in tourism.

The Czech Republic is larger than the Slovak Republic, not only in terms of size and population, but also in terms of the number of eco-friendly hotels it has. According to the Czech Environmental Information Agency, at the beginning of 2018 there were 5 green hotels in the Czech Republic that were holders of the Czech environmental certificate Environmentally Friendly Service and the EU Ecolabel.

Switzerland, a country that has a tremendous amount of experience in the field of tourism and hospitality, is constantly paying attention to this issue. It offers a large number of accommodation facilities that meet the requirements and are environmentally friendly. Because there is a shortage of resources in the country, hotels try to conduct their business activities in such a way that they have the least impact on nature and use alternative sources to operate properly.

Based on the European Commission's database, Italy is the country with the largest number of eco-friendly hotels (157 in total). Through the combination of their ecological activities and their contribution to ecological tourism, they ensure they do not harm the environment or destroy its value in any way. It is their responsibility to preserve the environment for future generations and make it a better place (Green Pearls, 2018).

As tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors, the demand for sustainable and alternative opportunities is steadily increasing. Worldwide, completely new eco-friendly competitors are emerging, which means consumers can more easily compare prices.

Table 1 below shows the number of hotels in selected countries of the European Union that hold the EU Ecolabel, the minimum price per night for a double/twin bedded room and the number of inhabitants per eco-friendly hotel with the EU Ecolabel. The data shows that the number of eco-friendly hotels in the Slovak Republic is very low compared to Italy, and even the Czech Republic. It is also evident that the number of inhabitants per eco-friendly hotel is the highest in the Slovak Republic and Poland, which does not represent a positive result.

Table 1: Number of eco-friendly hotels in relation to number of inhabitants

Country	No. of hotels with EU Ecolabel	Minimum price for double/twin bedded room [€ per night]	Population [million]	No. of inhabitants per eco-friendly hotel [million]
Slovak Republic	2	74	5.4	2.7
Czech Republic	5	55	10.6	2.12
Poland	2	79	38.4	19.2
Austria	36	107	8.8	0.24
Germany	3	89	83.1	27.7
Switzerland	47	115	8.3	0.18
Italy	157	75	60.5	0.39
France	92	89	65	0.71

Source: Authors according to STATISTA 2018.

It should be noted at this point that the number of eco-friendly hotels in some countries may be greater due to the existence of independent agencies and organisations that issue their own ecolabels to promote sustainable hoteliering, such as Green Key, Green Pearls, or country-specific ecolabels.

Despite this fact, it is not just the number of hotels in which the Slovak Republic is lagging behind other countries. Unfortunately, it is also a reflection of the overall approach to the environment, of the effort to build hotels that have a low negative impact on the environment, and of the credibility of hotel marketing activities, which is failing to stem the scepticism and mistrust consumers have in environmental claims.

Based on the analysis, it is clear that the Slovak Republic should take note of what is happening in countries like Switzerland and Italy. It is these countries that care about their environments and the construction of new eco-friendly hotels. In Italy, hotels build farms and gardens to supply their restaurants with organic products. They only support cooperation with local suppliers that provide them with fresh and healthy raw materials because they know that imports from other countries increase emissions. They engage their employees in training programmes to provide high-level knowledge to customers about what habits they can acquire or how they can contribute to protecting the environment, even after leaving the hotel.

Today's consumers no longer buy on the basis of a hotel's green claims. It is essential for hotels to continually integrate environmental practices to increase consumer confidence (Science Daily 2015).

Results and analysis of the questionnaire survey

Of the 407 respondents in the sample set, 273 (67%) were female and 134 (33%) male. The respondents were subsequently divided into generational categories (Baby Boomers and Generations X, Y and Z) according to their year of birth and their responses escalated accordingly. This delivered the following breakdown of the sample set:

- Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1964) - 46 respondents (11%);
- Generation X (born 1965 – 1979) - 95 respondents (23%);
- Generation Y (born 1980 – 1995) - 163 respondents (40%);
- Generation Z (born 1996 – 2009) - 103 respondents (25%).

The results of the questionnaire survey revealed that Generation X most frequently came across the concept of green marketing in the food sector (28 respondents – 29%) and in gastronomy (20 respondents – 21%), with the hotel sector lagging well behind (3 respondents – 3%). Baby Boomers (13 respondents – 28%) and Generation Z (25 respondents – 24%) were more likely to have come across the concept in connection with toiletries and cosmetics, with the hotel sector, once again, lagging behind (2 respondents – 4%), as well as 4 respondents (9%) saying that they did not even know the term. This lack of knowledge and experience of green marketing was also the case for Generation Y (7 respondents – 4%) and Generation Z (3 respondents – 3%).

All four generations engage in environmental activities, but only rarely. Generation Z is the most interested in being actively engaged in environmental protection activities (61 respondents – 59%), whereas Generation X (13 respondents – 14%) showed the least interest.

From the results of the questionnaire survey it is also clear that Generations X, Y and Z are more likely to heed and take note of the ecolabels attached to a hotel if this fact is pointed out to them. Baby Boomers are not interested in whether a hotel holds ecolabels (27 respondents – 59%), whereas Generation Y (46 respondents – 28%) indicate that it is the second most important element when it comes to choosing a hotel.

Respondents indicated that for the most part they do not choose a hotel on the basis of it holding an ecolabel, but on the basis of it carrying out green activities. This is particularly the case for Generations X and Z, with more than 50% of respondents in the given categories indicating as such (Generation X - 52 respondents; Generation Z - 52 respondents). Otherwise, a non-eco-friendly hotel was more likely to be selected by Generation X (30 respondents – 31%) and Baby Boomers (23 respondents – 50%).

The choice to stay at an eco-friendly hotel may be conditioned by recommendations from other consumers or driven by curiosity and interest. Generations X, Y and Z showed a preference for hotels that do not have any ecolabel, but which present their green activities on the basis of claims. This contrasts sharply with the attitudes of Baby Boomers who have no interest in environmental labels and the green activities of the hotels they stay at. This fact may be caused by their general distrust of, and the misleading

information about, green services. Within this context, the right ecolabel may provide the necessary credence to such green services provided by a hotel.

Although the percentage of respondents that have had no experience of eco-friendly hotels was high (285 respondents – 70%) across all the generational categories, there were some respondents (94 respondents -23%) who had.

The countries where respondents most frequently visit eco-friendly hotels include the Czech Republic (36 respondents – 9%), the Slovak Republic (31 respondents – 8%) and subsequently countries like Germany, Great Britain and France.

Generations X and Y have the highest interest in choosing an eco-friendly hotel on the basis of environmental interest (Generation X – 15 respondents (16%); Generation Y - 26 respondents (16%)), with Baby Boomers and Generation Z having the lowest interest (respectively: 5 respondents – 11%; and 11 respondents – 11%). The quality of service is the most important factor for Generation Y (68 respondents – 42%) and recommendation from family and friends for Baby Boomers (15 respondents – 33%). The environment is the most important factor for Generation Z (52 respondents – 50%).

According to Generation Y (109 respondents – 67%), holding an ecolabel is a big competitive advantage for a hotel. This stands in contrast to Baby Boomers (20 respondents – 44%), Generation X (49 respondents – 52%) and Generation Z (63 respondents – 61%) who were unable to assess whether an ecolabel provides such an advantage.

It was confirmed across all generational categories that during their experience with eco-friendly hotels, the respondents were familiar with a variety of environmental protection activities, with the highest percentage being among Generation Y (95 respondents – 58%), and the lowest percentage among Generation X (34 respondents – 36%). At the same time, it was observed that Generation X (19 respondents – 20%) did not show such a high interest in the issue and did not follow the specific activities of hotels. Generation Z showed similar results to that of Baby Boomers (26 respondents – 56%).

Regardless of which generation the respondents belonged to, the majority would recommend eco-friendly hotels to their friends and family. However, a number of Baby Boomers (5 respondents – 11%) and Generation Z (11 respondents – 11%) stated that they would not recommend eco-friendly hotels at all, which represents a high percentage compared with the other two generations.

The results show that all four generations view prices as playing an important role in their decision making, but that they were willing to pay more if the price incorporated additional services, including environmental activities. Price did not play an important role for 38 Generation Y (23%) respondents and for only 3 Generation Z (3%) respondents.

When questioning the importance and significance of a hotel's green activities to consumers, the results for Generations X and Y were exactly the same (Generation X - 53 respondents (56%); Generation Y – 91 respondents (56%)), thereby confirming that they

are interested in similar activities and in whether a hotel performs all the activities they present to the public. This differs from the results for Baby Boomers (31 respondents – 67%) and Generation Z (65 respondents – 63%), who are not interested in whether a hotel does or does not conduct green activities and promotes them accordingly.

Baby Boomers consider saving water and energy as the most important tools with which to help the environment, whilst discounts on the use of environmentally friendly transport is absolutely unimportant to them. In addition to saving water and energy, Generation X views recycling in hotels as equally important. In a similar vein, they also identified discounts for the use of environmentally friendly transport as unimportant, as well as the use of organic products for food preparation. For Generation Y, the most important tools of green marketing are, in particular, organic toiletries, cosmetics and foodstuffs, whereas the least important factors are saving water and energy. Generation Z considers saving water and energy, the use of alternative energy sources, and recycling as the most important tools. This indicates that within the youngest generation some progress is being made with regards to interest in the environment and the choices of hotel.

Discussion

Based on the above, it is possible to state that the interest in eco-friendly hotel services will grow in the future, as long as the awareness thereof is enhanced and the quality and positive benefits associated with the operation of eco-friendly hotels are highlighted. Increasing awareness and confidence in green products and services will help reduce scepticism and consumer mistrust, which should increase consumer interest and drive the demand for hotels to transform themselves accordingly.

Based on the analysis of the results of the questionnaire survey, the following measures are proposed for the effective implementation of the principles of green marketing in the hotel industry:

- Raising awareness among consumers - eliminating the lack of information and the associated low level of green marketing through appropriate communication channels. Social networks, hotel websites and customer reviews are the appropriate way to inform customers about a hotel's green activities. An equally effective way is to use other progressive forms of marketing communication, such as viral marketing or guerilla marketing, which present easy ways to reach target groups and are not financially demanding. Membership of various associations also brings a number of benefits to a hotel in terms of relationship improvement and awareness, but also in terms of the opportunities to cooperate. Membership of a reputable hotel chain is especially advantageous due to the already established good name, particularly one that is known for its green credentials, the high quality of its services and good customer reviews, as well as in terms of the financial assistance that is provided for the implementation of new tools.

- Collaboration with other business entities - for a green hotel it is advisable to choose its suppliers with a view to eliminating negative impacts on the environment. When choosing suppliers for daily consumables and long-lasting products, care must be taken to select a local supplier, farmer and grower whose distance from the hotel is as small as possible. Collaboration with local suppliers provides value added in terms of regional quality and freshness, as well as supports the development of small entrepreneurs. Another form of beneficial co-operation is the organisation of conferences and seminars on, but not limited to, ecological topics, so that a hotel's good name extends to all participants, and beyond.
- Specific hotel activities - an important activity that can raise the profile and visibility of a hotel among consumers is engagement in various ecological activities and projects within the region or across the country. These activities can include the beautification of local areas and watercourses, and the planting of greenery. One of the ways to attract consumers and engage them in environmental activities is to implement environmental projects to raise public awareness, either through seminars, workshops and/or cultural programmes, the yield of which would be used to support the projects or activities themselves. Consumers would become familiar with the issue, whilst at the same time, the hotel would gain a higher profile, with increased consumer awareness providing credence to their marketing activities and the promotion of the hotel's main philosophy. Within this context, a good idea, that is mainly seen in foreign eco-friendly hotels, is the use of products sourced from a hotel's own garden or organic farm.
- Become an ecolabel holder - hoteliers can take steps to create a positive image of their hotel and reduce consumer scepticism. The most important step is to obtain certification and an ecolabel from an independent organisation in the field of accommodation services. A comprehensive green programme, publicly accepted certification, and the dissemination of information to customers are key strategies that can make a hotel more trustworthy in the eyes of consumers.
- Measures to eliminate negative impacts on the environment - every hotel that wants to take a positive attitude towards the environment should start its green activities as quickly as possible, depending on the available funds. This includes not only recycling, but also the reduction of the amount of plastic waste through the elimination of single-use breakfast packs and cosmetic products. It is also necessary that hotels eliminate the high consumption of water through the introduction of eco-friendly systems. In a similar vein, it is advisable to replace chemicals and harmful detergents with eco-friendly products.

Conclusion

When taking into consideration the enormity of the pollution around us, which is largely due to human factors, the increased interest in environmental protection is an extremely positive trend.

Although the analysis of the results of the questionnaire survey revealed that the utilisation of the principles of green marketing by Slovak hotels is lower than abroad, the expectation is that the number that do will increase.

Consumers are generally actively engaged in environmental protection. Green marketing as a source of competitive advantage in the hotel industry was largely identified by Generation Y (which represents the main target group of hotels), whose confidence in eco-friendly hotel services is also rising.

If a hotel utilises green marketing as an opportunity, it can gain a strong position amongst the growing competition. However, sustaining and developing such a position requires constant and consistent control and innovation. Within this context, any hesitation whatsoever will cause a hotel to lag behind, which will be mercilessly taken advantage of by its competitors.

The effective implementation and utilisation of the principles of green marketing in the hotel industry:

- reduces consumer scepticism;
- increases consumer confidence;
- increases interest in green hotels;
- increases the numbers of customers with ecological thinking;
- increases hotel revenues;
- enables development of a strong market position;
- raises awareness among existing and potential customers;
- increases brand value;
- strengthens a hotel's image;
- creates customer loyalty;
- links the good name of a hotel with the high quality of services provided;
- generates mutually beneficial cooperation with other business entities;
- increases traffic on websites and social media sites.

If a hotel therefore perceives all its green marketing activities as opportunities, applies them correctly, without having a negative impact on the environment, they will help the hotel to maintain its competitive advantage and achieve its environmental goals.

Acknowledgement

This paper is the outcome of the science project APVV-15-0505: Integrated model of management support for building and managing brand value under the specific conditions of the Slovak Republic.

References

CHAN, E. - W., 2013. Gap analysis of green hotel marketing. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. **25**(7), 1017-1048. ISSN 0959-6119.

- DANCIU, V., 2012. The Green Marketing at Work: The Push-Pull Effects of the Green Communication Strategies. *The Romanian Economic Journal*. **15**(45), 3-24. ISSN 1454-4296.
- GRANT, J., 2007. *The green marketing manifesto*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN 978-0-470-72324-1.
- GREEN PEARLS, 2018. *The best green holidays in Italy*. [online]. Green Pearls. [accessed: 2018-04-20]. Available at: <https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/f/locations/italy/>.
- GROENING, CH., J. SARKIS, J. and Q. THU, 2018. Green marketing consumer-level theory review. A compendium of applied theories and further research directions. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. **172**(-), 1848-1866. ISSN 0959-6526.
- HAJNIK, B. and M. RUSKO, 2004. *Environmentálne orientovaný personálny manažment v praxi manažéra*. Trnava: Wirtgen. ISBN 80-85599-32-5.
- HE, W., 2010. Research on Chinese Hotels' Green Marketing based on the Game Theory. In: International Symposium on Green Hospitality and Tourism Management. Marietta: American Scholars Press, 161-165. ISBN 978-0-9798471-6-5.
- JIANG, X. H. and T. Y. ZHANG, 2007. Discussion On The Green Marketing Of Hotels. In: *Proceedings Of International Symposium On China Hospitality Management And Business Information*. USA: American Scholars Press, 373-379. ISBN 978-0-9721-4792-7.
- KRIZANOVA, A., J. MAJEROVA and K. ZVARIKOVA, 2013. Green marketing as a tool of achieving competitive advantage in automotive transport. In: *17th International Conference on Transport Means*. Lithuania: Kaunas University Technology Press. 45-48, ISSN 1822-296X.
- LAZER, W., 1969. Marketings changing social relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, **33**(1), 3-9. ISSN 0022-2429.
- NURDIN, H., 2017. Green Tourism Marketing Strategy In Bantimurung South Sulawesi. In: *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Accounting, Management and Economics*. Paris: Atlantis Press, 195-213. ISSN 2352-5428.
- PAPADAS, K. K. et al., 2017. Green marketing orientation: Conceptualization, scale development and validation. *Journal of Business Research*. **8**(-), 236-246. ISSN 0148-2963.
- POLONSKY, M. J., 2011. Transformative green marketing: Impediments and opportunities. *Journal of Business Research*. **64**(12), 1311-1319. ISSN 0148-2963.
- RAHMAN, I. et al., 2015. Consequences of "greenwashing": consumers' reactions to hotels' green initiatives. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. **27**(6), 1054-1081. ISSN 0959-6119.
- RYPAKOVA, M., L. STEFANIKOVA and K. MORAVCIKOVA, 2015. *Suggestion of green customer segmentation in Slovakia*. *Procedia Economics and Finance*. **26**(-), 359-366. ISSN 2212-5671.

SCIENCE DAILY, 2018. *Hotel 'greenwashing' dirties eco-friendly reputation*. [online]. Science Daily, 2015. [accessed: 2018-04-20]. Available at: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/10/151001154113.htm>.

STATISTA, 2018. [online]. Statista. [accessed: 2018-04-20]. Available at: <https://www.statista.com>.

WILLNESS, C., K. ZERR and D. JONES, 2012. How awareness, greenwashing, and public opinion influence employees' concept of their company's "green" practices. *International Journal of Psychology*. 47(1), 527-52. ISSN 0020-7594.

WU, Z. H., 2013. The research of enterprise green marketing based on green consumption. In: *Proceedings of 2013 International symposium. International marketing science and information technology*. Melbourne: St Plum-Blossom Press Pty Ltd., 293-297. ISBN 978-0-9874593-1-2.

XIA, Y. and Y. ZHANG, 2017. Research on Green Marketing's Effect on Enterprise's Sustainable Development. In: *3rd Asian Pacific Conference on Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development (APEESD 2017)*. Lancaster: Destech Publications., 67-70. ISBN 978-1-60595-435.

Contact address of the authors:

Ing. Margaréta Nadányiová, PhD., Department of Economics, Faculty of Operation and Economics of Transport and Communications, University of Žilina, Univerzitná 1, 010 26 Žilina, Slovak Republic, e-mail: margareta.nadanyiova@fpedas.uniza.sk

Ing. Ľubica Gajanová, PhD., Department of Economics, Faculty of Operation and Economics of Transport and Communications, University of Žilina, Univerzitná 1, 010 26 Žilina, Slovak Republic, e-mail: lubica.gajanova@fpedas.uniza.sk

NADÁNYIOVÁ, M. and L. GAJANOVÁ, 2018. Consumers' Perception of Green Marketing as a Source of Competitive Advantage in the Hotel Industry. *Littera Scripta* [online]. České Budějovice: Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice, 11(1), 102-115 [accessed: 2018-06-29]. ISSN 1805-9112. Available at: http://journals.vstecb.cz/category/littera-scripta/11-rocnik-2018/1_2018/.