

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADAPTION OF GREEN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF THE TOURIST HOTELS IN THE CULTURAL TRIANGLE IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Over the past years, there has been a growing global concern for the environment, putting increasing pressure on organizations to adopt environmentally friendly management systems. This integration of environmental management within the context of sustainability is commonly referred to as green environmental management. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the key factors influencing the adoption of green environmental management practices in hotels situated in the Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka. Drawing on existing literature, the research focused on analyzing the impact of the adaption several factors on green environmental management practices, including the cost associating with green initiatives, employee attitudes, hotel policies and conditions, as well as customer support. To collect data, a purposive sample of 75 hotels from the region was selected, and data were gathered from the general manager or his/her representative of the relevant hotels through a structured questionnaire. Quantitative data analysis techniques such as correlation analysis and regression analysis were applied in data analysis. The findings indicted that employee attitudes and customer responses played crucial roles in the successful implementation of green practices in hotels. This underscores the significance of equipping employees with eco-friendly knowledge and practices to effectively embrace green environmental measures. Additionally, customer support emerged as a vital factor in the overall success of the green environmental practices within hotels. As a results, hotel administrations should pay special attention to these aspects to achieve success in green environmental management practices and contribute significantly to the pursuit of sustainable development growth.

Keywords: *Green management practices, employee attitudes, hotel policies and conditions, customer support*

Introduction

According to Robinot and Giannelloni (2010), environmental issues are receiving increasing global attention due to the decline in environmental quality. One major contributor to environmental degradation is the hotel industry itself. The industry affects the environment in several ways, including overutilization of natural resources, overdevelopment of tourism facilities, and the high volume of tourist arrivals (Deraman & Ismail, 2017). Sri Lanka, like many other countries, has implemented various green

practices in response to these concerns, with the hotel industry playing a significant role due to its direct impact on environmental issues.

Research has shown that Green Environmental Management (GEM) practices not only improve environmental outcomes but also enhance business performance (Porter & Linde, 1995; Hart & Ahuja, 1996; Florida & Atlas, 1999). In particular, the growing demand for eco-friendly practices is driven by environmentally conscious tourists who seek

authentic and unique travel experiences, rather than mass-produced, uniform options (Londono & Hernandez-Maskivker, 2016). According to ISO 14001, green environmental practices can be defined as the investment of resources in activities and knowledge development aimed at reducing pollution at the source. This includes efforts to implement environmental management systems, reduce waste, and recycle materials (Hjamohammed & Vachon, 2010).

Jones et al. (2014) suggest that in the evolving trend toward sustainability, both businesses and consumers are increasingly recognizing the seriousness of environmental degradation and its consequences (Verma & Chandra, 2018).

Despite extensive research on green environmental concepts, there is still limited understanding of the factors influencing the adoption of green environmental practices, particularly in specific regions and industries. Moreover, research focused on tourist hotels in Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle remains scarce. While green practices are widely acknowledged by the global hotel industry, the path to becoming environmentally responsible is often hindered by certain factors, particularly in developing countries like Sri Lanka. The factors influencing the adoption of green practices in hotels located in the Cultural Triangle may differ in nature and impact compared to other regions, making it important to identify and address these factors to promote sustainable practices.

The Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka is located in the central part of the country and includes world heritage cultural sites such as the sacred city of Anuradhapura, the ancient cities of Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya, the ancient city of Dambulla, and the sacred city of Kandy. These sites, with their millennia-old constructions and historical significance, are of immense universal value and attract many pilgrims and tourists, both local and international.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the factors influencing the adoption of Green Environmental Management practices in tourist hotels located in Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle.

Literature Review

The tendency for environmental friendly practices is not only a particular concern to tourism, but also to all industries in the world. Particularly, the establishments in all the industries which play a role in environmental problems such as climate changing and global warming are seeking solutions about reducing such negative effects. The problems such as pollution of the seas, melting glaciers and ozone depletion are tried to be minimized by the studies of international environmental friendly organizations, non-governmental organizations and scientists. In this context, the "environmental sensitive" concept gradually began to gain importance by the effects of individuals and organizations that behave in a sensitive way for the environment (Erdem & Tettick, 2015). Begin with the tourism industry and development of it environment has to be destroyed by peoples activities. Considering with that situation world needs something new to feel to people that environment essential for the world. With that inspiration this concept comes to world. Green concept is no more a new concept to Sri Lanka. With identifying the importance of going green Sri Lanka also walk with the world in same path (Moramudali & Manawadu, 2018). It refers that Greening is no more a new concept to the industries due to unstoppable pressure that has being placing from government and non-government organizations to implement sustainable approaches throughout the business management procedures. Adopting green practices has become inevitable for hotel industry since customers have become sensitive when making purchasing decisions thereby giving priority for green hotels.

According to Jamaludin and Yusof (2013), hotel industry is providing the core facility of

accommodation to function the global tourism industry. Large amount of paper, food, energy, and other resources are regularly used in hotel operations in 2013. Due to high level of resource utilization (energy, water, consumables) in hotel facilities, the environmental footprint of hotels is typically larger than those of other types of buildings of similar size (Erdem & Tettick, 2015). As an example Tourism has been identified as one of the major income sectors for Sri Lanka. Hotel buildings are identified as commercial buildings which consume higher sources of energy per guest. It is said that hospitality buildings have higher environmental impact since they operate 24 hours basis providing comfort for guests. Guests are expecting enhanced service and experience during their stay in a hotel. Making a value for money by reducing waste of resources is a challenge for hotel operators (Moramudali & Manawadu, 2018). With the development of environmental impacts to the world hotel sector and all other sectors find new ways to perform their environmental friendly concepts through the business. On the other hand most of tourist hotels located in cultural triangle of Sri Lanka. It belongs Kandy, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. In here these hotels consider various things when implementing green practices in their organizations. Most of tourists and local tourists like to purchase green brands. Because of green concept is a trending concept at the time in the world. So organizations which are work in this sector find new things to combine with their service activities. This study works on selecting factors to measure the impact on green management practices.

Empirical Review

Empirical review has found following details related to the each variable from previous articles.

Cost - The hotel industry has to see the broader benefits of going green and corporate green characteristics into their operations so that they can improve the economic advantage of business

(Moramudali & Manawadu, 2018). Consumers have become more aware of environmental issues and many companies have recognized the relevance of green marketing in gaining competitive advantage. As a part of green marketing strategy, companies are developing green brands. The influence of consumer's knowledge of the environment on purchase intention was found to be non-significant. Hence, investing resource to promote environmental concern, to impart environmental knowledge and to communicate self-expressive benefits will be helpful in increasing purchase intentions of green brands (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2015). In this context, many companies are transforming their entire business process to be eco-friendly and are embracing a green marketing strategy to position their products. This shows a paradigm shift in business thinking towards the environment and the society Integrating sustainability into business practices yields several benefits like product differentiation, resource utilization, enhance competitive advantage. Green products and green process innovation drive firm's competitive advantages. Sustainability and continuity of business highly depends on the manner in which firm deals with environmental problems⁸. Moreover, environmental investments unfurl plenty of profitable business opportunities⁹. Hence, going green results in many benefits such as bottom line cost savings, brand recognition and competitive advantage to a company (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2015). Bagur-Femenias, Celma & Patau (2016) was found that in small hotels, the implementation of EPs yields internal improvements that enhance efficiency and that result in a better utilization of resources with consequent cost savings. It cannot be overlooked that there is a positive effect on workers and their performance, efficiency and the ability to meet the expectations of the increasingly demanding consumer.

Employee Attitudes - Employees play important roles in ensuring the success of green programs. To be eco-friendly staff, most hotel employees should be trained,

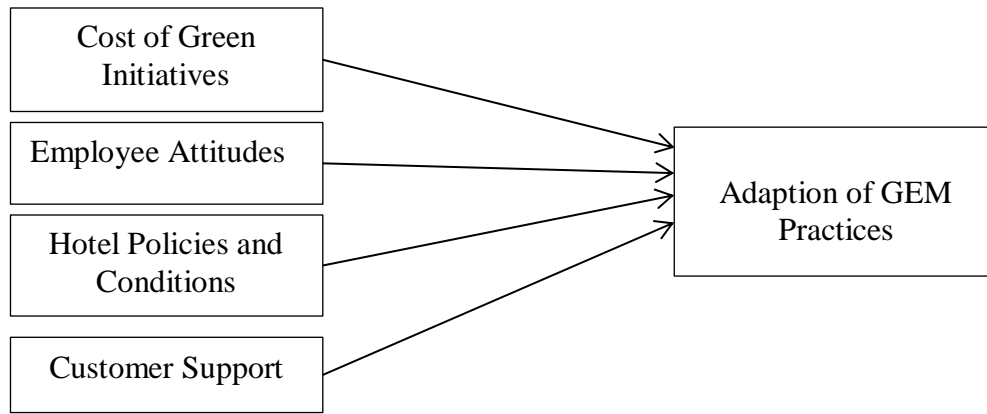
educated and personally involved in conserving the nature. The education can start with simple instruction to switch off any devices or equipment when not in use, to conserve as much energy as possible. Without realizing it, most managers indirectly encourage environmental friendly behavior among the employees by purchasing eco-friendly products and use it during operation (Deraman & Ismail, 2017). Implementing environmental programs normally require the support and involvement of hotel employees. Some previous studies on the relationship between employees and environmental programs indicated that staff morale and satisfaction are enhanced by the implementation of the programs (Chan & Hon, 2017). A research by Yoon, Jang and (2016) indicates the Environmental management strategy and organizational citizenship behaviors in the hotel industry. The results establish the foundation for applying Environmental Management Strategies in organizational operations. The findings can benefit managers, as they show how hotel firms' prosaically practices can enhance employees 'positive behaviors. Despite the importance of employee attitudes and behaviors, little is known about the mechanism by which employees perceive the influence of an EMS on organizational citizenship behaviors.

Hotel Policies and Conditions - According to the Heish (2012) hotels have adopted the self-initiated environmental policies and programs which are designed to meet the special needs of the customers, regulators and the public and have made their commitment to environmental protection (Mbasera et. al, 2018). Study that worked by Deraman and Ismail (2017) implies that, guests nowadays become more environmentally conscious and demanding the lodging industry is to be more responsible in preserving the environment. As a result, hotels begin to implement a green practice.

Customer Support - With this green environmental concept tourist hotel starts to find new ways to full fill their customer choices. Unless a consumer develops any kind of attitude or perception towards experiential grounds, green experiential satisfaction would not take place in the minds of the consumers resulting in a switching behavior or green consumer retention (Peiris & Nishadi, 2019). This situation which whole the world's attention takes by the environment resulted above status. Because of when customers identify that concept as a most essential concept lots of people want to experience it and follow it. One of green consume request is eco lodges. Today tourists are becoming more aware of the importance of environment and, this forces the hotel industry to pay more attention on environmentally – sensitive approach. As a consequence of these changes and progresses, an accommodation concept called as “eco-hotels” or “eco-lodge” or “green hotel” has been occurred (Erdem & Tettick, 2015). Arachchi, Yajid and Khatibi (2015) conducted a research to study ecotourism practices in Sri Lankan Eco Resorts. According to the findings it shows that there is no standard way of understanding the ecotourism concept. The hoteliers looked at the concept in different manners. Sri Lankan hoteliers believe that the concept of ecotourism is equal to the above-mentioned concepts. But in the international context, the above concepts are totally different from ecotourism. As a result, ecotourism concept practiced in the eco resort is also different from the global standards.

Methodology

This research investigates the Factors influencing the Green Environmental Management Practices of the Tourist hotels in the Cultural Triangle in Sri Lanka. After a rigorous review of the exiting literature the following conceptual framework and hypotheses are proposed for the study.



Source: Developed by the Researcher

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

H₁: Cost of green initiatives has a positive impact on green environmental management practices in hotels located in cultural triangle of Sri Lanka

H₂: Employee attitudes have a positive impact on green environmental management practices in hotels located in cultural triangle of Sri Lanka

H₃: Hotel policies and conditions have a positive impact on green environmental management practices in hotels located in cultural triangle of Sri Lanka

H₄: Customer support has a positive impact on green environmental management practices hotels located in cultural triangle of Sri Lanka

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate to identify the factors influence on GEMP based on the data collected from a questionnaire survey. The population of the study was all the hotels located in the Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka. Cultural triangle includes Kandy, Polonnaruwa, and Anuradhapura district. The target population for this study was self-declared eco resorts, which are registered under the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). It distributes in the cultural triangle with following proportions. Kandy, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Matale has registered classified tourist hotels 150 approximately (SLTDA, 2019). Using a purposive sampling technique, a sample consisting with 75 hotels was selected for the study using the Morgan Table (Krejcie

& Morgan, 1970). The reason for selecting the tourist hotels in cultural triangle for this research is that this area is more attractive area among tourists (SLTDA, 2019). General Managers of the hotels or his/her representatives were contacted for the data collection and the data were obtained by using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed focusing the main variables of the study and it includes 32 questions on Likert type five scale to measure them. The questionnaire was piloted before the final data collection and it was slightly modified based on the outcomes of the pilot test. The reliability of each construct of the questionnaire was measured by administering the Cronbach's alpha test and it suggested that all the constructs are reliable for measuring the target variables. Correlation and regression analysis were used for testing the hypotheses of the study.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and result of correlation analysis performed for the main variables of the study. The mean values indicate that the selected hotels have taken favorable green environmental management initiatives in their hotels. Moreover, employee attitudes, hotel policies and conditions, and customer support are also shown favorable situations. Additionally, the cost associated with green initiatives seems reasonable here as per the mean value.

Table 1: Results of the Reliability Analysis

Variable	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Independent Variable- Cost green initiatives	04	0.833
Employee Attitudes	04	0.834
Hotel Policies and conditions	04	0.799
Customer Response	04	0.722
Dependent variable	08	0.904

According to the Cronbach's alpha value all the variables use in the study is greater than 0.7. which explains all the variables can be use in the study for further analysis. As the dependent variable Adaption of GEM

Practices shows the highest reliability among all the variables while customer responses show the least reliability among other variables.

Table 2: Result of Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Cost of green initiatives	3.8233	.78819	-.993	.277
Employee Attitude	4.1800	.63878	-1.826	.277
Hotel Policies	4.2233	.62544	-1.924	.277
Customer Response	4.0867	.64001	-1.630	.277
GEMP	4.1633	.60891	-1.856	.277

According to the descriptive statistics of the table 02, there are no significant differences between mean values of each variable. Mean of the Descriptive analysis explain that all the variables can have the high possibility to use in adaption of green management practices. And the data set has the negative skewness where the square of absolute values explains a positive impact base on the mean of the data set.

environmental management practices and they are significant in promoting green management practices over other variables selected for the study. These results support the second (H₂) and fourth (H₄) hypotheses of the study.

The correlation statistics shown in the table indicate that employee attitudes ($r=.778$, $p<.01$) and customer support ($r=.746$, $p<.01$) variables have a positive effect on green

Table 4 provides the result of the regression analysis. In regression analysis, green environmental management practices was entered as the dependent variable, and cost of green initiatives, employee attitudes, hotel policies and conditions, and customer support were entered as predictors.

Tables 3: Result of correlation analysis

	A	B	C	D	E
A. Cost of green initiative	(3.823)				
B. Employee attitudes	0.571**	(4.180)			
C. Hotel policies and conditions	0.511**	0.767**	(4.223)		
D. Customer support	0.634*	0.63988	0.633**	(4.086)	
E. GEM Practices	0.064	0.778**	0.072	0.746**	(4.163)

Table 4: Result of Regression Analysis

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.359	.283		
Cost of green initiatives	.092	.065	.119	1.423	.159
Employee Attitudes	.348	.099	.365	3.507	.001
Hotel policies and conditions	.176	.098	.181	1.789	.078
Customer support	.307	.088	.322	3.494	.001

Adjusted R^2 value (0.715) indicates that predictor variables for the test have 75% ability to explain variation in green environmental management practices. Therefore, it can be concluded that this regression model is reasonably fit for the data. F value, 47.314 which is significant at 0.05 ($p < 0.01$) further indicates that the assumption that linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables is not violated.

The regression coefficient of the cost of green initiatives indicates that it has no significant impact on green environmental practices ($\beta = .092$, $p > .05$). This result further does not support the first hypothesis (H_1) of the study. And then the regression coefficient of employee attitudes indicates that it has a positive impact on green environmental practices ($\beta = .348$, $p < .01$). This result further supports the second hypothesis (H_2) of the study. The regression coefficient of hotel policies and condition indicates that it has no significant impact on green environmental practices ($\beta = .176$, $p > 0.05$). This result does not support the third hypothesis (H_3) of the study. And lastly regression coefficient of customer support indicates that it has a positive impact on green environmental practices ($\beta = .307$, $p < .01$). This result further supports the fourth hypothesis (H_4) of the study.

The result of the present study revealed that employee attitudes and customer supports are significant in adopting green environment management practices in hotels. These results are supported by previous research findings (Chan & Hon, 2017;

Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2015; Mbasera et. al, 2018). Although the cost of green initiatives, and hotel policies and contritions have been found by several past pieces of research as significant factors in green initiatives, surprisingly those variables are not validated for the present study of the hotels located in the cultural triangle of Sri Lanka.

According to results of the study the researcher found out that among the factors measured in this study, employee attitudes and customer supports are more significant factors when implementing green practices. The tourist hotel sector must focus on developing the mentioned factors rather than others. And also, the previous literatures found different factors than selected factors in here, any other researched would be able to use different factors to study on this further. And the researcher has found out that, there is a season for tourist visit. In Sri Lanka, except cultural triangle the beach sides is another area which has the most tourist attraction. So, any researcher can conduct a research on that geographical area as well. Finally, according to the findings and the result of the study, it can be concluded that there are many factors needs to be focused by tourist field in order to improve their industry in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

The major purpose of this study was to examine to examine the factors influencing the adoption of green environmental management practices in tourist hotels located in Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle. Specifically, the study aimed to assess the impact of each factor on the implementation

of green environmental management practices and to identify the most significant factor contributing to successful adoption. The results of the study revealed a significant and strong positive relationship between employee attitudes and the implementation of green environmental management practices. Furthermore, a similarly strong positive relationship was found between customer support and the implementation of green practices in the hotels. These findings emphasize the importance of both internal and external stakeholders in promoting sustainable practices.

The study highlights the critical role of empowering employees in green initiatives and fostering positive attitudes toward environmental sustainability. By engaging employees and equipping them with the necessary knowledge and motivation to support green initiatives, hotels can ensure the successful implementation of sustainable practices. Additionally, the research suggests that hotels should develop effective strategies to involve customers in green initiatives, encouraging their active participation and support. Customer involvement is crucial to achieving the goals of environmental sustainability and the broader objectives of green practices in the hospitality industry.

Future research should focus on validating the findings of this study by examining hotels in other regions of Sri Lanka to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing green environmental management practices across different geographic locations.

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