

ECO FRIENDLY PRACTICES IN LUXURY HOTELS: THE LEBANESE CASE

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Abstract

This study was designed to analyze the environmental practices in luxury hotels in Beirut. We try to understand if these hotels are aware of the importance of environmental issues, how they are translating this awareness into day to day operations and if they are reinforcing their marketing strategy with environmental programs. The data were collected by means of questionnaire and interviews. The study found that despite the absence of rules and policies mandating environmental practices, many hotels took the initiative to develop ecological programs. However, these programs are implemented mainly to reduce costs rather than protecting the environment and increasing employees and customers' awareness. Thus. It is important to develop an integrated system of policy and practice that involves all parties concerned with the tourism industry to protect the environment and ensure its sustainability.

Keywords: *hotel industry, environmental practices, energy conservation, water conservation, waste management, green marketing.*

1. Introduction

Lebanon is located on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea surrounded by Syria to the north & east and Israel to the south. Its total area reaches 10452 km². It extends over 210 km in length and 50 km in width. Despite its small size, the country's territory is very rich and diverse. Its diverse atmosphere and ancient history make it an important destination for tourism in the Middle East. It offers multiple attractions from ancient roman ruins, well preserved castles, limestone caves, historic Churches and Mosques, beautiful beaches nestled in the Mediterranean Sea, world renowned Lebanese cuisine, nonstop nightlife and discotheques to mountain ski resorts. In Lebanon, as in most of the developing countries in the world, tourism is one of the main engines of growth in the economy and contributors to its development. The Lebanese economy is characterized by the low weight of the industrial and agricultural sectors which represented only 27% of the GDP in 2002 while the service sector shows a strong dynamism and represents 73%. Economic activity is concentrated in the capital and its surroundings as well as in the city of Tripoli in northern Lebanon (Verdeil, Faour, & Velut, 2007). Tourism is a major source of income and employment. Today, the tourism sector accounts for 19.4% of GDP far exceeding the world average with a provision of 30.6% of GDP in 2026. The number of international arrivals surpassed 1.9 million in 2017 (The World Tourism Organization). The hotel industry play an important role in tourism sector as it is a vital and fundamental need of human travelling. Tourists need an accommodation facilities to rest and refresh along their travel. Lebanon offers a wide variety of accommodation facilities from 5 star luxury hotels to modest guest houses and rooms. The capital Beirut offers 26% of total available hotels. 70% of 5 star hotels and 43% of 4 star hotels are located in Beirut.

Nowadays, the growing international awareness about environmental problems and climate change are forcing companies to take part of this concern and integrate environmental issues into business strategy and activities (e.g. Nidumolu et al., 2009). Hotels are not an exception. Environmental sustainability has become as well an important issue within this industry (Han and Yoon, 2015). Recently, customers are more aware about environmental responsibility which is

affecting their behavior when making purchasing decisions (Hillary et al., 2001; Segarra-Oña et al., 2012), influencing their reasons for travelling and the final choice of destination and service provider (Sánchez-Ollero et al., 2012).

The aim of this work is to analyze the environmental practices in luxury hotels in Beirut. We try to understand if these hotels are aware of the importance of environmental issues and how they are translating this awareness into day to day operations. The paper is structured as follow: section two presents a literature review, the third provides a detailed description of the empirical methods, the fourth presents the results and the final section concludes.

2. Literature review

2.1. Green hotels and eco-friendly practices

Jackson (2010) define green lodging as a place where efforts and activities are concentrated to eliminate the negative environmental externalities associated with hotel operations. He considers that these negative externalities manifest themselves in energy usage, water usage, waste generation and air quality degradation (Jackson, 2010). The Green Hotel Association (2014) defines green hotels as “environmentally friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programs that save water, save energy, and reduce solid waste—while saving money—to help protect our one and only earth” (The Green Hotels Association, 2014, para. 8). This green commitment can be implemented through many ways like recycling waste, towel and linen reuse programs, low-flow faucets and shower-heads, water-free urinals, refillable bathroom amenities, automatic climate control and light sensors, and natural ventilation (Rahman & Reynolds, 2016). Due to the growing international awareness of environmental concerns and the significant impact of the hotel industry that has on the environment caused by the huge consumption of energy, water and non-durable products, many hotel chains have adapted eco-friendly practices. This green commitment has in its turn many advantages such as cost savings, competitive advantage, ecological responsibility, legitimization, media recognition, risk minimization, employee organizational commitment, public scrutiny, enhanced investor relations, social benefit, local community support, marketing benefits, and improved operational efficiency (Rahman & Reynolds, 2016).

2.2. Green Initiatives & Practices Worldwide

With the increase awareness of the ecological issues worldwide, many governments started to take actions toward environmental protection and conservation. The first Earth Summit took place in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972. 113 nations attended the summit that had addressed the environmental effects of industrialization. The conference produced some successes, including the 26 principles of the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, an Action Plan for the Human Environment and an Environment Fund. Another significant outcome was the establishment of UNEP (United Nations Environment Program), designed to promote environmental practices across the globe. The European Union established policies and rules for waste recycling and water and air pollution by requiring minimum standards and legal infrastructures. In addition, they included environmental issues into Amsterdam Protocol to enhance the prevention of ecological pollution. Moreover, the Fifth Environmental Action Program, which was established for the 1993-2000 period, had obliged all sectors (industrial, energy, tourism, transportation and agriculture) to include environmental dimension in all their works carried in the European Union (Reynolds, 2013). Many companies in the service sector have adopted targeted environmental programs to do something physically to protect our planet namely McDonalds; Cathay Pacific Airways; and the 10 international hotel companies that founded the

International Hotel Environment Initiative (IHEI), including the Inter-Continental, Ramada, Forte, Accor, Hilton International, Holiday Inn Worldwide, and the Marriott. Energy, water and waste management programs are examples of adopted practices by these hotels and other hotel companies that can protect the environment (Chan & Wong, 2006).

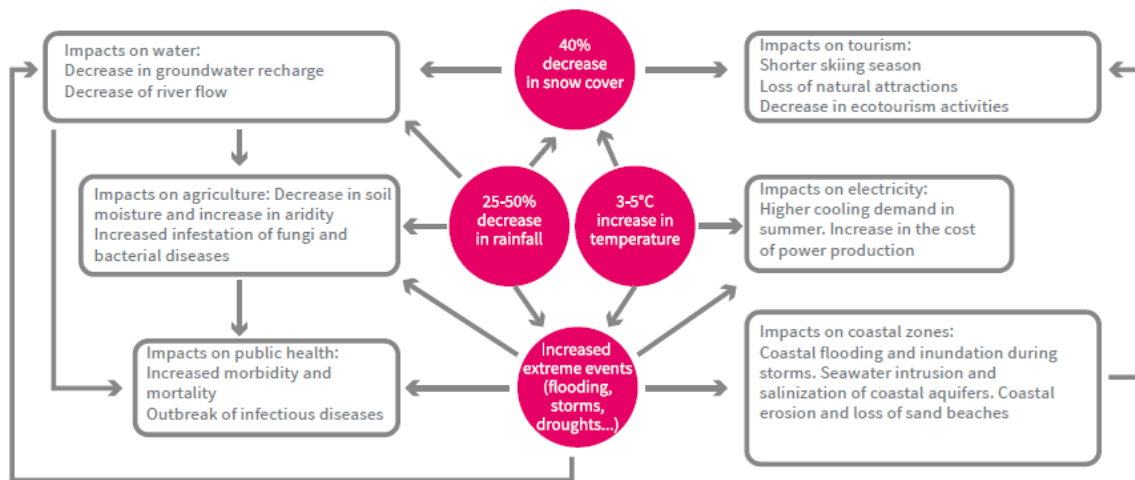
2.3. Customer green awareness

Recently, customers are becoming more aware of environmental issues. They started to require green products and services. Previous works confirmed that customers are valuing positively green initiatives by the hotel industry. This positive attitude toward green practices is displayed by their attitude, revisit intention, spreading positive word of mouth and willingness to pay more (Han et al. 2011). Many studies confirmed that customers are willing to pay premium prices in green hotels (Cook et al., 1992; Kang et al. 2012; Kuminoff *et al.* 2010). Bohdanowicz (2003) showed that 75% of hotel guests support and prefer eco-labeled hotels, with 25% willing to pay a premium. Kim et al. (2016) showed that green initiatives have a positive impact on customer's overall attitudes and their willingness to pay a price premium. In general, eco-friendly products are from a lesser quality, less luxury and more expensive. Despite this, environmentally concerned customers are ready to sacrifice for green initiatives and embrace green products (Rahman and Reynolds, 2016).

2.4. Climate change & its effect on tourism activity in Lebanon

As mentioned earlier, the Lebanese economy is heavily dependent on tourism activity. Many of these activities are dependent on climate conditions. The disrespect of the environment has caused a climate change that will lead to serious problems for the Lebanese environment and economy. Figure 1 shows the impacts of climate change on Lebanon. Despite the Lebanese share of the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is just 0.07%, climate changes have already shown their effects in Lebanon. The temperature has risen to exceed 40 ° C in summer 2017. Winter sport destinations suffered from the rise of temperatures too, which has caused in delaying ski season opening and ending it sooner. In 2010, a well-known ski destination in Lebanon assumed losses of up to 20 million dollars for the operators of various commercial enterprises. Moreover, the climate change will affect the sea level that will submerge low-lying beach areas and islands. Rising temperatures and extreme heat waves will reduce the attraction toward Lebanese mountains. In addition, the city tours could also be affected by higher temperatures and extreme weather events which would cause according losses. As part of the tourism industry, tourist accommodations consume high energy and substantial emissions, which are generated by heating, air conditioning, hot water, lighting, and by budgetary and technical equipment. Moreover, food and beverages contribute to the GHGs because they require transportation to be delivered. Furthermore, meals preparations and the related use of energy contribute to emissions. Therefore, hotels are victims and perpetrators of climate change at the same time. For instance, they should be involved in protecting the environment to save their business in the long term. Environmental initiatives by a company may be a response to external mandatory requirement or internal voluntary measures. Unfortunately, there is no law in Lebanon forcing the hotel industry to take environmental initiatives. Despite the international awareness of environmental concerns and the trend to becoming more involved in green initiatives, the nature and extent of hotels commitment

to environmental issues in Lebanon is largely unknown. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine the situation in Lebanese hotels and give information on its environmental practices.



- *Figure 1: impacts and vulnerabilities from climate change on Lebanon. Source: “How to create value from climate change: A guide for your company in Lebanon”, European Commission & Lebanon Climate Act, 2017.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Measures

The study was designed as a survey research combining qualitative and quantitative data. The questionnaire, representing the quantitative data, was developed from literature review works using similar measures (Han, et al., 2009; García-Pozo, et al., 2013; Sánchez-Ollero, et al., 2014; Millar & Baloglu, 2011; Baker, et al., 2014). The questionnaire was checked by experts working within the hospitality field. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Each section included fourteen variables. Respondents were asked to specify if these variables were available and applicable at the hotel in the first section. The remaining section were devoted to study professional’s perception of their customer’s vision about green practices. Respondents were asked to identify the eco-friendly variables that: are important for customer choice in the second section, increase their willingness to pay (WTP) in the third one, and increase a positive word of mouth (WOM) in the last one. The qualitative data were collected through interviews with hotel managers. The objective of the questions were to collect general information about the hotel and understand professional’s vision about the environmental issue.

3.2. Data collection

The sample in this study was defined as upscale hotels that includes 4 star hotels and 5 star hotels located in central Beirut. To determine the sampling frame, we checked the list of hotels on beirut-hotel.com and Expedia.com. The total sample included 78 hotels consisted of 26 five star hotel and 52 four star hotel. We contacted these properties by phone to ask for a meeting to conduct the interview and fill the questionnaire face to face. It was difficult to obtain cooperation from the management especially those working in 4 star hotels. At the end, we were able to conduct 35 interviews.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. General demographics and tourism activity

Beirut is the capital and the largest city of Lebanon. The city plays a central role in the Lebanese economy that is service-oriented with the main growth sectors being banking and tourism. According to Bankmed report in January 2018, the number of tourists visiting Lebanon reached 1,714,812 in the first eleven months of 2017. 588,706 arrivals were European, 301,604 were American arrivals, 74,750 and 125,097 arrivals from Oceania and Asia, and 523,930 were Arab arrivals. Central Beirut locate almost 100 hotels. Ernst & Young's benchmark survey indicated that hotel occupancy rate in Beirut was 65.8% in the first ten months of 2017 with USD 154 as an average room rate and USD 101 as revenue per available hotel room (Bankmed report, 2018). According to the survey, 4 and five star hotels in Beirut were amongst the best performers in the MENA¹ region. The difference between 5 and 4 star hotels in Lebanon is presented in additional facilities offered by five-star hotel like gym, pool, restaurants and bar, special amenities, room and bed size and some additional services like butler service and guest relation (Ministry of Tourism, Lebanon, 2016).

4.2. Results Description & Numbers

The final sample obtained with valid answers were 35 questionnaires, 60% represents 5 star hotels.

❖ Implementation of green practices

The first section of the questionnaire consisted of identifying to what extent hotels are going green, in other words what are the green practices applicable in these hotels. Results show that all practices can be found at least in one hotel except eco-guest program that is consisting of rewarding customers of being green. The table below shows the percentage of each variable and its applicability in the hotels. When observing the table, we can notice that most hotels are using keycards, LED lights, linen and towels reuse program and water control usage. These variables contribute to lower costs which is consistent with previous studies that indicates that tourism industry is only interested in ecofriendly activities when it reduces operating costs (Akis, 2001). 31, 4% of hotels have answered that they have recycle bins in lobby. In reality, they have explained that the recycle bins are available in the back offices and many of the respondents indicated that they follow some rules such as consuming a specific number of papers per month and not printing papers unless it is really important. It is essential to mention that despite the limited number of hotels recycling their papers, it is still a great initiative by these hotels because in Lebanon recycling centers are limited and municipalities doesn't offer any recycling programs. Also, those managers responding by yes concerning recycling old beds and mattresses have explained that they are not recycling them but giving up these assets for charities.

Green Variable	Available at the hotel (%)	
	Yes	No
Environmental certification	22.9	77.1
Recycle bin in lobby	31.4	68.6
Recycle bin in guest rooms	11.4	88.6
Refillable shampoo dispenser	5.7	94.3
Occupancy sensor	48.6	51.4

¹ Middle East and North Africa Region

Keycard to turn power to the room on and off	97.1	2.9
Energy efficient light bulbs in guest rooms	88.6	11.4
Linen and towels reuse program	71.4	28.6
Hotel is certified as a green hotel	11.4	88.6
Water control usage	60	40
Recycling old beds and mattresses	45.7	54.3
Eco-friendly guest programs	0	100
Eco friendly training for managers and staff	60	40
Green purchasing policy	11.4	88.6

▪ *Table 1: The percentage of hotels applying or not each of the green practices*

We also calculated the level of greenish of each hotel (how many practices are available in each hotel separately). Because of information confidentiality, we cannot name the hotels with their respective percentage, the table below show the margin of engagement of Lebanese hotels in green practices. Half of the hotels are below the average (less than 7 green practices), and almost half of the rest are engaged in 7 green initiatives. With comparison with table 1, we can conclude that almost all hotels are including these green initiatives into practice because they help reducing cost. This suggestion is empowered by the fact that the majority of hotels engaged with more than 7 practices (28.5%) have an environmental certification. The repartition of hotels based on the number of environmental practices is shown below in table2.

Number of practices	Engagement of hotels in green practices (%)
Less than 7 practices	51.4
7 practices	20.1
Above 7 practices	28.5

▪ *Table 2: The repartition of hotels based on number of environmental engagement.*

❖ *Practices important for hotel choice, WTP & WOM*

The second, third and fourth part of the study was intended to understand hotel managers' perception of their customers concerning environmental practices. Table 3 shows managers' judgment about the importance of green practices for hotel choice and their impact on positive word of mouth. Hotel managers agreed in the third part of the questionnaire that none of the green practices might increase customers' willingness to pay. Almost all managers had the same explanation concerning the mentality of the majority of customers and potential client. More than 60% of hotels 'customers are from Arab countries. Managers suggested that they don't have enough environmental education and awareness. Concerning European and other tourists that may have environmental awareness, managers' considered that it won't affect their willingness to pay more, reversely they may want to pay less. The small positive percentages shown in table 3 are not always referred to western tourists. While environmental certification, recycling bins, LED lights and green hotel certification are important for aware tourist of environmental issues when choosing a hotel, linen and towels reuse program has another explanation for its importance. According to some managers, there are a lot of guests that ask not changing their linen and towels for hygiene purposes. They think that using the same linen and towels is better than changing different ones used by many others. Furthermore, some managers agreed that actions made for green issues may contribute to positive word of mouth by many tourists, especially by non-Arab clients. This finding is consistent with Dief & Font (2010) results where Western European markets stood out as the most powerful predictor of green marketing strategies. It is also consistent with Ayuso's (2006)

suggestion that customers' environmental concerns depend to a great extent on their nationality, with Western Europeans being more willing to collaborate in environmental initiatives (Ayuso, 2006).

Green Variable	Important for customer choice (%)		Increase positive word of mouth (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Environmental certification	22.8	77.2	11.4	88.6
Recycle bin in lobby	20	80	17.1	82.9
Recycle bin in guest rooms	2.8	97.2	17.1	82.9
Refillable shampoo dispenser	2.8	97.2	5.7	94.3
Occupancy sensor	2.8	97.2	20	80
Keycard to turn power to the room on and off	31.4	68.6	14.2	85.8
Energy efficient light bulbs in guest rooms	17.14	82.86	14.2	85.8
Linen and towels reuse program	25.7	74.3	22.8	77.2
Hotel is certified as a green hotel	14.2	85.8	14.2	85.8
Water control usage	17.1	82.9	11.4	88.6
Recycling old beds and mattresses	11.4	88.6	11.4	88.6
Eco-friendly guest programs	11.4	88.6	8.5	91.5
Eco friendly training for managers and staff	17.1	82.9	11.4	88.6
Green purchasing policy	11.4	88.6	8.5	91.5

Table 3: The percentage of importance for customer choice of each green variable and its effect on the positive word of mouth based on hotel managers' perception.

❖ Green practices' effect on the hotel

Whether the purpose of implementing environmental practices is to save the environment or reduce cost, many hotels are trying to incorporate green initiatives within the property. Despite the lack of society's environmental awareness and government regulations and laws, some hotels took the initiative to develop ecological programs to play a role in ecological protection. Radisson Blu Martinez Beirut is the first hotel in Lebanon to be designated with "Green Key" Certificate by achieving full environmental certification for environmental conservation. The hotel fulfilled the majority of requirements to obtain this certification that includes: Environmental Management, Staff Involvement, Guest Information, Water and Energy Consumption, Washing and Cleaning, Waste, Food and Beverage, Indoor Environment, Parks and Parking Areas, and Green Activities. Hilton Beirut has succeeded to achieve \$253 000 in cumulative savings in 2015 for implementing their "Travel with Purpose" program. The companies' sustainability initiatives in Beirut include: community service represented by donations and volunteer work, energy and water saving projects and recycling. To accomplish their environmental goals, they have replaced four generators with

newer, more efficient models that contributed to an annual saving of \$230 000. They have installed water saving devices into the faucets and showers in all guestrooms generating an annual saving of \$23,000. Moreover, they were able to recycle around 2,450 kilograms of paper and 460 kilograms of plastic. Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts aims to reduce and optimize its consumption through the use of basic measures, such as energy efficient lighting, water consumption reduction and better management of waste and chemical use. The hotel commitment goes beyond environmental and employee sustainability, to also encompass social sustainability. They support local and international charities, support local products and handicrafts, encourage team members to volunteer and implement donation schemes. In addition to Movenpick’s program, Rotana’s Earth Program include food strategies related to decreasing the quantity of food waste and donate the excess food to charities. Intercontinental Hotel Group (IHG) also developed its Green Engage Program to reduce waste, develop recycling strategies and increase donation to charities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, few hotels are using green practices in their marketing advertising (see table 4). The reason given was mentioned earlier: “Our guests don’t care about environmental issues and it is not important to waste money and time for campaigns that don’t generate profit”. Contrariwise, the majority of hotel managers consider that implementing green practices contribute to a better image of the hotel (see table 4). Previous research in marketing and consumer behavior indicated that the image of a firm plays a critical role in buying behaviors (e.g., Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Bloemer and Ruyter, 1998; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Lin et al., 2007; Ryu et al., 2007). So if managers are aware that ecological practices may enhance the hotel image, they should understand that it is important to market these practices to inform the customers about environmental initiatives and gain competitive advantage. In addition, the study of Han et al. (2009) implied that customers who have favorable attitudes toward eco-friendly behaviors in their everyday lives and positive images of green hotels are willing to stay at a green hotel, to recommend it, and to pay more. These results must attract marketers’ attention to consider green practices in their campaigns. Marketers should try to improve their firm’s image on one hand and on the other hand they should enhance people’s green attitudes and awareness.

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Using Green Practices within the Marketing Strategy	.17	.382
Green practices contribute to better image	.83	.382
Luxury experience may be damaged by green practices	.54	.505

▪ *Table 4: Marketing environmental practices and it is influence on hotel image and luxury experience.*

When asking managers about the effect of green practices on the luxury experience their opinion was divided if it is negative or neutral. Half of respondents considers that green practices don’t affect at all the luxury experience, especially that customers are not obliged to implement green initiatives (for example; they have the choice of reusing or not the linen and towels). The other half of managers considers that some of green practices may damage not only the luxury experience but also the hygiene by using refillable shampoo dispensers for example. Biodegradable amenities were also chosen to be not appropriate for a luxury property because of its low quality and cheap aesthetics. Some managers also considered that linen & towel reuse program is not compatible with guests’ expectations of a luxury experience.

5. Conclusion

Throughout the literature, it is clear that all sectors worldwide are becoming more aware of environmental issues and trying to implement green practices. The hotel industry is not an exception. There are many reasons pushing the implementation of environmental protection by the hotel industry such as government regulations and society pressure. On the other hand, cost reduction is also a motivator to implement environmental measures aimed at reducing the consumption of energy, water, and materials. Moreover, hotel managers believe that environmental practices may enhance customer loyalty and the company's public image (Chan & Wong, 2006). An organization can become eco-friendly through two levels: first, value addition process and management systems, second, product level (Prakash, 2002). For instance, a hotel may become green by including green practices in its whole value chain (logistics, operations, marketing, servicing, waste and recycling) or through the corporate social responsibilities (Kapferer, 2010).

5.1. Energy Management

Hotel companies can have large, expensive energy requirements because of the big spaces that require to be heated and cooled properly. However, there are many options for conserving energy. Solar heating or good isolation can help reduce the energy consumption. In addition, simply changing thermostat settings can make a big difference. Like hotels worldwide, Lebanese hotels are also recognizing opportunities to implement energy-efficient projects in space of heating and cooling systems. In almost all hotels, the energy in rooms is turned on/off by using the keycard so when the guest leaves the room, all non-necessary energy appliances shut down. In addition, some hotels participate to the Earth Hour movement by turning off lights for one hour. Linen & Towel Reuse Program is another contributor to energy savings. The majority of Lebanese hotels included tents in guest rooms to give them the choice not changing linen and towels daily. This initiative can indeed save energy, but additional details may enhance energy savings. Changing the temperature from 85 degrees Celsius to 65 degrees Celsius when washing sheets, towels and linens contributed to saving \$2000 in energy costs in the first 3 months at Sheraton Auckland Hotel and Towers without any change in the final result (cleanliness of linens). In addition to reducing energy costs, this project reduced the use of washing chemicals and decreased pollution of the hotel wastewater (Alexander & Kennedy, 2002). Another way of reducing energy consumption is the use of LED lights or fluorescent lamps. It is the easiest way for reducing energy costs as lighting is considered to be one of the largest energy using system in the hotel. The majority of Lebanese hotels have replaced the incandescent lamps in order to save energy. Those who didn't, claimed that the yellow light is essential for a luxury atmosphere. These managers must consider the Sheraton Tacoma Hotel case that has saved \$15,000 with a payback rate of 18 months when they changed the lights to fluorescent lamps (Alexander & Kennedy, 2002).

5.2. Water management

Water is a resource that is still a cost and important stress on the local environment. Due to technological innovation, water is used more efficiently in hotels if applied correctly. It helps hotels to better manage how and when water is being used. Water conservation may be applied in hotel facilities by using low-flow shower heads, faucet aerators and urinal sensors to allow flushing automatically. More than the half of responding managers claimed that water conservation practices are available at their property but it was not clear how and where it is considered. Many managers explained that neglecting water conservation is due to investments' high cost in these

technologies. It is true that investing in eco-friendly technologies might be costly sometimes, but we should not forget that the monetary savings might be much bigger besides the resource savings and the contribution to environmental protection for the long term (Alexander & Kennedy, 2002). La Quinta Inn succeeded to save \$1.50 per room per month when installing low-flow shower heads and aerating faucets in each room. The total cost of this replacement was \$3 250. The annual cost savings for the water conservation came to \$5 244, with a payback of only seven months (Alexander & Kennedy, 2002).

5.3. Materials and waste management

The solid waste of hotels is composed of different materials including paper, food, various metals, plastics, aluminum, and glass. The implementation of a solid waste reduction program in a hotel is a complicated task because of the coordination and cooperation needed among management, employees, and guests. Though, the cost savings and creating a more eco-friendly hotel are encouraging advantages (Alexander & Kennedy, 2002). Solid waste recycling program can be implemented by reducing waste through purchasing recycled content products, donating excess food to local food banks, recycling paper, aluminum & plastic and training employees to increase environmental awareness. These steps were implemented by Westin San Francisco Airport Hotel in 1994. It has contributed to recycle 22 tons of materials and save \$6,000 annually (Alexander & Kennedy, 2002). In Lebanon, it is hard to implement a successful waste management program but it is not impossible. Unfortunately, the government has not issued any environmental legislation mandating hotels to implement environmental programs. Though, some hotels took the initiative to reduce their waste by implementing some simple practices such as not printing emails, using both sides of the paper, recycling papers, donating old bed and mattresses, donating excess food, and using biodegradable amenities. Some hotels claimed that they are planning to reduce paper usage by replacing it with high tech products such as using tablets for restaurant menu and TV for promotions.

Environmental management has become a vital aspect of management in the hotel industry, with an important number of hotels adopting ecological practices in response to the growing concern for sustainable tourism products (Mensah, 2006). Nevertheless, the current findings suggest that hotels in Beirut are far away of being environmental responsible. This is due not only for the mentality of conducting business and lack of awareness but also for the general situation in the country. Although the majority of hotels are implementing energy saving practices, in reality, the purpose of these implementations is cost reduction and not environmental protection. Moreover, when conducting interviews, it was noticed the lack of environmental awareness, the lack of understanding the importance of protecting the environment and the positive results of green practices. In addition, managers' 'perception of customers' awareness is very negative by considering them unaware and don't care about the environment what requires conducting a study to understand their real view about environmental issue and their attitude toward it.

Regardless to the purpose of green practices implementation, results has shown that few practices are applied in almost all studied hotels. These practices should not be confused with "green washing". Jackson (2010) explained that a lodging to be called "green" must concentrate efforts and practices throughout all business and service delivery processes, and should be supported at all managerial and operational levels of lodging organizations, to eliminate the negative impacts of lodging activities on the environment. He defines "green washing" as the manipulation of information by companies to represent themselves as eco-friendly while in reality only some components of their operation adhere to the core principles of the green concept (Jackson, 2010).

It is obvious from the present study that there is a need in Lebanon in general for a system of comprehensive and integrated environmental protection policy and practices. This system must involve all sectors especially the tourism industry. It is important that the government participate in reinforcing such system application by mandating a minimum environmental protection standards in all organizations. It is true that changing traditional ways of operating takes time, but it is important to begin green process by simple steps such as recycling papers and decreasing paper usage, purchasing products with less packages, turning off unnecessary lights and ask guests if they would like their room to be cleaned daily if their stay is longer than one day. Moreover, including environmental trainings for staff is important to increase environmental awareness which may lead to changes in attitudes and behavior toward the environment. Although these steps are simple and less costly than other green approaches, they do make a difference in developing a green hotel.

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