

Chapter 9

Navigating The Path to Sustainability and Overcoming Environmental Barriers in the Egyptian Hotel Industry

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the specific environmental practices of Egyptian hotels and identifies potential barriers to implementing sustainable initiatives. The aim was to gain a holistic perspective on the factors affecting hotel environmental sustainability practices rather than merely discussing ecological problems. The analysis was based on qualitative data from 42 semi-structured interviews with top management from a sample of four- and five-star hotels in Egypt. The chapter reveals seven internal barriers: staff capabilities, physical limitations, the attitudes of top management, cost concerns, access to resources, owner attitudes, and day-to-day activities.

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External factors include government regulations, incentives, and guest attitudes. This chapter also examines the theoretical implications and discusses how future research might address environmental challenges in hospitality.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry, which plays a significant role in producing and sustaining economic growth and employment worldwide (Statista, 2023), is also concerned about its ecological influence (Sachs et al., 2019). This is particularly true in Egypt, a country with a well-established history, a growing tourism industry (Sanikos, 2021), and many environmental problems (Abdelhafez et al., 2020). Hotels use large amounts of resources that negatively impact the environment (Kuo et al., 2022). Sustainable development and viability challenges affect this sector's stability (Sachs et al., 2019). These issues are relevant in the hospitality industry and require immediate attention. The research is conducted in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to promote sustainable economic growth while protecting the environment and its resources per the global development agenda (United Nations, 2015). Thus, this chapter explores the challenges of environmental practices in the Egyptian hotel industry, emphasising the potential problems that may hamper the adoption of sustainable projects. This research is relevant to the Egyptian context and contributes to the global understanding of environmental sustainability and its implications for the hospitality industry.

Hospitality is one of the largest industries, and hotels, one of the most important subsectors, negatively affect the environment by utilising vast amounts of resources and producing large amounts of waste (Moosa & He, 2023). Energy consumption, water, and waste are high for the industry and severely impact air, water, and soil pollution (Zhang et al., 2022). Various studies have revealed that the hospitality industry significantly contributes to environmental degradation despite various international interventions, obligations, initiatives, agreements, and policies to mitigate the issue (Abdou et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022). Research on the effects of the Egyptian hotel industry on sustainable development has revealed that despite growing awareness of environmental concerns, many companies are reluctant to embrace sustainable development (Suliman et al., 2023; Taha & Espino-Rodríguez, 2020), which calls for more research on factors that may impede the adoption of sustainable practices.

This study aims to identify internal and external factors that limit the application of environmental sustainability in the Egyptian hotel industry, arguing that a closer look into these barriers will help understand the real causes, as such barriers remain unexplored (Fathy, 2019). An internal issue that presents a significant challenge is

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