

Exploring the Relationship Between Sustainability, Guest Experience, and Tourism Recovery in Hospitality Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between sustainability practices, guest experience, and tourism recovery in the hospitality industry of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, Philippines. The primary objective is to explore how sustainable operations influence guest satisfaction and contribute to the sector's resilience and recovery in the post-pandemic context. A mixed-method research design was employed to provide a comprehensive analysis. The quantitative component utilized structured questionnaires distributed through printed copies, Google Forms, and social media, targeting stakeholders such as hotel guests, business owners, and procurement managers. Slovin's formula was applied to determine a statistically relevant sample size, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error. The qualitative component involved thematic analysis of stakeholder perspectives to gain deeper insights into motivations and challenges surrounding sustainability.

The study's main findings reveal that integrating sustainable practices—such as eco-friendly operations, energy efficiency, and waste reduction—positively impacts guest satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, these practices enhance business reputation and contribute significantly to long-term recovery and resilience. Technology adoption and supportive government policies emerged as critical enablers of sustainable transformation within the industry. The analysis also highlights the importance of guest-centric strategies, emphasizing that positive guest experiences and environmentally responsible practices go hand-in-hand. The research underscores the vital role of sustainability in driving recovery and competitiveness in the hospitality sector. Businesses that embed sustainability into their operations not only minimize environmental impact but also improve service quality, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. The study offers practical insights for industry stakeholders and policymakers, advocating for a balanced approach that aligns economic goals with environmental and social responsibility. Embracing sustainable practices and prioritizing guest experience will be crucial in ensuring the continued growth and resilience of the hospitality industry in a post-pandemic world.

Keywords: Sustainability, Guest Experience, Tourism Recovery, Hospitality Industry

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector plays a pivotal role in the tourism industry, contributing significantly to job creation and economic growth. Through a broad spectrum of services such as accommodations, dining, and entertainment, the hospitality industry enhances the overall guest experience and serves as an essential driver of local economies (Asante et al., 2021). The interdependence between tourism and hospitality is evident across many nations, where the sector not only contributes to economic development but also supports initiatives for sustainable growth (Neville et al., 2014). In countries like India, for example, the hospitality sector plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable practices that balance economic growth with environmental stewardship (Neville et al., 2014).

Over recent years, sustainability has become increasingly important within the hospitality sector. This shift in focus arises from growing consumer demand for environmentally conscious practices (Abdelmoety et al.,

2022). The integration of sustainability within hospitality operations has created an opportunity for businesses to not only enhance their brand image but also make a significant positive impact on the environment and society (Chuang, 2019). Furthermore, the alignment of sustainable practices with tourism allows businesses to generate both environmental and economic benefits, creating a win-win scenario for all stakeholders involved (Wieselthaler et al., 2001).

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges to the hospitality industry, causing significant revenue losses and operational disruptions (Fiore et al., 2012). Travel restrictions and health protocols reshaped the landscape of the industry, highlighting the critical need for resilience and strategic recovery. In this context, stakeholders in the hospitality sector have been forced to reassess their business models and operational strategies (Fiore et al., 2013). As the world gradually returns to a semblance of normalcy, the sector must adapt to a post-pandemic world by embracing sustainability, environmental responsibility, and an enhanced guest experience, all of which are essential for rebuilding customer trust (Morocho, 2024).

Sustainability in hospitality has evolved beyond eco-friendly practices, now encompassing a holistic approach that includes waste reduction, energy efficiency, and sustainable procurement (Ah-Keng & Loh, 2006). This broader understanding is increasingly attractive to consumers who prefer businesses that prioritize environmental stewardship and social responsibility (Kenji, 2024). Additionally,

incorporating wellness and health initiatives within the hospitality environment enhances not only the well-being of employees and guests but also the overall productivity, improving service quality and customer satisfaction (Rahmah, 2023).

In response to these challenges, innovative strategies and government support have become critical for the hospitality industry's recovery. Collaboration between businesses and policymakers can enhance resilience and facilitate the implementation of sustainable practices (Ballut et al., 2022). Government initiatives, such as financial assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have proven effective in helping these businesses overcome challenges and thrive even in difficult times (Sakiyama et al., 2002).

The rapid adoption of digital solutions has also proven vital in enabling the hospitality industry to adapt to evolving consumer expectations and health regulations (Mitchell et al., 2022). Technology integration improves operational efficiency while enhancing the guest experience, especially as post-pandemic travelers demand greater safety, cleanliness, and personalized service (Mahrous, 2017). As such, embracing digital innovation is a key strategy for businesses looking to meet new consumer demands and foster customer trust.

At the core of the hospitality industry's recovery is the guest experience, which has seen a fundamental shift in expectations. Today, travelers prioritize safety, cleanliness, and personalized interactions, making it necessary for hospitality businesses to adjust their operations accordingly (Kaji & Lewis, 2006). To attract and retain customers, businesses must offer tailored services that address the diverse needs of their clientele, while utilizing digital platforms for real-time interactions and feedback to quickly resolve any issues (Fong et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study is to explore the complex relationships between sustainability, guest experience, and tourism recovery in the Bulacan hospitality sector. By examining how sustainability initiatives contribute to guest satisfaction and the sector's recovery, this research aims to provide valuable insights for businesses navigating the post-pandemic landscape. The study will also evaluate how factors such as business innovation, tailored services, and government regulation.

Significant Relationship between Hospitality and Tourism Recovery and Resilience

Was there a significant relationship between Sustainability in Hospitality and Tourism Recovery and Resilience?

Table 19 Spearman's rho: Significant Relationship between Sustainability in Hospitality and Tourism Recovery and Resilience

Spearman's rho			Tourism Recovery and Resilience		
			Business Performance	Innovation and digitalization	Government Policies
SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT	Sustainable Procurement	Correlation	-0.28	-0.09	-0.07
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	0.13	0.62	0.72
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Accept Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
	Guest and Employee Engagement	Correlation	0.03	0.15	-0.39
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	0.89	0.43	0.03
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Reject Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Significant
	Health and Wellness	Correlation	0.10	-0.16	-0.02
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	0.61	0.41	0.91
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Accept Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 19 Exhibited Spearman's rho, showing a significant relationship between Sustainability in Hospitality and Tourism Recovery and Resilience.

The table displayed the p-value related to the correlation coefficient, indicating the statistical significance of the relationship. A p-value less than 0.05 suggested a significant relationship between Guest and Employee Engagement and Government Policies. Specifically, the correlation coefficient of -0.39 with a p-value of 0.03 revealed a significant

negative relationship. This implied that as Guest and Employee Engagement increased, there may have been a decrease in alignment or influence from Government Policies, or other factors could have been influencing this negative association.

This result suggested that Government Policies might have had less direct impact or been less aligned with increasing Guest and Employee Engagement, possibly due to differing priorities or challenges in the tourism and hospitality sector post-pandemic. It was important to consider the evolving nature of these relationships, as changes in government policies may have further influenced engagement strategies and vice versa. Hall et al. further elaborated on the ethical dimensions of resilience, indicating that neoliberal policies may have prioritized individual responsibility over collective engagement strategies, which could have led to a disconnect between government initiatives and industry needs (Hall et al., 2022).

Significant Relationship between Tourism Recovery and Resilience and Guest Experience and Personalization

Was there a significant relationship between Tourism Recovery and Resilience and Guest Experience and Personalization?

Table 20 Spearman's rho: Significant Relationship between Tourism Recovery and Resilience and Guest Experience and Personalization

Spearman's rho			Guest Experience and Personalization		
TOURISM RECOVERY	Business Performance	Correlation	Service Adaptation Response Time	Social Media and Review Sentiments	Loyalty Program Engagement
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	-0.25 0.18	0.11 0.57	0.07 0.73
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Accept Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
	Innovation and Digitalization	Correlation	-0.09	0.34	-0.18
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	0.63	0.07	0.34
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Accept Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
	Government Policies	Correlation	-0.06	-0.01	-0.16
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	0.76	0.95	0.41
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Accept Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

****Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Table 20 exhibited Spearman's rho, showing no significant relationship between Sustainability in Hospitality and Tourism Recovery and Resilience.

The data revealed that there was no significant relationship between Tourism Recovery and Resilience and the factors of Service Adaptation Response Time, social media and Review Sentiments, and Loyalty Program Engagement. Specifically, the correlation coefficients for Business Performance, Innovation and Digitalization, and Government Policies in relation to the various dimensions of Guest Experience and Personalization all produced p-values greater than 0.05, suggesting that these relationships were not statistically significant.

For example, in the Business Performance cluster, the correlations for the three dimensions ranged from -0.25 to 0.11, with p-values of 0.18, 0.57, and 0.73, respectively, all indicating that there was no significant association. Similarly, in the Innovation and Digitalization and Government Policies clusters, the correlation coefficients also failed to reach statistical significance, with p-values ranging from 0.07 to 0.95. These results implied that, while there may have been some correlations between Tourism Recovery and Resilience and Guest Experience and Personalization, they did not meet the threshold for significance, highlighting that these factors may not have had a strong or direct impact on one another in the current context. This aligned with the findings of other studies that emphasized the importance of experiential marketing and customer engagement in enhancing loyalty within the tourism sector, yet did not establish a direct link to recovery and resilience metrics (Girard, 2024; Rather & Sharma, 2017).

Significant Relationship between Sustainability in Hospitality and Guest Experience and Personalization

Was there a significant relationship between Sustainability in Hospitality and Guest Experience and Personalization?

Table 21 Spearman's rho: Significant Relationship between Sustainability in Hospitality and Guest Experience and Personalization

Spearman's rho			Guest Experience and Personalization		
SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT	Sustainable Procurement	Correlation	Service Adaptation Response Time	Social Media and Review Sentiments	Loyalty Program Engagement
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	0.20 0.28	-0.11 0.56	0.07 0.73
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Accept Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
	Guest and Employee Engagement	Correlation	-0.28	-0.05	-0.18
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	0.14	0.78	0.34
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Accept Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
	Health and Wellness	Correlation	0.18	0.08	0.48
		Sig. (2 Tailed)	0.34	0.67	0.01
		Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho	Reject Ho
		Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Significant

****Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Table 21 exhibited Spearman's rho, showing the significant relationship between Sustainability in Hospitality and Guest Experience and Personalization. The table presented correlation coefficients and corresponding p-values for different sustainability aspects and their influence on Guest Experience and Personalization. In the Sustainable Procurement cluster, the correlation coefficients for Service Adaptation Response Time (0.20), Social Media and Review Sentiments (-0.11), and Loyalty Program Engagement (0.07) showed p-values of 0.28, 0.56, and 0.73, respectively. These p-values exceeded the 0.05 significance threshold, indicating no statistically significant relationship between Sustainable Procurement and the different dimensions of Guest Experience and Personalization. For the Guest and Employee Engagement cluster, the correlations between Sustainability and Guest Experience dimensions were also not significant. The correlation coefficients ranged from -0.28 to -0.18, with corresponding p-values of 0.14, 0.78, and 0.34, suggesting that no meaningful connection existed. However, in the Health and Wellness cluster, there was a significant relationship between Health and Wellness and Loyalty Program Engagement. The correlation coefficient of 0.48, with a p-value of 0.01, indicated a positive and significant relationship at the 0.05 level. This result suggested that wellness initiatives positively influenced guest loyalty, reinforcing the importance of health and wellness offerings in enhancing the overall guest experience. In conclusion, the table highlighted that most sustainability factors, including Sustainable Procurement and Guest and Employee Engagement, did not show significant relationships with Guest Experience and Personalization. However, Health and Wellness.

II. Research Design

The study employed a mixed-method research design to analyze the relationships between sustainability practices, guest experience, and tourism recovery within the hospitality industry. The qualitative component explored stakeholder perceptions and motivations, while the quantitative component measured the impact of sustainability practices on guest satisfaction and recovery.

III. Population and Sample

The target population comprised various stakeholders within the hospitality industry in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan. A purposive sampling approach was used to select participants who had relevant knowledge and experience in sustainability, guest experience, and tourism recovery. The sample size was calculated using Slovin's Formula to ensure statistical relevance with a 95% confidence level and a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error. The target sample size ranged between 295 and 590 respondents, with different categories (e.g., procurement managers, hotel guests, business owners) contributing to the data collection.

IV. Research Instrument

This study employed a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool to explore stakeholder perceptions and experiences within the hospitality industry, focusing on sustainability practices, guest experience, and tourism recovery. The questionnaire was developed in consultation with subject matter experts in hospitality and tourism, who reviewed it for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. Their insights ensured that all key dimensions were thoroughly addressed.

The instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale format, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with specific statements: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. This scale was chosen for its established effectiveness in capturing attitudes and perceptions, supported by scholars such as Bowling (2005), Grawitch et al. (2006), Dunleavy et al. (2021), and Nieuwenhuizen (2023). Its use enhanced the instrument's reliability and alignment with best practices in social science research.

The questionnaire was divided into clusters, each addressing different aspects of the study: sustainability, guest experience, and tourism recovery. To ensure the tool's clarity and validity, a pre-test was conducted with a minimum of 3–5 stakeholders from the hospitality sector. Their feedback informed necessary revisions to improve item phrasing and relevance.

Importantly, the instrument collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Closed-ended items allowed for statistical analysis, while open-ended responses captured deeper insights into stakeholder views. This dual

approach enabled a comprehensive examination of interrelationships among key themes and supported robust conclusions. Data gathered were analyzed using appropriate statistical and thematic analysis methods, as recommended by Barry et al. (2020). The revised questionnaire ultimately proved effective in measuring stakeholder perceptions, contributing valuable insights into sustainability and recovery efforts in the hospitality industry.

V. Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers used multiple methods to collect data, such as printed questionnaires, Google Forms, and social media links, to ensure wide participation and overcome potential access issues. Efforts were made to ensure accessibility and convenience for participants.

VI. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards, ensuring informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality of respondents' information. Transparency and honesty were emphasized in reporting the study's findings.

VII. Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The responses were coded and analyzed using various statistical methods like descriptive statistics, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), correlation, regression analysis, and ANOVA to explore relationships and differences across groups.

The qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify key themes that provided deeper insights into stakeholders' perceptions.

Results were interpreted in light of their search questions, providing a comprehensive understanding of sustainability practices' impact on guest experience and tourism recovery.

This approach ensured that both qualitative and quantitative data contributed to a robust analysis of the research questions, and the study adhered to established ethical standards to ensure data integrity and participant protection.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study delves into the intricate relationships between sustainability, guest experience, and tourism recovery within the hospitality industry, particularly in Bulacan, Philippines. The findings emphasize the pivotal role of sustainability in the industry's path to recovery from the pandemic, highlighting the need for a multifaceted approach that prioritizes sustainability and guest experience. The study underscores the significance of integrating sustainable operations and socially responsible initiatives into hospitality businesses, emphasizing the potential for businesses to minimize their environmental footprint, enhance their reputation, and drive guest loyalty through the adoption of eco-friendly practices. Furthermore, the research sheds light on the vital role of technology and government policies as catalysts for the industry's transition towards sustainability, emphasizing the importance of innovative solutions and regulatory frameworks in navigating the complexities of a post-pandemic world. It also provides valuable insights for hospitality stakeholders seeking to embed sustainability into their operations, emphasizing the potential for businesses to drive growth, enhance competitiveness, and contribute to a more environmentally conscious tourism industry by prioritizing guest experience and embracing sustainable practices. Ultimately, the study highlights the importance of sustainability as a cornerstone of long-term success in the hospitality industry, emphasizing that embracing sustainable practices and prioritizing guest experience will be critical in ensuring businesses' resilience, competitiveness, and continued growth in a post-pandemic world.

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