The Barriers of Environmental Sustainability Practices in Addis A Baba Hotels

Among the tourism industry components, a hotel sector alone contributes a major share in bringing various negative impacts in local environments. To reduce the level of hotels negative environmental impacts, hotels are expected implement certain environmental management practices. However, these practices face various challenges. Additionally, in Ethiopia, there is a shortage of study and clear knowledge in the areas of the hotel sector environmental practice. Therefore, to solve this setback at certain extent, this research aimed to explore the barriers of operational environmental sustainability practices in Addis Ababa hotels. A qualitative research design was applied to undertake the study. Primary data were collected through the semi-structured interview from hotel stakeholders. The study revealed that factors like the lack of hotel owners' support, lack of formal environmental policy in hotels, lack of government support, absence of government regulation, and lack of sufficient physical infrastructure were the critical barriers to environmental sustainability practices in hotel industry.

Keywords: environment, hotel, environmental practice, environmental practice barriers

Introduction

The hospitality sector is one of the basic components of the tourism industry. Ordinarily, the hotel is believed to be an industry with no significant impact on the natural environment compared to the other industries (Park, 2009). However, experts revealed that hotel sector is one of the leading business sectors that generate much negative environmental impacts in consuming both local and imported resources such as ample water, energy, and non-durable products, and produces wastes and emitting a carbon dioxide to air (Kirk, 1998; Bohdanowicz, 2006; Erdogan & Baris, 2007). As a result, hotels' environmental impact is considerable, and it stands out among other commercial buildings (Bohdanowicz, Zientara, & Novotna, 2011). According to Kasim (2007), an environmental friendly operation is necessary for hotels. The common and major sustainable environmental practices in hotels are energy efficiency, and water conservation, liquid, and solid waste management, and sustainable hotel site development (Shanti, 2016).

Hotel sector has attempted over years to incorporate environmentally friendly practices in its operation (Jackson, 2010). Despite hotel trail to practice environmental sustainability, studies conducted in various countries reveal that
there are multiple factors that block the implementations. Few of these factors are cost-saving (Leslie, 2007; Doody, 2010; Mishra, 2016), limited awareness (Doody, 2010; Tzschentke et al., 2008, Fukey and Issac, 2014), lack of financial resources (Chan, 2008; Mahachi, Mokgalo, & Pansiri, 2015), employees resistance (Mbasera et al., 2017); challenges of legislation and accreditation system (Chan, 2008; Doody, 2010); and high implementation costs (Chan, 2008).

As the main component of the tourism industry, the Ethiopian hospitality sector is also progressing well and sharing role in development. Kifle (2012) reported that though there were so many challenges within the sector, the Ethiopian hotel industry is steadily growing since the last two decades. The study carried out by Trevor, (2018), indicates the number of international and regional hotel chains in the pipeline in Ethiopia has grown from 20 hotels in 2017 to 31 hotels in 2018, in which 25 hotel locations are in Addis Ababa. Additionally, the data received from the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism [MoCT] (2019), shows that there are more than 129 tourists recommended hotels in Addis Ababa alone.

To cope up with the booming of the hotel industry and the expected undesirable environmental results, it is crucial to focus on the environmental management studies. Whereas, the previously conducted studies in the Addis Ababa hotel sector were mainly concentrating on non-environmental subjects like hotel marketing, service delivery, hotel manpower, customer satisfaction and other hotel business (Zeleke, 2012; Andargie, 2013; Kifle, 2012; Gobena & Gudeta, 2013; Gebregziabher, 2015; Trevor, 2018; Wudie, 2018). These studies reveal the available professionals and academic centres paid attention to hotel business and its management, rather than the environment management part. Even, the environmental in hotels did not receive sufficient concern from the hotel and tourism industry itself. As a result, there was a shortage of literature work, which exposes the information on hotel environmental management and the factors challenging these environmental practices.

This study, therefore, aims to identify the challenges of environmental sustainability practices within the Addis Ababa hotel industry. The researcher believed that this study played a crucial role in the generation of knowledge about hotel and environment links by providing insights into the environmental practices and its blockage factors.

**Literature Review**

**Concept Sustainability in Hotels**

In the context of the hospitality industry, the concept of sustainability performance is an operation and management of resources in a manner that leads to the maximisation of the economic, social, and environmental benefits within hotels (Sloan, Legrand and Chen, 2013). The sustainable hotel aims to reduce the
impact on society and environment, which allows them meeting the needs of the present generation, and at the same time, it also helps to ensure the protection and enhancement of opportunities for future generations (Abdelrazaq, 2017). Ricord & Smith (2009), explained “sustainable in hotel practically ranges from using energy-efficient light bulbs to designing entire facilities and operational processes of a business in line with enhanced efficiency, sustainability of resources, and respect of local communities’ well being” (P.2). Many hotel companies have utilized social impact initiatives to improve the quality of life in local communities, the well-being of their employees and maintain the environment (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2009). Abokhamis Mousavi, Hoşkara & Woosnam (2017) argued that, besides to environmental and social, economic factors management decisions also play significant role in applying sustainability measure, as the hotels financial performances determines hotels continuing in operation. Lunkes and Rosa (2012) states to promote sustainable development in hotels, it is crucial to have structures that satisfy the demands of guests, efficient economic performance and develop responsible environmental practice. In more sustainability focus, hotels are becoming environmentally friendly through obeying environmental sustainability standards in their architectural design, management and customer service (Mishra as cited in Abokhamis Mousavi et al, 2017).

Environmental Sustainability in Hotels

The environmental sustainability in hospitality sector case has been a serious issue in the decades (Doody, 2010). Despite, its significance in the world economy; the hotel operation generates a negative environmental impacts that can causes natural resources depletion and then global warming (Rosa & Silva, 2017). Erdogan & Baris (2007) stated, these harmful impacts on environments are caused by the consumption of huge amount of water, energy, and disposable products in hotel operations. These negative impacts enforced the governments and other tourism stakeholders to implement and strengths eco-friendlier operation and green consumption in hotels (Moreo, 2008). This initiated the existence of corporate social responsibility concepts- the concern of community service and volunteerism; and environmentalism in business including the hospitality industry (Micioni, 2009). Corporate social responsibility is the idea that companies ought to justify their existence more than just making for profit in terms of voluntary service for community (Bohdanowicz and Zientara, 2009). The requirements of environmentally sustainable behavior become essential in hotel (Manaktola & Jauhari 2007). These are commonly named as ‘environmental management practices’. The environmental management practices are a broad term intended to reduce the negative environmental impacts of the organizations (Dief & Font, 2012). It also refers to the extent at which the hotels’ seeks to implement environmental initiatives (Park et al., 2014). These environmental responsible practices are the measures to increase the energy efficiency, reduce water
consumption, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, solid and liquid waste management; those minimizes or to solve environmental problems (Lunkes et al., 2012). The requirements of huge water and energy consumption, and the pollution of environment through gas emission and production of wastes triggers the importance of environmental practices in hotels.

**Barriers of Environmental Sustainability Practices in Hotel**

Environmental management implementations in the hotel sector can be constrained by many factors. Doody (2010) identified the barriers of implementing environmental practices in hotels such as knowledge deficiency, owner/manager attitude, human resources, finance, customer attitudes, operational, and legislation and accreditation system. Also in his study, Chan (2008) identified six main factors that hinder hotels from adopting environmental management system in hotels which includes: lack of resources, lack of professional advice, lack of knowledge and skills, the uncertainty of outcome, certifiers/verifiers, and implementation and maintenance costs. Other than hotel sectors, the barriers of environmental management system practices are also encountered in other fields. For example, according to Levy & Dilwali, (2000), the lack of knowledge of effective conservation measures, limited capital budget, lack of knowledge of new technology, lack of institutional memory; lack of performance measures; difficulty in quantifying environmental gain and limitations in staff availability are the key barriers facing the facility directors on implementing the environmental practices in the university.

Similar to these factors, Quazi (1999) stated that the factors challenge the environmental management systems are lack of incentives to implement; legal ramifications; lack of total employee involvement; lack of management commitment cost of implementation; and unclear responsibilities of employees. Environmental practices barrier factors can be considered under different categories. Chan (2008) divided barriers to industry barriers and organizational barriers. According to this author, industry barriers are capital costs, technical information, competitive pressures & configuration of current operations; and organizational barriers are factors including poor communication, employee attitudes, past practices and inadequate leadership. In addition to that, Hillary (2004) developed and categorized the barriers of environmental management system into internal and external barriers. The author stated internal barriers such as resources, attitudes and company culture, implementation understanding and perception; and external factors like certifiers/verifiers, economics, institutional weaknesses; and support and guidance. According to (Murillo-Luna et al., 2011) external environmental barriers are environmental factors that cannot be controlled by company such as certifiers, economics, institutional weaknesses and support and guidance.
Methodology

The researcher followed the qualitative research method. To obtain information about hotels’ environmental sustainability challenges, data was gathered through key informant interview. Kumar (1989) states that key informant interview involves the interviewing of identified individuals who are likely to provide the required information and concepts on particular subjects solicited by an investigator. According to this author, only an appropriate and small number of informants’ that usually range from 15 to 35 are interviewed. For this study purpose, the researcher developed semi-structured interviews and a cross-sectional sample survey was undertaken.

The targeted population was a selected public and private stakeholders. These key informant interviewees were from hotel stakeholders such as Addis Ababa City Administration Culture and Tourism Office, Ministry of Culture and Tourism Office, Hotel consultant companies, and Addis Ababa Sub City Culture and Tourism Offices. These stakeholders were targeted because of the awareness they have towards environmental management practices in the hotel industry. Hotel consulting companies are working with hotels through consulting and guiding hotels on the business. The government offices are also working with hotels by consulting, supervising, guiding and giving license for hotel business. The purposive sampling (expert sampling) technique was employed to select key informants for interviews from the targeted population. The size for key informant interview participants was determined based on the available key informants within the targeted population, and the information saturation. As a result, 15 (fifteen) key informants participated in the research. Procedurally, key informant interviewees were directly approached and contacted. Based on the consent of these informants, a personal interview was conducted at convenient places and time. To get rich information the interview was conducted both in Amharic and English languages based on the interest of informants. The interview was deep and a digital voice recorder recorded the voices of participants in May 2019.

The data gathered through key informant interview were analyzed thematically. The researcher took the following step that was formulated by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to these authors, thematic analysis is often the fit method for qualitative research and consists of six stages. These stages are; familiarization with the data through repeat reading of transcribed interview data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing a report. However, the researcher used the back and forth to compile the convenient report; because qualitative research analysis is not a linear process where the researchers simply move from one stage to the next stage Braun and Clarke (2006).
Data Presentation and Analysis

Informant Respondents’ Data

Background data of respondents are about their organization, age, educational background, and their number. It described and presented in Table 1 accordingly.

Table 1. Key Informant Respondents’ Background

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Source: Own Survey Data (2019).

According to this table, the total numbers of key informant participants were fifteen. Except, the hotel consultancy companies other organizations mentioned in the table were public organizations, which are working with the hotel industry. Accordingly, the majorities (66.7%) of critical informants were from the government organization, and the rest 33.3% of participants were the
representatives of selected private hotel consulting companies found in Addis Ababa.

**Barriers to Environmental Sustainability Practices in Hotels**

The challenges of implementing operational environmental sustainability practices in hotels are categorized into internal and external barriers.

**Internal Environmental Practices’ Barriers**

The internal environmental sustainability practices barriers are any challenging factors existed within the hotels. The major identified internal barriers are lack of support from owners, lack of internal environmental policy in hotels, the expense associated with environmental practices and lack of specialized staff for environmental management practice.

**Lack of hotel owners support**

The lack of hotel business owners’ support is a tremendous and most common barrier for Addis Ababa hotels in implementation of environmental sustainability practices. The attitudes of majority hoteliers are highly focusing on business making rather than paying attention to the environment. This is due to a lack of concern and awareness toward environment among hotel business investors. Besides, most of the hotel owners are not hotel professionals. They invest in the hotel sector only because of the money and the interest they do have within the hotel business. As a result, they do not have sufficient know-how on the impact of hotel as well as the environmental issues. Some of the responses of stakeholders included in the analyses were quoted as follows.

I think it is a matter of awareness; the majority of hotel investors do not know how to treat the environment. Owners are not hotel professionals; rather, they are moneymakers. If they do have the environmental awareness they would have treated the environment, and at the same time, they would save money from it (Anonymous 2, personal communication, May 10, 2019).

Another key informant added and explained the absence of hoteliers’ support as:

In the first places, most of the hotel owners are not hotel professionals. They have no idea about hotel impacts. Since they have money, they have built hotels. So to go according to the environmental practices requirement, hotel owners are not ready to support the staff/professionals on environmental practices. I think much awareness creation activities should be done in the subject area (Anonymous 5, personal communication, May 13, 2019).
Lack of environmental policy in hotel

The second most influential environmental sustainability practices barrier is associated with the absence of formal environmental policy in hotels. The stakeholders consider the lack policy as the top significant barrier to implementations of environmental practices. Majority of the local independent Addis Ababa hotels lack internal policy for environmental management. These hotels have only business-oriented internal operational policies. These policies have few elements that encompass environmental issues like procurement procedures, waste management, and housekeeping management. However, the majority of hotels lack environmental policies, especially the local independent hotels. Concerning the environmental policy in Addis Ababa hotels, one informant discussed the issue in detail as follows:

...For the managers of independent hotels, there is no policy as a requirement to execute or implement the environmental sustainability practice. They do not have such policy, so they do not mind about it. That is why they highly focus only on business making. However, for international franchised hotels, they have a policy called Quality Assurance audit (QA). QA takes place once or twice in a year, and a general manager performance is evaluated by it. Therefore, basically the franchised hotel manager should follow the same procedure written in QA. (Anonymous 12, personal communication, May 20, 2019).

Another key informant narrated the lack of internal environmental policy as

I have been working with hotels for the past eight years. As far as I know majority of hotels have only general operation procedures, what we call ‘metadaderiya demb’ in Amharic language; it means internal operation legislation. Only few hotels have policy separately for environmental sustainability. However, some the internal operation legislation contains articles indicates how to manage wastes, water etc. but it is not strong that much; and honestly it was not intended to for environmental commitment purpose. They focus mainly on business making and expense management area (Anonymous 13, personal communication, May 20, 2019).

The expense for environmental practices

The third most influential internal barrier is an expense related to implementing environmental sustainability practices. Some technologies required for environmental sustainability practice needs enormous capital and as well as it takes long payback periods. Due to this, it is challenging hotels to afford the expense. In Addis Ababa hotels, technologies required for water treatment, materials recycling machines, rainwater-harvesting equipment, and the expense of affording land for the garden were the main challenge for hotels to afford. An informant from Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Office narrated this as:
There are very few hotels those re-use materials with minimal extent. Also, there were some hotels re-use water in swimming pool, but still, they are very limited in number. Whereas no hotel re-uses liquid wastes, no hotels re-use it at all. The water treatment plant needs vast capitals (Anonymous 4, personal communication, May 13, 2019).

In this study, another informant added:

…the cost of land is not affordable in Addis Ababa. This is a critical challenge for hotels to afford the land to develop various infrastructures. Besides, hotel market demand is not that much high in Ethiopia, therefore the invested money on infrastructure payback period would be very long. As a result, hotel business owners are not confident enough to invest such substantial money for an environmental purpose (Anonymous 6, personal communication, May 16, 2019).

The lack of specialized staff

The lack of specialized staff for environmental management was a significant barrier to the implementation of environmental sustainability practices in Addis Ababa hotels. It is known that hotel have a complex structure that is mainly made for the business making. Many hotels do not give place for the environment to develop an accommodating structure for environmental management. Especially the local independent hotels lack these professionals. In the absence of good structure and appropriate professional experts, it is not easy to guide environmental management in the hotel sector. In his speech, one hotel consultant stated:

I have been working with many hotels, but I have not been experienced yet any position allocated for environmentalists in local independent hotels, whereas franchised hotels have positions with various names (Anonymous 15, personal communication, May 22, 2019).

The absence of environmental specialists and their positions in hotels shows that hotels did not give sufficient concern for environmental protection. This situation hinders the hotels' environmental sustainability practices in Addis Ababa hotels.

External Environmental Practices’ Barriers

The critical external barriers to environmental practices in Addis Ababa hotels were the lack of government assistance, lack of environmental management regulations, lack of promotion for environmental practice and insufficient physical infrastructure for environmental practices.
1 Lack of government assistance
2 Among the identified external barriers, the lack of government assistance for
3 hotels is a big challenge for the implementation of environmental management
4 practices. This reveals the lack of concern for environmental management is not
5 only limited to the hotel business owners, but also the government ignored the
6 issue. The government has been providing little assistance for motivating hotel
7 business, but this assistance does not include any elements of environmental
8 management practice. This assistance includes incentives for hotel starters as hotel
9 investment motivation, which does not cover environmental issues. In addition to
10 that, the government has a weak side on coordinating and working on hoteliers to
11 make their hotel business more environmentally friendly. This makes the lack of
12 government assistance as a critical challenge for environmental sustainability
13 practices. If the government supported the hotel businesses on environmental
14 issues, there would have been better environmental practices within the industry.
15 The government should both support and enforce the hotel investors to work on
16 the environment. For example, unlike other investments, the government does not
17 requests investors to bring the report of Environmental Impact Assessment (IEA)
18 and the building design as essential criteria to get business hotel license. If the
19 government support and enforce the hotel business to conduct EIA, to the
20 minimum, this can pave the way for hotels to undertake environmental initiatives.
21 Some explanations from key informants are quoted as follows. According to one
22 key informant:
23
24 Let alone assistance; there is no proper follow up for progressing hotel
25 projects from the government. For example, for star grade awarding
26 process, MoCT conducted hotel evaluation only twice in the last ten years.
27 So, I can say other than some incentives like permission to import specific
28 equipment to encourage hotel industry expansion, there is no support or
29 motivate for hotels to be environmentally sustainable yet (Anonymous 6,
30 personal communication, May 16, 2019).
31
32 This informant added:
33
34 \...if we need achievements in terms of environmental management in the
35 hotel sector, we need to work with hotel business owners. We need to
36 create adequate environmental awareness for investors, and then they can
37 pay at least an attention to environmental issues rather than running short-
38 term economic profit only. An owner can influence both managers and
39 employees of the hotel to practice environmental management
40 (Anonymous 6, personal communication, May 16, 2019).
41
42 Another Key informant explained some procedural gap among the hotel
43 sector and the government executive bodies to make hotel sustainable. He said:
To get investment permission (business license), investors are not obligated to bring any document that assures the environmental sustainability of hotel business; even we do not have any regulation to enforce hotel investors to bring environmental impact assessment. I do not think so if both the hotel investors and our offices do have adequate awareness of the requirements for environmental sustainability in the hotel. Besides that we do not have any specialized departments as well as specialized experts that check up the environmental sustainability of hotels during their operation (Anonymous 3, personal communication, May 10, 2019).

One stakeholder narrated the lack of assistance from their office for hotels environmental practices. “We do not provide any assistance for hotels to work on environmental sustainability practice, but we follow up and supervise to check if they are operating by following hotel operation regulation rather than focusing on environmental issues” (Anonymous 11, personal communication, May 17, 2019).

Lack of government regulation toward environmental practices in hotel

The absence of government regulation has been a significant barrier to implement the environmental practices in Addis Ababa hotel. What makes sense here is, unlike other industries such as agriculture and manufacturing, the hotel sector lacks a clear policy that enforces the hotel business to be environmentally friendly. Furthermore, there is complicated and uncoordinated procedure among the government bodies those licensing, supporting, supervising and following up the hotel business. Government agents like health sector, MoCT, AAC&T offices, Construction office, Land management, EIC, Environmental Protection Authorities and other government organizations work with the hotel industry with very complex networks and unclear procedure that results in loose follow up of environmental issues in the hotel. There is no single mandated government body to regulate the implementations of environmental practices in hotels. One key informant explained the seriousness of the problem, “As a country, we do not have any enforcing regulations or motivating policy to practice environmentally sustainable initiatives in hotels yet. To develop and implement, such as regulations, there is a lack of cooperation among the concerned bodies” (Anonymous 15, personal communication, May 22, 2019).

Another key informant said:

In Ethiopia, the hotel industry is not like factories. I know there is a clear policy on factories, which regulate not to damage the environment. I do not see any clear policy for hotels on the part of the government. Of course, the Addis Ababa health bureau comes to check the hygiene and sanitation when hotels want to get a trade license. But that is not strict; I can tell you it is a checking point for issuing the hotel trade license only.
There should be specific policies that enforce hotels to do EIA before they join the business (Anonymous 6, personal communication, May 16, 2019).

Another key environmental sustainability practices’ barrier is the shortage of infrastructure.

Insufficient physical infrastructure

Environmental sustainability management practices of Addis Ababa hotel industry profoundly affected by the absence of sufficient physical infrastructure and facilities. As Addis Ababa is one of the developing country capital cities, there is shortage of physical infrastructure. So it is very for hotels to afford or to develop from scratch. As these reason, hoteliers are not voluntary to invest for themselves on the infrastructures. Even if hoteliers are voluntary to develop certain infrastructures to facilitate, it is not easy to regain the capital that would be invested in the infrastructure as it takes a long payback period. In addition to that, the current market demand for a hotel in Addis Ababa is not that much high to encourage investing in facilities required for environmental management. This mainly linked with a low flow of international tourists. Some ideas provided by key informants were quoted here. One key informant from Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Office narrated how many insufficiencies of physical infrastructure are discouraging for hotels to practice the environmental initiatives like as follows:

The lack of adequate physical infrastructure and facilities is one of the substantial challenges for hotels to practice environmental management. For example, if the government developed an adequate water waste drainage system, hotels do not incur the cost to transport liquid wastes. If governments supply sufficient water, hotels do not incur a cost to drill groundwater. Not only these, for example, if our city has sufficient materials recycling centre, solar panel developer and much more other facilities, our hotels never challenged like now. Hotels can invest small capital, and they can practice environmental initiatives. It is very challenging hotels to invest in everything from scratch, but if they get an encouraging environment with good infrastructure, they can easily participate in environmental sustainability practices (Anonymous 4, personal communication, May 13, 2019).

Another external barrier for environmental practices is the lack of promotion on environmental issues in the hotel industry of Addis Ababa.

Lack of promotion on environmental practices

Hotel stakeholders viewed the lack of promotion as a significant external barrier for the hotels’ environmental initiative measures. Despite, Addis Ababa hotels are widely working on promotion of their services and products, they works rarely on environmental promotions. This brings shortcoming of awareness and
understandings towards the advantage of implementing environmental sustainability practices. If the government and stakeholders worked on environmental promotion using by various media, there would be good environmental knowledge and awareness among hotel business owners and staff. Moreover, the promotion enables various hotel stakeholders will pay attention to environmental issues. The quotes of key informants state the absence of promotion on hotel environmental practices as follows:

I have not heard any media promoting hotels environmental sustainability practices in Ethiopia yet. I believe that, as this resulted, most hotel owners suffer from a shortage of awareness on environmental issues (Anonymous 7, personal communication, May 16, 2019).

Another key informant narrated the absence of promotion, as “it is common to hear while hotels are promoting their product and services, but I have not experienced any environmental protection promotions either from hotels, government or other bodies” (Anonymous 13, personal communication, May 20, 2019).

Discussion

Many barriers challenged the environmental sustainably practices within Addis Ababa hotels. These barriers analyzed under internal and external categories. The internal barriers include the lack of support from owners, lack of formal policy in the hotel for environmental practices, the expense associated with environmental practices and lack of specialized staff for environmental practice. The external barriers are the lack of government assistance, lack of government regulation, lack of promotion of environmental practice, and insufficient physical infrastructure.

The internal environmental practice barriers are related to factors within the business (Kasim (2009), cited in Sucheran, 2018). Addis Ababa hotel business investors are not supporting their hotels to invest in environmental issues due to either lack of environmental awareness or lack of environmental concern or both. A research carried out by Tzschentke et al., (2008) in Scotland, Britain reveals that limited awareness amongst hospitality business owners of their adverse environmental has consistently identified as a barrier to change. The Addis Ababa hotel business owners highly focused on short-term business profit. This is confirmed by similar study of Leslie (2007), environmental management commitment of owners of accommodation is overshadowed by the more considerable attention they being paid to attaining maximum financial returns like through cost-saving.

The second key internal barrier is the lack of formal environmental policy in the hotel as a barrier; despite few, internationally franchise and locally owned
hotels have a formal environmental policy. A similar finding also revealed in Mbasera, Du Plessis, Saayman, & Kruger (2016), where most hotels did not have any green management policies, yet green initiatives have been implemented in the hotels pushed by other factors. While internationally franchised or chain hotel is obliged to follow the environmental policy with guidelines set out by the chain headquarters to promote environmental initiatives (Park et al., 2014), the locally owned independent Addis Ababa hotels have only an established certain regulations manuals for internal hotel operation. These hotel businesses oriented operational policies contains some elements of environmental practices like the procurement procedures, housekeeping management, smoke-free policy and selling of reusable materials; but it was not designed for environmental management purpose.

Another internal challenge for environmental practice is its technologies need a substantial financial expense. The study of Bohdanowicz (2006), Tzschentke et al., (2008) and Sucheran (2018) documented similar findings that showed lack of financial expense as a critical challenge for environmental management. The study at hand discovered, for example, the technologies required for water treatment, recycling machines, rainwater harvesting, land for the garden were the main challenge for Addis Ababa hotels to afford due to its high investment expense. In addition to that, the local hotel business owners are reluctant to invest in those infrastructures due to unsatisfactory hotel market demands, which make difficulties of paying back the investment costs shortly. Because, the financial capacity of hotel business determines the extent of involvement in environmental management; if there is little income is coming in, the environmental green issues tend to get little focus, whereas if business is good, these issues tend to get priority scale focus (Tzschentke et al., 2008). These findings also affirmed by the study of Sucheran (2018) in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa that states "A larger proportion of independent hotels cited "high costs" as a barrier to environmental management compared to chain hotels" (pp.1358-9).

Another hotels environmental practice critical internal challenge is the absence of specialized staff and allocated departments/structures that is responsible for environmental sustainability practices. Environmental experts play a role in provoking and guiding the environmental practices in the hotel. Comparable findings were made by Sucheran (2018) in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa where 78.3% of hotels confirmed that the lack of specialized staff as critical barriers to environmental measures, and Chan (2008) discovers that the Hong Kong hotel managers lack environmental consultants to assist them to run environmental programs that affected the implementation of environmental practices in their hotels.

External barriers are environmental factors that a business cannot control (Murillo-Luna et al., 2011). From Addis Ababa hotels point of view, the lack of government support is mentioned as a most influential external challenge for practicing environmental management in hotels. The Ethiopian government lacks focus on hotel environmental practice; as a result, there is no enforcement or
encouraging for the practice. Sucheran (2013) reported that 76.7% South African of sampled hotels consider lack of government assistance as a barrier to environmental practices. Leslie (2007) confirmed that there was a lack of support from the local authority on the environmental management of accommodations. In contrast to these, the study of hotels in Zimbabwe and South Africa shows the availability of much support from the local government in implementing green initiatives (Mbasera et al., 2017).

Lack of government regulation on hotel industry’s environmental performance was the second big external challenge according to this analysis. Unlike other industries, those have a clear environmental policy such as agriculture and manufacturing, Ethiopian hotel sector lacks policy that guides or initiates the business to be environmentally friendly. The study of Sucheran (2018) affirmed that the lack of environmental regulation and legislation was a critical barrier to environmental management by most hotel managers in South Africa. The absence of necessary infrastructures that directly or indirectly support the operation of environmental program practices was also another crucial challenge for environmental programs in hotel. There is a shortage of sufficient required infrastructure such as road, water, sewerage system and other enabling technology requirements, for example, the glass, wood and plastic recycling centre, solar technologies, water harvesting infrastructure, etc.. This finding is consistent with the study of Ustad (2010), where the absence of modern technology was the second most significant barrier for environmental sustainability practices in New Zealand hotels. The last external barrier hotel environmental practice is the lack of promotion of the environmental program. A good hotel environmental management promotion can motivate government, hoteliers and other stakeholders to participate actively; in contrast, its absence can challenge the practice negatively.

Conclusion

Despite encouraging environmental management performances, there are various blockage factors in Addis Ababa hotels. These barrier factors have thematically analysed under external and internal barriers. Among the hotels internal barriers, the prominent one is lack of owners’ interest to invest in environmental management. The hotel owners and managers are more concerned with the short-term interest derived from hotel business rather than long-term benefits of environmental protection. The second most challenging was the lack of environmental policy in hotels. The shortage of financial resources and lack of environmental specialists are also additional internal challenges. From the external challenges, the absence of government support and lack of environmental guiding government policy come at the foremost as a barrier for the majority of hotels. The lack of necessary infrastructure and the absence of environmental sustainability
promotion are additional crucial external challenges for hotel environmental sustainability initiatives within Addis Ababa hotel.

**Recommendations**

To minimize the identified barrier factors and to improve environmental management programs in hotels, it is advised to apply several recommendations in hotels as well as within the stakeholders’ arena. Hotels managers should work on establishing structures that works on environmental issues. This structure can initiate environmental policies in hotel and within stakeholders. In addition, hotel managers should work with various academic institutions, stakeholders, and other government bodies to increase the awareness on environmental management. The hotel owners should focus on environmental issues as part of their hotel’s business. Finally, the participation of government is very important to reduce the barriers of environmental practices. This can applied through initiation of various regulations and policies, working on awareness creation, and motivating and enforcing hotels to apply environmental friendly practices.

**References**

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