

## Hotel Operations and Environmental Sustainability in Post-Covid 19 Hotel Industry

Ugbaja, Chinwendu Gloria  
Department of Hospitality Management and Tourism  
Federal Polytechnic, Oko  
Anambra State  
E-mail: chinwegloriau@gmail.com  
08039498898

### Abstract

The Hospitality Industry over the past several years has turned their focus to the importance of environmental sustainability as it relates to hotel development and operations. The aim of this paper is to review hotel operations and environmental sustainability in post covid -19 hotel industry. This study is carried out based on the secondary data sources, various literature, newspapers, organisational and government publications, website materials and other sources are used to find out and complete the study, literature on hotel operations, hotel impact on environment, environmental sustainability in the hotel industry, COVID-19 effect on hotel industry, strategies and COVID-19 guidelines are well discussed, The findings shows that the economy of hotel industry has been heavily hit by COVID-19 pandemic and solutions proffered for this problem are for the hoteliers to adopt environmental sustainability strategies and COVID -19 guidelines for the welfare of their guest.

**Keywords:** hotel operation, environmental sustainability, COVID-19 pandemic

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### Introduction

The hotel industry is a fascinating and ever-changing field which can be very rewarding to the world economy, however to develop their activities, processes and services, the hotel generates environmental impacts that may contribute to global warming and the depletion of natural resources (Bohdanowics, 2005).

In light of the growing environmental degradation, hotels are becoming increasingly aware of the need of adopting and enforcing more effective measures of environmental protection. In 1987 the white paper, named our common future was published by the world commission on Environment and development (WCED). The paper stated that sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability Principles refers to the environment, economic and socio-cultural aspect of Tourism development and a suitable balance must be established between these dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Many countries has started to focus on environmental issues, they pay more attention to balance between economic growth and environmental protection (Lu and Nepal, 2009). In the recent past, environmental responsibility has been

receiving more attention in the hotel industry and is now increasingly becoming a corporate issue. Even the current covid-19 pandemic create the scenario for new process of sustainable strategic adaption and renewal that will enable hotel industry to receive current systems and foster sustainable business model and incorporate sustainable practices for their future service depend on it. This paper is an attempt to look into the issues related to hotel operations and environmental sustainability in post covid -19 hotel industry and it also intends to advance the knowledge base of hotel owners and managers to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to achieve greater environmental responsibility, proper implementation tools and strategies are necessary.

## **Conceptual Issues**

### **Hotel and Hotel Layout**

A hotel is defined as service industry that provides food, drinks, accommodation and other auxiliary services to people either for profit-gain or welfare (Courtney, 2020). The industry may also be referred to as organizations that provide myriad of services like accommodation, food, entertainment, and good comfort desired by strangers when away from their homes, and at a profit to the organization. A large property may employ a general manager, under whom a hotel manager or resident manager assumes responsibility for day-to-day operations. There is often a room director who supervises the departments that make up the room division, and a Food and beverage director who oversees the departments in that division. Other key members of the management team or executive committee of a large hotel include a director of sales and marketing, controller, director of human resources, and the chef engineer. Hotels also include services like specialty shops, personal services valet, laundry, hair care, swimming pool and other recreational activities gaming/casino operations ground transportation and fro. House keepers, are those who keep the guest rooms clean, maintenance staff are those who repair and fix hotel utilities and electronics, account officers they keep account and track expenses, marketing and sales unit, they are the marketing team responsible to keep update with the latest marketing channels and practices, kitchen staff. They keep up with orders and meet guest dining needs. Organizational chart and volume of job position and hierarchy varies by hotel size, function and class. The Administrative staff, supervisor housekeeping, and director of catering are part of the management team. The general manager may be responsible for day to day running of the hotel, A front desk supervisor will be responsible for running the house keeping departments and the assistant manager is responsible for food and beverages if the property contains a restaurant at one extreme. In the small property, the Administrative staff may consist of two or three persons supported by a few department heads or supervisors and key employees (Jones, 1996).

### **Hotel impact on Environment**

Environment refers to the physical surrounding which comprises the natural and built components. The nature environment is what exists from nature -climate and weather, water features, topography and soils, flora and fauna. The built environment is the man-made physical features (Stipanuk, 2001). Hotel as physical feature provides accommodation to half of all national and international visitor, lindividually hotels do not have a significant negative impact on the environment, collectively however they consume huge amount of resources and due

to the high level of resource utilization (energy, water, consumables). In hotel facilities, the environment footprint of hotels is typically larger than those of other types of buildings of similar size (Rada,1996). The hotel sector has historically had a dramatic environmental impact through energy and water consumption, use of consumable and durable goods, solid and hazardous waste creation, Hotel consume energy for operation, lighting fuel and other power needs. Water is used for bathrooms, laundry as well as other general operation. Most of the water consumed is released in the form of sewage, requiring adequate treatment. Waste is generated by the disposal of paper, batteries and bulbs, furniture, equipment, appliance and more. According to International Hotel Environmental Initiative (2002), in estimate, a typical hotel produces in excess 1kg of waste per guest □ day, which for a typical facility results in many tons of waste each month. These figures illustrate the urgent need for more environmental sound practices in the hotel industry and in order to address environmental problems the hoteliers and their managers are now going green.

### **Environmental sustainability in the Hotel Industry**

The hotel industry has been rather oblivious of the extent of environmental damage caused by its services and operations. Sustainability is not only about environment, There are four main types of sustainability; human, social, economical and environmental. Jones (2014) opined that out of the four, concentrating on environmental sustainability is the need of the hour. United Nations (2008) defines it as □meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs□. Environmental sustainability maintains the balance between social and economical development keeping in mind environmental protection. There are many environmental problems that need to be addressed, the main aspects are climate change, energy conservations, water resources production, waste recycling, waste management, environmentally responsible procurement, protection of natural resources, reducing environmental impacts and green building standards to guide the construction of new hotels. The hotel industry is beginning to adopt sustainable practices, with the hope of decreasing environmental effects. This is the result of cost savings, media pressure, environmental consciousness and other aspects (Berezan, 2013).

The sustainable development of the hotel means that the development of the hospitality industry must be based on the tolerance of the ecological environment in line with local economic development and ethics, reducing the generation and emission of waste and pollutants, promoting the production process of hotel products and its environment and reducing the damage to the environment (Jarvis, 2010)

### **COVID-19 Effect on Hotel Industry**

The breakout of COVID-19 pandemic that started since March 2020, has confronted the hotel industry with challenges that have never been experienced before now, these challenges are:

1. The virus generated deep fear, confusion and physical confinement which affect the hotel industry the most. Many customers are not willing to travel to a destination and stay at a hotel. Due to fear of COVID-19 there have been massive cancellation of tours, events,

conference, conventions and reservations. Hotels continue to decline as leisure and business are delayed, loss of room revenues and shut down of many small hotels which might be permanent until the recovery can take place.

2. The consequential shortage of labour and cash has led to the postponement of hotel renovation projects, decelerating the expansion of domestic hotel groups. This scenario has led to a sharp decline in the market value of stocks in the hotel sector. In other words, the pandemic has been devastating hotel marketing and operations. (Elena, 2020)

3. With government announcement of "stay at home policy" and "social distancing" movement restriction, most Hotel are greatly affected, this led to rapid shutdowns in cities and states, many hotel and restaurants in major towns in the country are restricted to offering only delivery services, since most restaurants operate with fresh food product, which are difficult to keep in stock as demand fluctuates, they are bound to incur losses.

Hotel industry are expected to make substantial changes to their operations in the COVID-19 business environment in order to ensure employees' and customers' health and safety, and enhance customers willingness to patronize their business (Gossling, 2020). The hoteliers cannot afford to follow the existing model of operations. There is need to address changes in customers' demand following the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic and restore travelers' confidence Strategies against COVID-19 must be adopted, strict sanitary and hygiene measures will need to be applied, with new practices put in place to monitor and control the environment in which the business takes place.

### **Sustainability Strategy and COVID-19 Guideline -Solution for Hotel Industry**

Sustainability strategy entails developing and integrating a detailed sustainability vision in to a long-term strategic plan in a way that creates lasting value (Mensah, 2006). Sustainability relates to long-term goals to address the global challenges related to inequality, poverty, environmental degradation and climate change. Hotel sustainability is not only about going green and saving the planet, it is focusing on hotels using their resources efficiently, creating more working places for local people and focus on heritage and local values (Elena, 2020). In this new age of Covid- 19 pandemic. There are additional requirements for the Hotel industry to have long-term sustainable business success,

The present guidance should be used

1. Physical distancing measures, together with frequent hand and Respiratory hygiene are the main measures to prevent transmission of COVID 19, guest should be reminded of this measure as a form Hospitality.
2. Front desk staff should have personal protective equipment kit, like disinfectant wipes, face mask, gloves and disposable plastic apron. Restaurant, bar and dining staff must take precautions and comply with the basic protective measures against COVID -19.
3. Hotel managers should adapt additional health and safety measures, upon check-in, during stay and check-out period, measures like checking guests body temperature, requiring proof of health check, new clean up processes, limited food and beverages options to prepackage meals.(Bartik, 2020).
4. Helping guests to reconsider their health lifestyle will become a post pandemic trend for hotels. Secondly, hygiene and cleanliness are essential to successful hotel operations (Chien and Law, 2003). When predicting the Hotel Industry recovery in post COVID-

19, hygiene and cleanliness will be a key factor that will influence guest to stay in a hotel. Travelers will likely patronize hotels that offer reassurance lodging services and accommodation product in terms of hygiene and cleanliness..

### Conclusion

The hotel industry is important to the world economy as it contributes to economic, social and environmental development. Environmental sustainability in hotel industry has been in the centre until the breakout of COVID-19. The pandemic outbreak has disrupted the operations and survival of hotels around the world, with COVID-19. Hoteliers have witnessed that the mere threat of a pandemic can lead to a sharp drop of guest, wide spread flight cancellation, supply chain disruptions and severe government restrictions. The hoteliers and professionals need to put more effective strategies to boost customer's confidence and help business recover in a timely manner. After this global health challenge, guidelines which are universally applied, must be adopted, like hotels must care for their employees, stay engaged with them through the pandemic and keep them safe when they return, They must manage customer expectations, recognize that these will continue to evolve and prepare to act in order to address health and safety issues.



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