

Evaluation of Advantages and Determinants of Thermal Hotel's Environmental Management Practices

Mehmet BOYRAZ¹, Ahmet BAYTOK²

Abstract

The aim of this research is to identify the advantages and determinants of environmental management practices in environmentally sensitive thermal hotel operations from the perspective of senior managers or owners. The research population constitutes tourism operation licensed 14 thermal hotel establishments with environmentally-friendly accommodation operation certificate in Turkey. In the research, a survey technique from the quantitative research methods for determining the reasons for hotel managers to adopt the environmental management practices; face to face interviewing techniques from qualitative research methods were used to determine the expectations of senior managers were from environmental management practices. In the analysis of the quantitative data obtained, frequency analysis; in the analysis of qualitative data, content analysis techniques were used. As a result of the research, the biggest and most important advantages of thermal hotel management with environmental management practices are; improving the corporate image of the hotel, raising awareness of social responsibility and maintaining sustainability in tourism. As the most important and most influential determinants behind the direction of thermal hotel management to environmental management practices, it has emerged that environmental management practices play a significant role in reducing costs, improving corporate image and increasing customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Tourism, Environmental Management, Manager's Perspective, Environment Sensitive Accommodation Facilities, Thermal Hotels

JEL Codes: L83, F64, Q56

1. Introduction

Environmental values are one of the main elements in the formation of tourist products and there is a mutual and close relationship between tourism and the environment (Kahraman and Türkay, 2014: 44; Boyacıoğlu, 2013: 127). In terms of sustainability in tourism, environmental sensitive activities are at the forefront of the most important issues. These activities are also significant for the number of hotel enterprises that are growing in parallel with the rapid development of the tourism industry. Managerial practices are the main determinant in hotel management through environmental management practices (EMPs), in

¹ Res. Asst., (MSc), Afyon Kocatepe University, Faculty of Tourism, mboyraz@aku.edu.tr

² Assoc. Prof. Dr., Afyon Kocatepe University, Faculty of Tourism, ahmetbaytok@aku.edu.tr

support of efficient and effective use of resources and sustainability. Because of in enterprises, decision makers and supervisors are senior managers in the creation and execution of the environmental management system (EMS). In this respect, it is great significant to understanding the perspectives of managers for EMS and knowing the reasons for directing managers to EMPs.

2. Literature Review

The protection of resources for the future of tourism is important. In this respect, some hotel establishments have contributed to the sustainability of the environment (Tosun and Özdemir, 2015), the preservation of the natural resources of the destination (Molina-Azorin et al., 2009), the contribution of the renovation of the environment (Vatan and Zengin, 2014), some are increasing the level of resources available to the government and local residents and strengthening the spirit of sustainable development (Hsiao et al., 2014), or to take measures against global warming-climate change (Dinçer and Gedik, 2010) as well as to increase the level of resources and strengthen the spirit of sustainable development hotels adopts the EMS for various purposes. In addition to this, as a way of strengthening relations with consumer groups, communities and environmentally sensitive investors, hotel establishments may appeal authorized EMS like ISO 14001 (Pouliot, 1996; Roy vd., 2001; Stenzel, 2000) or hotels applied EMS to fulfill its moral obligations as official social responsibility activities (Polonsky, 1994: 3). Ateşoğlu and Türker (2010: 219) found that most of the practices of hotels in the area of social responsibility are related to the environment, whereas Kirk (1998) states that, according to hotel managers the most important benefit of the EMS is; development of public relations and better relations with local communities. Beside of that, in Turkey, Green Star certification which is issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, seen as an important tool in the context of social responsibility (Yılmaz and Yumuk, 2013; Akdag et al., 2014).

The “desire to reduce costs” in the adoption of the EMS in hotel operations is an important and priority factor. Savings in water and energy resources, increased efficiency and reduced waste (Gulka and Crawford, 2007), incentives (Ayuso, 2007), cost concerns for reducing business inputs (Kaymaz, 2012) or reduction of insurance and litigation expenses, prevention of environmental punishment (Miles and Covin, 2000) are being both of advantages or determinants for hotel managers to adopt EMS. On this account, hotel operators are financially able to increase their incomes.

According to Han et al. (2009), the adoption of EMS has an increasing prescription for the competitiveness of hotels, whereas Chan (2008) claims that hotels uses EMS to create a positive image. For this reason, managers expect to increase the competitiveness of their businesses with the green image of their management image (Revilla et al., 2001), reputation (Miles, Munilla and McClurg, 1999). On the other side, some hotel operators use the EMS label as a marketing tool (Prendergast and Man, 2002) and others to attract customers (Pizam, 2009). In this direction, hotels use EMS as a means of competition and advantage by giving them extensive use in their web sites (Hsieh, 2012: 106).

Bohdanowicz (2006) states that the most important determinants of the visitors towards EMS are; reduction of costs, improvement of customer’s wishes, image and reduction of environmental damages. Akdağ and his colleagues (2014), on the other hand, found that the hotels have developed its image with green star certificate, it is preferred by tour operators and travel agents, and is an effective tool for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage.

3. Methodology

The aim of this research is to identify the advantages and determinants of EMP in environmentally sensitive thermal hotel operations from the perspective of senior managers or owners. The population of research constitutes 14 thermal hotel establishments with environmentally-friendly accommodation operation certificate in Turkey. Five of these thermal hotels are located in İzmir, four in Afyonkarahisar and two in Ankara while the remaining three are located in Bursa, Denizli and Hatay. There was no need to take any sampling in the research and it was based on full counting. In order to gather data, interviews from qualitative research methods, and questionnaire from quantitative research methods was used. In this context, frequency analysis is used to analyze quantitative data and content analysis techniques are used to analyze qualitative data. In the direction of the findings, the advantages and determinants of EMPs in the thermal hotel enterprises are ranked according to their degree of importance in terms of managers.

4. Findings

There are 12 of the 14 thermal hotels that make up the population of research. Ten of the hotels are five-star and two are four-star thermal hotels. Three of the hotels operate as international chains, one as a national chain, and the remaining eight as independent thermal hotel management. Eight of the participating hotels have EMS documents taken by different organizations other than the green star.

In order to determine the benefits of the EMS, question of “Would you like to evaluate the advantages of having a green star document?” was directed to participant managers. First, managers have indicated that priority resource use and consumption in thermal hotel enterprises is reduced as a result of the adoption of EMPs. When the opinions of managers are evaluated, the advantages of EMPs that all managers agree are; contributing to the development of the hotel’s corporate image, helping to develop social responsibility awareness, and ensuring sustainability in tourism. These findings are parallel with the evidences of previous researches, in terms of the contribution to; corporate image, Bohdanowicz (2006); social responsibility, Kirk (1998) and sustainability of tourism, Molina-Azorin et al. (2009).

Table 1: Advantages of EMPs to Thermal Hotel Operations

#	Advantages	Yes		No	
		#	%	#	%
1	EMPs improve the corporate image of our hotel.	12	%100	-	-
	EMPs increase awareness of social responsibility.				
	EMPs provide sustainability in tourism.				
2	EMPs reduce our costs.	11	%91,67	1	%8,33
	EMPs increase our operating profitability.				
	EMPs provide competitive advantage.				
3	EMPs help fulfill legal obligations.	10	%83,33	2	%16,67
	EMPs increase the satisfaction of our guests.				
4	EMPs helped to keep up with rival hotels.	9	%75,0	3	%25,0

	EMPs increase the satisfaction of employees.				
5	EMPs have improved the interaction with local people.	8	%66,67	4	%33,33
6	EMPs are important tool to follow progress in the sector.	6	%50,0	6	%50,0

Approximately 92% of the managers stated that cost reduction, gaining competitive advantage and increasing profitability through these two criteria are the second priority benefits of EMPs. According to this, it has been determined that thermal hotels firstly gain social and environmental advantages with EMPs, and secondly have made additional investments in order to obtain efficiency and saving, after that lastly and have achieved some economic advantages parallel to these gains. Third, the mid-level advantageous benefits of EMPs are, respectively, helping to fulfill legal obligations, increasing the satisfaction of guests, being an important tool to avoid falling behind rivals and enhancement of employee satisfaction. On the other hand, the lowest contributions of EMPs are; the improvement of the interaction with the local people and having a role in the following trends in hotel sector.

In the research, when the answers given by the hotel managers to the questions asked to determine the reasons for adopting EMP were evaluated, three factors with different levels of influence emerged. According to this, first factor which is supported by all managers, has the most important effect and consist of the determinants that achieving cost savings, contributing to the creation of corporate image or strengthening of existing image and increase guest satisfaction positively. These findings have some similarities with the outcomes of prior studies, in terms of; cost savings Tzchentke et al. (2004); improving the image, Chan (2008) and for customer satisfaction, Bramwell & Alletorp (2001).

Table 2: Determinants to Adopt EMS for Thermal Hotel Operations

#	Determinants	Yes		No	
		#	%	#	%
1	We have adopted EMPs for the possibility of lowering costs.	12	%100	-	-
	We have adopted EMPs to improve corporate image.				
	We have adopted EMPs to improve customer satisfaction.				
2	We have adopted EMPs to provide marketing advantage against rivals.	11	%91,67	1	%8,33
	We have adopted EMPs due to being respectful to nature.				
	We have adopted EMPs because of social responsibility conscious.				
	We have adopted EMPs because of life philosophy of the business owner.				
	We have adopted EMPs to benefit from incentives.				
3	We have adopted EMPs to increase financial profitability.	10	%83,33	2	%16,67
	We have adopted EMPs to increase employee satisfaction.				
	We have adopted EMPs to fulfill legal obligations.				
	We have adopted EMPs due to corporate policy of the affiliated group.				
	We have adopted EMPs to adapt to the green environment.				
	We have adopted EMPs to protect natural resources.				
4	We have adopted EMPs to increase occupancy rates.	9	%75,0	3	%25,0
	We have adopted EMPs to follow popular developments in industry.				

5	We have adopted EMPs to develop interaction with local people.	6	%50,0	6	%50,0
---	--	---	-------	---	-------

The most important secondary determinants behind the integrity of managers to EMPs have been identified as: to be used as a marketing tool that makes a difference to competitor hotels, respect for nature, awareness of social responsibility, opinion or perspective of owners and financial incentive factors. Increasing financial profitability, increasing employee satisfaction, fulfilling legal obligations, adapting to the affiliated company’s corporate policy, complying with environmental trends and conserving natural resources have emerged as third priority determinants of EMPs within the scope of the research.

Some factors in the adoption of the EMPs in thermal hotel enterprises have a decisive role, while some factors have been found to have very low effectiveness or no impact. Information on these factors is detailed in Table-3. Therefore, there is no pressure on thermal hotel operations by tour operators and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), hence there has been no demand or desire by these institutions. The reason for this situation is almost the entire thermal hotel operations may have their guest profile made up of locals and not open to foreign markets. In addition, the lack of environmental awareness or sensitivity and NGOs have not been organized in a sufficient level may be a reason. As the second lowest impact factors; the demands of thermal hotel management employees and the similar practices of rival hotel enterprises operating in the same region do not put pressure on thermal hotels. Employee's lack of environmental awareness or due to the low salaries in the service sector workers do not perform necessary and their best success may have eliminated this factor. Lastly, environmental punishment, desire to reduce insurance and other costs is at the top of the list of factors that have no impact on the management's view of the adoption of EMPs.

Table 3: Non-Effective Factors to Adopt EMPs for Thermal Hotel Operations

#	Non-Determinant Factors	Yes		No	
		#	%	#	%
1	We have adopted EMPs due to the demands of tour operators.	1	%8,33	11	%91,67
	We have adopted EMPs due to the pressure of NGOs.				
2	We have adopted EMPs due to the demands of our employees.	2	%16,67	10	%83,33
	We have adopted EMPs due to the pressure of the riffs.				
3	We have adopted EMPs to alleviate environmental penalties.	4	%33,33	8	%66,67

4. Conclusion

There are factors that affect the adoption of EMPs in the hotel business, and on the other hand there are some important outcomes that can be gathered by the hotels with the EMPs or having an environmental green certificate. Considering the data obtained from the data analysis in the research, it is seen that the relevant literature and the results of the EMPs have obtained important results. The most valuable results of the research is; as the greatest advantage of EMPs for thermal facilities are; sustainability of tourism with the improvement of corporate image and awareness of social responsibility. EMPs play a significant role in reducing costs and increasing customer satisfaction. On the other hand, as an external factors such as tour operators, non-governmental organizations and competitors; as an internal factors, the demands of co-workers and desire to reduce the costs of environmental penalties are not motivating factor in adopting EMPs of managers. As a result, the advantages of EMPs and their determinants are parallel and in mutual harmony. In this direction, the decisive factors for EMPs can be turned

into advantages for hotel enterprises if such practices are adopted. In other words, the hotel managers who are motivated towards the advantages considered can see these beneficiaries as a determinant for environmental management.

Nonetheless, as external factors; tour operators, non-governmental organizations and competitors or as internal factors; the desire of business employees to reduce their claims and environmental penalty costs has no motivational effect for adoption to EMPs by hotel's top managers. Accordingly, contrary to the advantages achieved by the EMPs, among the determinants those directors lead to EMS; at first due to the economic contributions of these factors; after in the direction of these outcomes a number of social and environmental factors that may be possible decisive and motivating qualification.

In addition to the finding and results, research has some limitations as well. The research population was consists only 14 thermal hotel establishments. The scope of research application is so narrow and non-thermal hotels are not taken into account. Adapting the generalizations made within the obtained data to the operations is among the limitations of the study. From this point of view, it will be important to ensure the integrity of the work that will be done in different areas in the up-coming years.

References

Akdağ, G., Güler, O., Demirtaş, O., Dalgıç, A. and Yeşilyurt, C. (2014). Turizm ve Çevre İlişkisi: Türkiye'deki Yeşil Otellerin Gözünden Yeşil Otelcilik Uygulamaları Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme. *Coğrafyacılar Derneği Uluslararası Kongresi*, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi, Muğla 4-6 Haziran 2014, 258-267.

Ateşoğlu, İ. and Türker, A. (2010). Konaklama İşletmelerinin Sosyal Sorumluluk Faaliyetlerine Yaklaşımı: Muğla İli Örneği. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 15(3), 207-226.

Ayuso, S. (2007). Comparing Voluntary Policy Instruments for Sustainable Tourism: The Experience of the Spanish Hotel Sector. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15(2), 144-159.

Bohdanowicz, P. (2006). "Environmental Awareness and Initiatives in the Swedish and Polish Hotel Industries-Survey Results". *Hospitality Management*, 25(4), 662-682.

Boyacıoğlu, E.Z. (2013). Turizm İşletmelerinin Çevresel Etkileri. Ş.T. Aydın ve M. Boz (Ed.). *Turizmde Güncel Konu ve Eğilimler* içinde (123-146). Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.

Bramwell, B. and Alletorp, L. (2001). "Attitudes in the Danish Tourism Industry to the Roles of Business and Government in Sustainable Tourism". *The International Journal of Tourism Research*, 3(2), 91-103.

Chan, E.S.W. (2008). "Barriers to EMS in the Hotel Industry". *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(2), 187-196.

Chan, E.S.W. (2008). Barriers to EMS in the Hotel Industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(2), 187-196.

Dinçer, M.Z. and Gedik, S. (2010). Sürdürülebilir Turizm Yaklaşımı İçinde İstanbul'daki 5 Yıldızlı Çok Uluslu Konaklama İşletmelerinin Çevre Duyarlılığının Değerlendirilmesi. *11. Ulusal Turizm Kongresi*, Kuşadası, Aydın 2-5 Aralık 2010.

Gulka, G. and Crawford, P. (2007). *Vermont's Green Hotels in the Green Mountain State (GHGMS) Program*. Retrieved February 23, 2017, from

<http://www.newmoa.org/prevention/webconferences/hospitality/NEWMOAGreenHotelPresentation.pdf>

Han, H., Hsu, L. and Lee, J. (2009). Empirical Investigation of the Roles of Attitudes Toward Green Behaviors, Overall Image, Gender, and Age in Customers' Eco-Friendly Decision-Making Process. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(4), 519-528.

Hsiao, Y.T., Chuang, M.C., Kuo, W.N. and Fong Yu, M.S. (2014). Establishing Attributes of an Environmental Management System for Green Hotel Evaluation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 36, 197-208.

Hsieh, Y.C. (2012). Hotel Companies' Environmental Policies and Practices: A Content Analysis of their Web Pages. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 24(1), 97-121.

Kahraman, N. and Türkay, O. (2014). *Turizm ve Çevre*. (6. Baskı). Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.

Kaymaz, M. (2012). *Turizm Sektöründe Çevre Yönetimi: Marmaris'teki Konaklama İşletmeleri Örneği*, (Yayınlanmamış YL Tezi), Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi, Muğla.

Kirk, D. (1998). "Attitudes to Environmental Management Held by a Group of Hotel Managers in Edinburgh". *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 17(1), 33-47.

Miles, M., Munilla L.S. and McClurg, T. (1999). The Impact of ISO 14000 Environmental Management Standards on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. *Journal of Quality Management*, 4(1), 1-122.

Miles, M.P. and Covin, J.G. (2000). Environmental Marketing: a Source of Reputational, Competitive, and Financial Advantage. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 23(3), 299-311.

Molina-Azorin, J.F., Claver-Cortes, E., Lopez-Gamero, M.D. and Tari, J.J. (2009). "Green Management and Financial Performance: A Literature Review". *Management Decision*, 47(7), 1080-1100.

Pizam, A. (2009). Green Hotels: A Fad, Ploy or Fact of Life? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(1), 1.

Polonsky, M. J. (1994). An Introduction to Green Marketing. *Electronic Green Journal*, 1(2), 1-10.

Pouliot, C. (1996). ISO 14000: Beyond Compliance to Competitiveness. *Manufacturing Engineering*, 116(5), 51-56.

Prendergast, G. and Man, H.W. (2002). The Influence of Store Image on Store Loyalty in Hong Kong's Quick Service Restaurant Industry. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 5(1), 45-59.

Revilla, G., Dodd, T.H. and Hoover, L.C. (2001). Environmental Tactics Used by Hotel Companies in Mexico. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 1(3-4), 111-127.

Roy, M.J., Boiral, O. and Lagace, D. (2001). Environmental Commitment and Manufacturing Excellence: A Comparative Study within Canadian Industry. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 10(5), 257-286.

Stenzel, P.L. (2000). Can the ISO 14000 Series Environmental Management Standards Provide a Viable Alternative to Government Regulation? *American Business Law Journal*, 37(2), 237-299.

Tosun, C. and Özdemir, S. (2015). Çevreye Duyarlı Konaklama İşletmelerinde Yöneticiler Açısından Rekabet Avantajı Olarak Yeşil Yıldız Uygulaması. *Journal of Recreation and Tourism Research*, 2(4), 26-36.

Tzschentke, N., Kirk, D. and Lynch, P.A. (2004). “Reasons for Going Green in Serviced Accommodation Establishments”. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(2), 116-24.

Vatan, A. and Zengin, B. (2014). Çevresel İnovasyon ve Konaklama İşletmelerindeki Uygulamalar Üzerine Bir Araştırma: İstanbul Örneği. *Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 2(8), 511-530.

Yılmaz, B.S. and Yumuk, Y. (2013). Türk Turizm Pazarında Çevreye Duyarlı Bir Eğilim: “Yeşil Yıldız” Uygulaması ve “Yeşil Yıldız” Sahibi Otel İşletmeleri Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme. *14. Ulusal Turizm Kongresi*, Erciyes Üniversitesi, Kayseri 05-08 Aralık, 1288-1300.