

ABSTRACT

Environmental sustainability has received a significant attention in the hotel industry in recent years. Such practices extend an additional core value to the business processes while enhancing the overall customer experience and industry sustainability as well. However, incorporating environmentally sustainable practices to the hotel industry needs a substantial commitment and investment. This study was endeavored to discern the barriers faced by small and medium-sized hotels when implementing environmentally sustainable practices. Accordingly, energy consumption, water consumption, Co2 emissions and waste management practices were considered as the main environmentally sustainable activities. The study was employed with inductive reasoning, and data were obtained from ten small and medium-sized hoteliers in Batticaloa district of Sri Lanka through purposive sampling techniques. The data collected through structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results revealed that the high cost of implementation and maintenance are the biggest barriers to device environmentally sustainable practices and systems. Moreover, lack of suppliers/resource or equipment, complicated government policies, lack of knowledge and skills, consequences of COVID-19 and the Easter Sunday Attack, lack of support from the local governments, were the major barriers faced by the small and medium sized hoteliers to implement environmentally sustainability practices. However, hotel characteristics and the experience of staff were significant determinants of the adoption of good practices. The medium-sized hotels have more involvement to implement environmentally sustainable practices and implementing environmentally sustainable practices were burdensome for small hotels. As a significant component of the Sri Lankan accommodation supply, small hotels should be motivated to adopt environmentally sustainable practices sufficiently extending needed financial support, knowledge and the government support.

Key Words: Environmental sustainability, Sri Lanka, Hotel industry, Tourism, Barriers, Small and Medium