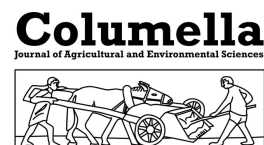




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## Sustainable tourism activities in Green Star hotels: A research in Europe

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**Abstract:** The unconscious use of the resources on earth caused great problems with the economic, social and cultural developments experienced after the industrial revolution. The tourism sector is a sector that is integrated with environmental resources, develops and gains importance depending on these resources. In terms of efficient use of limited resources within the framework of tourism sustainability dimensions of activities in hotel enterprises: to establish a reduction, reuse and recycling system. In this way, prevention of unnecessary use, more efficient use and reuse shows that green star hotels are one of the important determinants of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism activities in the hospitality sector are growing worldwide. The purpose of this study is to reveal the activities of green star hotels within the scope of sustainable tourism. In this context, it has been achieved by semi-structured interview technique with managers working in green star hotels in Europe. Energy consumption, water consumption waste consumption, and CO<sub>2</sub> management sustainable activities are carried out in green star hotels as environmental dimensions were evaluated.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Development, Green Star

Received 21 October 2020, Revised 23 November 2021, Accepted 25 November 2021

### Introduction

The concept of sustainability is based on the principle of protecting economic development, environmental resources and values and transferring them to future generations. When the concept of sustainability is applied to tourism, it can be expressed as the regulation of the use of tourism resources in a way that will enable future generations to use them without being consumed, polluted and destroyed (Kozak, 2014). Middleton and Hawkins (1998) defined sustainability as “a state of balance in which there is harmony between the activities of the human population and their natural, social and cultural environment”. According to Coccossis (1996), sustainability is "a set of approaches aimed at preventing economic, social and environmental negativities arising from the effects of human activities on environmental resources and emerging in the long term".

"Friendly environment" or "green" oriented

plans and policies that have become increasingly important for large and small businesses after the 1990 (Revilla et al. 2001). It has quickly become the subject of the applications of the accommodation sector, which is one of the key elements of the tourism industry. The concept of green hotels, which is used to describe the hotels established by investing from scratch with green strategies or through modernization, defines the hotels that produce quality service by using efficient energy, water, waste management and natural resources in a respectful way to nature (Cooper, 1998). According to the definition made by the Green Hotels Association, green hotels are "environmentally friendly businesses that make the necessary practices to save water and energy and reduce waste and help protect the world we have" (Lee et al. 2010). In order to be called as green hotels through green strategies, accommodation businesses must pass certain controls and show that they are sufficient in terms of

air quality, energy, water and waste management (Middleton and Hawkins, 1998). Although the high number of these certificates makes it difficult to define, green certificates can be defined as "effective instruments that improve the environmental quality of the tourism region while minimizing the damage caused by the products, production methods, services and processes produced by the tourism industry" (Kozak, 2014).

19th century, the rapid industrialization efforts that emerged as a result of the developments in the economic, social, cultural, environmental and technological fields with the Industrial Revolution caused irreparable damages on natural resources and the environment (Mebratu, 1998). In the 1970s, various meetings were organized under the leadership of international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank in order to prevent these damages to the environment and natural resources, and as a result of these meetings, the concepts of "Sustainability" and "Sustainable Development" emerged (Cunningham, 2004). Sustainability principles have been adapted within the tourism sector as in agriculture, industry and many other sectors, and the concepts and principles of "Sustainable Tourism" have been developed under the leadership of the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations (Despotakis, 1987).

Moreno, Lorento, and Jimenez (2004), in a study examining the environmental strategies adopted in the service sector and their effects on the performance of a company, found that the environmental strategies of Spanish hotels in their research findings on environmental protection activities are related to the higher performance level of the companies in the group with more advanced environmental strategies, but emphasized that it has nothing to do with performance. Kapiki (2012) in eco-friendly hotels, it is emphasized that green activities applied in hotels within the scope of sus-

tainable tourism provide cost benefits and increase customer satisfaction. At the same time, it was emphasized that the competitiveness of hotels with green management increased (Revila, et al. 2001). Amran et al. (2017), in the study of 115 hotels in Perlis, shows that hoteliers are starting to show a positive sign of adopting environmental practices such as the use of energy-efficient light bulbs, water-saving and recycling management programs. In addition Mungai and Irungu (2013), in research on green activities in 4 \* and 5 \* hotels in Mombasa, Kenya, it has revealed that the most water consumption was prevented from four general categories: energy management, waste management, water saving and green supply / recycling. Hays and Dosen (2014), in their research, indirect activities that save energy and water highlighted the importance of the proper recycling of waste. Not only do they reduce costs, they also build trust in green activities and thus add value to hotel services and brand. According to Sharma (2019) research on eco-friendly hotels in North India, green hotels recycle waste products and water, reduce the use of paper, ban the use of plastic and other toxic elements, customer intentions and customers such as the characteristics of products and services made in a sustainable way. it has been put on the ground that it directed to choose. In addition, Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) found that environmentally friendly practices are determinants of consumer preferences and choices as a result of their research. In addition, the green hotel where consumers stay; It has been concluded that participating in the environmental certification program, performing recycling practices and offering environmentally friendly products and services are effective in the customers' selection of green hotels.

In addition to the evaluation programs specific to sustainable hotel businesses such as internationally recognized Green Key (Denmark), Eco label (Worldwide), Green Leaf

Table 1: Energy management Activities

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To close the curtains of empty rooms.
Staff are advised to turn off lights in not use rooms.
Installing LED bulbs to replace the halogen bulbs.
Hotels have solar panels.
Tesla Destination electric vehicle charging point.
Heating system is controlled automatically in the general areas of the hotels.
Lighting sensors are used in public areas.

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(Thailand), Nordic Swan (Scandinavia), EU Flower (European Union), There is a Green Globe certification program, which is given to environmentally friendly accommodation facilities within the framework of social responsibility of hotels (Darnall, 2008; Honey and Rome, 2001). One of the most important and developing program which is established by The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) The Green Globe in 1993 and is a worldwide leading certification. The Green Globe's worldwide network is recognized in 187 countries. Green Globe Certificate fully complies with ISO 17021 standards. The figures show that there are more than 800 certified businesses. The Green Globe certification program creates plans for energy, water, waste consumption as well as CO<sub>2</sub> management in hotels (<https://greenglobe.com>).

The aim of the research, which has been prepared based on all these issues, is to reveal the implementation activities in 5\* hotels with green globe certification in Europe within the scope of sustainable tourism. The protection of natural and cultural wealth plays an important role in ensuring sustainability in tourism. For this reason, it is necessary to continue sustainable development in tourism and sustainability studies. The research is important in terms of the activities of accommodation businesses, which are one of the most important stakeholders of the tourism sector, in terms of minimizing their damage to the environment and provid-

ing better service.

## **The Aim and Importance of the Research**

### **Method**

The aim of this research is to reveal the applications and environmental contributions of 5\* Green Globe hotels in Europe. Highlighting the activities related to the environment in Europe and the applications made in the field of tourism, as well as the applications of the Green Globe member hotels have been revealed.

As one of the sectors where environmental factors are important, the protection of natural, historical and cultural resources that constitute the input of the tourism sector, in other words, prevention of their destruction is of great importance for the existence, development and continuity of the sector. One of the most important stakeholders of the tourism sector, the damage they give to the environment due to the activities of accommodation businesses is to be minimized and to provide better service.

## **The Universe and Sample of the Research**

The number of sustainable hotels with Green Globe certification in Europe is 245. However, as the research will examine the practices of hotel businesses within the scope of

Table 2: Waste management Activities

Organic linen: all of our linen certified organic	Organic (refillable) amenities.
Proper disposal of used chemicals.	Non single use plastic.
Waste compactors, the waste registering in a hotel optimizer.	It use to waste compactors, the waste registering in a hotel optimizer.
Toiletries are biological and biodegradable.	Composting kitchen waste.

sustainable tourism, the sample of the study consists of 22 5\* hotels with Green Globe certification.

### Data Collection Process

In this research, as a data collection method, information about the applications in the hotels with the Green Globe Certification Program within the scope of sustainable tourism is collected from the websites of the hotels.

### Results

#### *Energy management*

Hotels are very committed to reducing energy consumption in all its facilities, in the past has implemented some measures to make this reduction (Table 1).

Hotels have just implemented a computer shutdown policy that operates where it is feasible. They have the policy to close the curtains of empty rooms, to regulate the temperature of the building, which leads to a reduction in the use of energy. In addition, Staff are advised to turn off lights in rooms that are not in use, such as their offices. Hotels also installing LED bulbs to replace the halogen bulbs that we have in the hotel.

#### *Waste Management*

An area in which the hotel feels very committed through the system of continuous improvement of waste management. Hotels use new recycling containers so that recycling is

easier according to the type of waste. To control waste management, all recycling is done in the back of hotels, besides, has begun to record the amount of waste it generates and what type they are to create long-term waste reduction plans (Table 2).

Hotels have also begun to use waste compactors. The compactors will not only help to reduce the amount of waste produced but also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the number of times per month that waste must be collected so that it will not only generate a positive impact for the environment but also that will also allow saving costs to the company, also, recently we have begun to register the waste in a hotel optimizer we will use this data to create recycling objectives of the departments.

Non-single-use plastic, all plastic items are substitute with biodegradable options; i.e.: slippers, straws. Organic (refillable) amenities, locally produced organic amenities available to guests without needing to use disposable bottles.

#### *Water Management*

This is an area where hotel guests can actively participate since they can communicate that they do not want their sheets and towels washed by placing the note on their bed and with their towels. Flow reducers and movement sensors have been installed in male urinals and toilets with double discharge in all hotel services to reduce the amount of water consumed by guests without lowering quality standards (Table 3).

Table 3: Energy management Activities

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On request sheets and towels change.  
 Flow reducers and movement sensors have been installed in toilets and all hotel services.  
 Rainwater is used to irrigate the garden and has a water drainage system.  
 Toilet flush is water conserving.

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Table 4: CO<sub>2</sub> management Activities

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Hotel register and evaluate their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions monthly .  
 Water plant uses advanced heat recovery technology.  
 Hotels use energy-efficient computers and other machines.

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### *CO<sub>2</sub> Management*

Guests and visitors of the hotel also are informed of the best ways to move around the city sustainably. Hotels use energy-efficient computers and other machines, which are Energy Star certified or other energy efficiency certificates. Water plant uses advanced heat recovery technology to extract heat from cooled areas and then reuses it to create hot water. This technology delivers high output for low input, leading to a direct saving in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and running costs. Hotels use energy-efficient computers and other machines, which are Energy Star certified or other energy efficiency certificates (Table 4).

However, education and training of staff in regards to waste separation and recycling take place on regular basis. It also takes part in socio-cultural activities in hotels. Hotels have a global perspective of its socio-cultural work and integration of other cultures, so it welcomes guests and workers from all over the world.

The training of its employees reflects this global perspective to ensure that all its workers have a better understanding of both the local and cultural culture of the guests and visitors who come to the hotel. Guests must be properly treated according to their cul-

ture, so the staff has been trained for better understanding the culture of each of their clients, thus increasing their final satisfaction with the company. From here hotels support the development of the local culture of the world, so they try to integrate it as much as possible in the establishment in the same way we support the intellectual property of the local culture. In the same way that local employees are trained to be able to serve the needs of their clients.

### **Conclusion**

As a result of tourism activities, economic development and protection of environmental values, even increasing these values are the main objectives for sustainable tourism development. Making tourism sustainable depends on the elimination of some negativities and bold initiatives. In addition, " Water saving, increasing energy efficiency, reducing the consumption of environmentally hazardous substances and the amount of waste, encouraging the use of renewable energy resources, planning accommodation businesses environmentally sensitive starting from the investment stage, adapting the touristic facility to the environment, orga-

nizing and activities enhancing the environment, ecological architecture, It provides to raise awareness about environmental awareness, to provide training and to cooperate with relevant institutions and organizations. Although it was stated that the green star certification was high financially at first, it became the first choice of the enterprises

thanks to the financial and moral contributions it provided to the business. Hotel managements and personnel staff have completed the necessary trainings and continuity has been adopted as a principle, and with this, other gains have become an effective factor in the participation of the surrounding hotels in the green star certification program.

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