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Eshun, Gabriel; Appiah, Divine Odame

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Greening Hotels in Africa: Emerging Perspectives from Ghana

Gabriel Eshun[1], Divine Odame Appiah[2]

Abstract: This paper unravels emerging perspectives on the concept of greening in selected hotels in the Kumasi metropolis in Ghana. The study employed mixed-methodology by purposively selected ten highly rated hotels in the Kumasi metropolis in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Eight interviews were conducted with managers of these hotels; 40 semi-structured questionnaires were administered to employees and 50 semi-structured questionnaires were administered to customers. Descriptive statistics was employed with the aid of the tools in SPSS version 21 to analyse the quantitative data collected, and the qualitative data were analysed thematically. The study revealed that all the participating hotels engaged in some form of basic level of greening, eco-certification programs were however, unavailable. The study illuminates the barriers and opportunities associated with greening in the hospitality industry in Ghana.

Keywords: Greening hotels; Reduce; Reuse; Recycle; Ghana; Africa

JEL Classification: Z32; O55

1 Introduction

This section describes background of the study, problem statement, research gap, contribution of the paper and shows how the rest of the paper is organised. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2011), hospitality is a major global growth industry with some 12.7 million hotel rooms around the world; 4.9 million in the USA and 3.9 million in Europe. Ghana has around 1,729 hotel establishments (Akyeampong and Asiedu, 2008). The term 'greening' has developed a popular narrative in tourism over the past years. However, the basis of this concept can be seen in other environmental management concepts (Cespedes-Lorente et al., 2003; Haalandand & Aas, 2010). The greening concept falls under the rubric of the popular concept of sustainability, thus it helps to narrow the tortuous concept of sustainability (Pennisi, 2010; Eshun, 2011). Fennell (2008), adds that the core of greening is the implementation of the concepts of reuse, recycle and reduce. These aforementioned concepts are often referred to as the 3Rs of sustainability. To Mensah (2007), green hotels are developed by putting in place equipment and systems to ensure energy and water efficiency, recycling of waste, low carbon emissions and optimum use of local products. In the quest for achieving hotel greening, visitors are encouraged to reuse towels, reduce their energy use by turning off switches when not in use, hotels are encouraged to use water wisely and use energy efficient products among others (Scott et al., 2010).

Hotels have been identified as one major contributor to the negative impacts on the environment on the global scale. In recent times, hotels have been seen to be generating lots of waste within the environment in which they operate. It has therefore become a necessity for hotels to get involved in issues of greening towards a win-win impact (Joyner & Payne, 2002). Currently, issues of greening in hotels include; the status of the selected hotels in reference to greening; eco-certification programmes,

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[1] KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana and University of Johannesburg, School of Tourism and Hospitality, South Africa, E-mail: gabriel_eshun_knust@yahoo.co.uk.
[2] 2KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana, E-mail: dodameappiah@yahoo.com.

challenges posed to hotels in pursuing green practices and the cooperation of customers in achieving greening goals in hotels (Haalandand & Aas, 2010). However, research on the concepts of reuse, reduce and recycle with particular reference to issues of waste, water and energy within the hospitability sector is more prominent in South Africa (Lanjewar, 2015). For instance, Booyens and Rogerson (2016) in their research at Western Cape in South Africa, indicated that there is a widespread implementation of both innovation and environmental practices by tourism enterprises in the country. In Ghana, the Accra metropolis and Tamale metropolis have received research attention on the nexus of environmental management and hotel management (Mensah, 2007). However, Kumasi metropolis with the highest number of hotels after Accra has yet to receive similar research attention.

Greening in the hospitality sector is often positioned as an *avant-garde* and burdensome activity by some hotels in Africa, although greening presents opportunities for the hospitality sector (Kong et al., 2001). Jackson (2010), urges that future studies are encouraged to explore barriers to implementation of green practices in hotels, lodging managers' and consumers' attitudes toward green practices in the lodging industry. As a consequence, this paper unravels eco-practices of some selected hotels within the Kumasi metropolis and the case of how customers who patronise these hotels perceive greening practices. The study revealed that all the participating hotels engaged in some form of basic level of greening, eco-certification programs were however, unavailable. The study recommends for the packaging of waste food into animal feed.

The study is structured in the following manner. Section 2 discusses theoretical and empirical literature on the green status of hotels worldwide. Section 3 provides theory and empirical work on the nexus of tourism and greening hotels whereas section 4 shows the research methodology which includes details on the study area, sampling techniques, analysis and interpretation of the results. Section 5, provides the results and discussion, with particular attention to participation in green practices, cooperation of customers in hotel greening practices and barriers in going green in the selected hotels. Section 6, concludes the study whilst section 7 lists all the used references in full.

2. The Green Status of Hotels Worldwide— Theoretical and Empirical Review

To Knowles et al. (1999), hotels as a component of the tourism industry can act to reduce their environmental impacts, and collectively make a substantial contribution to improving the quality of the environment. Yu et al. (2017) aver that there are increasing numbers of customers who consider various environmental issues and are starting to seek and buy eco-friendly products. Associations like the Green Hotels Association founded in 1993, Green Seal in the US, Environmental Choice in Canada, and Green Management in Practice (GMIP) in Norway, have led hotels to increase their interest in environmental issues (Zhang & Liu, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2012). Such interest around the globe has led to the branding of the hotel type called the 'green hotel'. To Chen and Chen (2012), a green hotel is a hotel which provides both facilities and services with the idea of environmental protection and stewardship. Green Hotels Association also consider a green hotel as, a hotel which saves water and energy in a constructive manner and reduces solid wastes to maintain our environment (Fennell, 2008).

Eco-labelling has also been another issue in the hospitality sector as many countries have started adding eco-labelling systems for green hotels (Kong et al., 2001). Al-Yousfi (2006) states that the United Nations Environment Program sets up an eco-labelling plan to certify and label qualified

hotels, where there are five different labels used to certify hotels *inter alia* waste materials disposal, energy efficiency, hydraulic power management, staff environmental education, environmental guidance, and natural area protection. Another reason for eco-labelling was providing counsel to those hotels which had successfully obtained qualified labels (Zhang & Liu, 2010). Butler (2008) emphasises that, customers in the USA positively continue to demand that hotels build in accordance with standards established by the Green Building Council, where LEED standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) are also the basis of certification for qualifying these green buildings. Butler (2008) argues the presence of government in greening, as their mandate involves environmental stewardship which includes the need to reduce energy use and emissions. There is also the need to encourage the effective way to practice bottom-up approaches to greening where companies are motivated towards making green products which are relatively cheaper, efficient and contribute to customer satisfaction (Griskevicius et al., 2010). The LEED standards according to the Butler (2008) were first promulgated in 2000 and as at August 1, 2007, there were approximately 900 LEED-certified buildings or projects in the United States, and another 8,503 projects having taken the first step in becoming LEED-certified. In the hotel industry, the major hotel brands, including Marriott, Hilton, Fairmont, and Starwood, are launching initiatives and announcing environmental programs that are likely to have sweeping effects on the development and operation of their properties (Butler, 2008). All these trendsetting changes will contribute to promoting the development of green hotels. Butler (2008) also re-emphasises that greening is still new to the hospitality arena and those who get involved now are likely to reap the biggest rewards, because incentives are only awarded to encourage people to take action before it becomes the norm. Hotels actively participating in greening include the Westin Tapei and the Far Eastern Plaza both in Taiwan (Chen & Chen, 2012).

The green building movement is certainly international and the United Kingdom was one of the early pioneers to encourage green building with its Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standards adopted in 1990, and which ultimately provided to some degree a foundation for the US Green Building Council's (USGBC's). Also Australia's Green Star, Canada-LEED, Mexico-LEED, Japan's CASBEE, or European Union standards, governments are thus leading the charge to set up standards. Butler (2008) also speaks on green competition in the USA, as mayors of some states put it up to themselves to go green in terms of development to thus show forth whose state is greener. Butler (2008) documents the declining cost of green design and construction, which was associated with the increased experience in green building. The financial benefits are noted to be in lower energy, waste and water costs, lower environmental and emissions costs, and lower operational and maintenance costs as well as an increased productivity and health. Butler (2008) and Chen and Hsieh (2011) note that greening hotels contribute significantly to improved health of employees and customers, retaining a committed workforce, reduced absenteeism, and increases in perceived productivity, as compared to none greening hotels. Weaver (2015) argues as to whether this issue of sustainability has been empirically investigated, as it appears that the tourism sector's engagement with sustainability is neither broad nor deep. Sustainability as a key issue was propounded onto the agenda of business practice and scholarly research by the World Commission on Economic Development (WCED) which touts sustainability (Fennell, 2008; Honey, 2008; Eshun, 2011).

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3 The Nexus of Tourism and Greening Hotels— Theoretical and Empirical Review

Sustainability seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (McLeish, 2007; Fennell, 2008; Honey, 2008; Eshun, 2011; Millar and Baloglu, 2011; Eshun et al., 2015). Hawkins & Bohdanowicz (2011) summarise the sustainability principles for responsible hospitality under three important themes *inter alia* responsible stewardship of the environment, respect for people and communities, and fairness and transparency. Weaver (2015) cautions that the dominance of mass tourism and attention to their contribution to sustainable development is not just logical and probably inevitable but also desirable as long as "sustainable mass tourism" crystallises into viable and credible "enlightened mass tourism". He therefore emphasises the equivocal relationship that exists between alternative tourism and mass tourism, where he further argues that greening in hotels is not an entirely new concept, but rather one that uses the existing systems of a conventional hotel to achieve environmental sustainability (Figure 1).
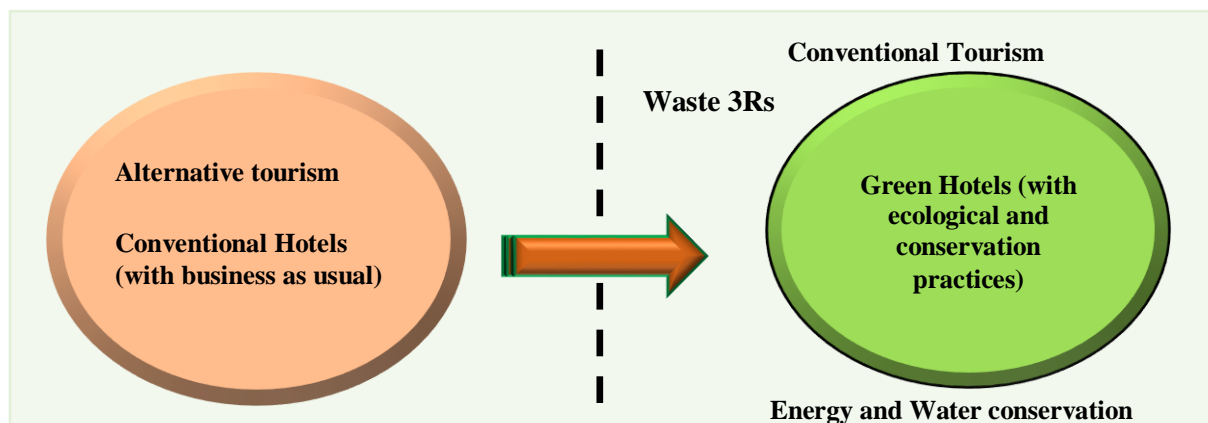

Figure 1. The Nexus of Greening, Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality

Source: Modified from (Fennell 2008, p. 78)

Every conventional hotel is accustomed to reducing their cost of operations in line with the main drive of making profit, and the other goal being to reduce environmental impact, which is accustomed to green hotels. Eshun (2011) argued that green washing may however occur when conventional hotels pretend to operate on the premise of reducing their impacts on the environment by using eco-friendly attributes to advertise in attracting customers. Independently, hotels do not have a substantial deleterious impact on the environment; however, wasteful practices result to redundant operational costs (Zhang & Liu, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2012; Hawkins & Bohdanowicz, 2011). Graci and Kuehnel (2015) add that three key areas of environmental impact i.e. energy, water, and waste are to be considered, and also the concepts of reuse, reduce and recycle should be introduced to mitigate such impacts. Graci and Kuehnel (2015) further pointed out that roughly 30% of waste in hotels can be diverted through reuse and recycling, and that excessive energy use is very expensive. Thus, there have been efforts aimed at adjustments in energy use to reduce cost (Millar & Baloglu, 2011). Popular cost cutting measures in line with the concept of reuse, reduce and recycle according to Graci and Kuehnel (2015) include the use of compact fluorescent lights which saves energy; reuse of linens which saves water, detergent, energy and greenhouse gases; low-flow shower systems which saves water and energy; local products which save transportation costs; installation of green roofs which saves energy; installation of solar heaters or other renewable energy source which saves energy, reducing the amount of customer-generated waste through recycling bins in rooms, encouraging

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customer to reuse towels, and having refillable shampoo dispensers which reduce waste and reassure the reuse of the dispensers. However, the ultimate result of greening actions is a triple win situation, where a company gains profit, and customers get satisfied and the resources of the planet are used sustainably (Lee, 2002).

4 Research Methodology

The Kumasi Metropolis is the most populous area in the Ashanti Region. It has an approximated area of 254km^2 and is located between latitude 6º 00'35'' and 6º0'40''N and longitude 1º0'30'' and 1º 0'35''W. The city was projected to have a population of 1,625,180 in 2006 and growth rate of 5.4 % per annum (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). This study thus investigates how highly rated hotels in Kumasi (3 star and above) are engaged in issues of reuse, reduce and recycle. The research adopted mixed-method approach, which enabled the researchers to have access to a variety of information on the same issue; thereby achieving a higher degree of validity and reliability (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). With this study, purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of the hotels. Purposive sampling technique enabled the researchers to focus on particular characteristics of the hotels being studied in order to address the set objectives (Yin, 2009).
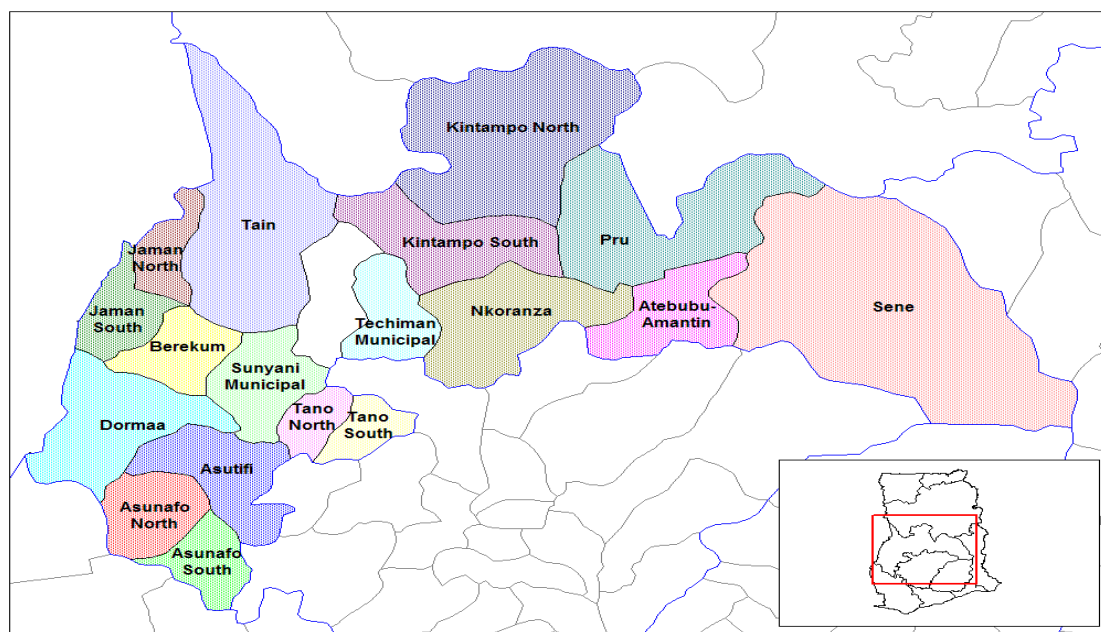
Figure 2. A map showing the study area in a Regional context

Source: (Eshun, 2011)

There were 10 hotels which were selected for the study. Greening is still novel to most hotels in Ghana, and thus most of the managers were not comfortable participating in the research. They thought the research will put their hotels in a bad light, should adverse environmental practiced be identified with their operations. Finally, eight of the managers agreed to participate, when the researchers assured them of anonymity of their hotels and themselves. Also, all the hotels showed initial resistance to involving their clients in the study. As a result, the researchers were only able to through convenience sampling technique select 50 customers, five at each hotel. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to the customers of the selected hotels. The analysis took two forms.

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The quantitative were analysed using descriptive statistics with the aid of the SPSS version 21 to generate tables for the study.

The qualitative data from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and interviews were subjected to thematic explications. Gupta and Levenburg (2003) have explained that thematic analysis is a useful tool for identifying patterns of meaning and experience in qualitative data. The categories of themes that highlight recurrent patterns, representing emergent themes on the nexus of environmental management and hotel management were made evident and were interspersed with the overall discussion in the paper.

5 Results and Discussion

This section shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. It will address the sex, age and level of education for all the respondents as well as the duration for which both employees and managers have stayed working for the selected hotels. The male frequency is 57% and that of the female being 43%. Out of the 8 managers interviewed, six (75.0%) were males. Again, a clear indication that males dominate in the management positions in the selected hotels (Eshun and Tagoe-Darko, 2015). A research conducted earlier by Wallace and Pierce (1996), also showed that jobs generated by tourism fall mainly to the youths of local communities with males dominating. Walpole and Goodwin (2010), however said the sex ratio of visible employment is not necessarily a good indicator of female involvement in an industry. The study showed the age of respondents to range from 20 to over 35 years. Personnel within the age range of 20 to 25 contributed 30.0% to employees within the selected hotels. These personnel normally have secondary level education (Table 1).

Table 1. Sex of Respondents

	Visitors Frequency (%)	Managers Frequency	Employees Frequency	Frequency Total
Male	32 (64.0)	6 (75.0)	19 (47.5)	57 (100)
Female	18 (36.0)	2 (25.0)	21 (52.5)	43 (100)
Total	50 (100)	8 (100)	40 (100)	100 (100)

Source: Authors' Compilation

Students on internships are often found in this age range. The proportion of respondents with primary education were 0.0%, those with secondary level education were 42.5 %, vocational or training level of education of 15.0% and tertiary education 32.5%. The tertiary level of education dominated all the other levels of education. Eshun (2011) opines that the hospitality sector in Ghana, is gaining the appropriate human resource that can contribute to the country, becoming an international tourism destination. Also since the main objective of the study is on greening, experience on greening issues from the respondents was sought, the various duration for which employees have worked in the selected hotels. The highest ranging working period from most employees is 1 year, which registered 20% (see Table 2).

Table 2. Duration of employment for respondents

Employees Duration	Employees Frequency	Employees Valid %	Managers Duration	Managers Frequency	Managers Valid %
4 months	2	5.0	8 months	1	12.5
5 months	2	5.0	1 years	1	12.5
6 months	3	7.5	2 years	1	12.5
7 months	1	2.5	4 years	1	12.5
1 year	6	15.0	5 years	1	12.5
2 years	5	12.5	6 years	1	12.5
3 years	3	7.5	7 years	1	12.5
4 years	6	15.0	8 years	1	12.5
5 years	4	10.0	0	0	0
6 years	3	2.5	0	0	0
8 years	1	2.5	0	0	0
9 years	1	2.5	0	0	0
10 years	2	5.0	0	0	0
N/A	1	2.5	0	0	0
Total	40	100.0	Total	8	100.0

Source: Authors' Compilation

Participation in Green Practices

The study sought to find out reasons for managers embarking on green initiatives in their hotels. The management of most of the hotels were aware of the detrimental effects their conventional methods have been, on the environment in running their establishments (McLeish, 2007). Increasingly, managers and employees see greening as an opportunity for creating more profit from eco-travellers using their facilities (Lynes & Dredge, 2006). Going green, creates a more sustainable environment by conserving natural resources, reduce cost to hoteliers, ensures that the company is viewed positively by guests, reduces pollution, and in all helps maintain the ecological balance on the earth to name a few (Lynes & Dredge, 2006; Jackson, 2010). The study showed that 75% and 95% of managers and employees respectively agreed on the motive of profit creation with 25% and 5% disagreeing with the option. Results from the field also showed that most hotels were privately owned by locals (Table 3).

Table 3. Participation in Green Practices by Hotel Accommodations

Green Activities	Participants		Non-Participation		Total
Compliance with legislation and bye-laws	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**	
Acquisition of environmental permit from the EPA	8	100	-	-	8
Submission of Environmental Impact Statement to EPA	8	100	-	-	8
Submission of Environmental Management Plan to the EPA	8	100	-	-	8
Acquisition of health permit from the SMA	7	87.5	1	12.5	8
Conservation Projects					
Cash or kind contribution towards conservation project	5	62.5	3	37.5	8
Use of energy-efficient equipment and products	7	87.5	1	12.5	8
Installation of water-efficient devices and equipment	8	100	-	-	8
Drying of clothes using sunlight	8	100	-	-	8
Sheets changed upon request only	6	75	2	25	8
Energy saving bulbs in the sleeping area	8	100	-	-	8
Towel Reuse Programs	5	62.5	3	37.5	8
Refillable soap dispensers	6	75	2	25	8
Low flow showerheads	6	75	2	25	8
Turn power off whenever customers leave the room	8	100	-	-	8
Low flow Toilets water	6	75	2	25	8
Eco-labelling and Certification					
Certification by an eco-label or certification scheme	3	37.5	5	62.5	8
Acquisition of ISO 14001 certification	3	37.5	5	62.5	8
Environmental Audit					
Periodic internal environmental audit	6	75	2	25	8
ISO 14010 or external environmental audits	4	50	4	50	8
Environmental Health and Pollution Prevention					
Use of ozone-friendly detergents and equipment	8	100	-	-	8
Enforcement of no smoking in public areas	7	87.5	1	12.5	8
Measures to ensure sanitation and food safety	8	100	-	-	8
Green Marketing					
Modification of operations to reduce environmental impacts	7	87.5	1	12.5	8
Provision of accurate information to guests and the public	8	100	-	-	8
Greening/ Purchase of eco-friendly materials	8	100	-	-	8
Prescription of environmental standards for suppliers	5	62.5	3	37.5	8
Bulk purchasing of supplies	8	100	-	-	8
Support for local communities					
Promotion of local traditional culture	5	62.5	3	37.5	8
Improving lives of local people/giving back to society	6	75	2	25	8
Recycling Projects					
Implementation of recycling programme	2	25	6	75	8
Composting of waste	1	12.5	7	87.5	8
Recycling bins	3	37.5	5	62.5	8
Sorting of waste into paper, glass, plastic etc.	1	12.5	7	87.5	8
Total - Participation and Non-Participation	**197**	**74.6**	**67**	**25.38**	**8**

With the option concerning quality of service, 87.5% and 82.5% of managers and employees respectively agreed that going green was a means of improving their quality of service. A minority of 12.5% and 17.5% of managers and employees respectively disagreed with the option. Majority of employees were unaware of any institution which dealt with environmental management issues in

Ghana, however, managers were aware of the country's Environmental Protection Agency. Nevertheless majority of employees agreed that they were involved in environmental practices such as water and energy conservation in their respective hotels. On reduce, reuse and recycling in greening more employees had a fair idea as to what the concepts entailed, but in giving out ways as to how the concepts could be applied in their hotels majority had no idea.

Also, in Table 3 it shows that all managers know about Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency bye laws and legislation. However, under the acquisition of a health permit one manager did not have the said permit in place. As high as 62.5% of the managers did not practise eco-labelling and have no certification. Mensah (2007) showed the worst performance of green issues in Ghana in the area of eco-labelling and certification and environmental auditing. Most managers were engaged in the issue of environmental health and pollution prevention with just one manager not paying particular attention to the enforcement of no smoking in public areas. This finding re-echoes Mensah's (2007) position that the best performance of the hotels was in the area of environmental health and pollution prevention. Under green purchasing all the managers confirmed they purchased eco-friendly materials and detergents as well as bulk purchasing of supplies. Some also indicated they purchase local products. Increasing optimum use of local products is touted as being useful for local sustainability.

Furthermore, although some of the hotels have recycle bins, they do not enforce recycling of paper, plastics and glass. Similarly, while North American hotel managers have adopted widely sorting of waste, the laws regarding waste sorting are less rigid in Turkey (Nicholls & Kang, 2012). Kuuder et al. (2013) add that recycling is not priority among the hoteliers in Ghana. Specifically, on the water management in the selected hotels, all the managers claimed they had low flow shower heads and dual flush water in place. Water availability in Kumasi metropolis is relatively better compared to Accra metropolis.

Currently, Owabi Dam supplies three million gallons a day to supplement that of the Barekese Dam in the provision of pipe-borne water for residents of Kumasi and its environs (Eshun et al., 2015). Some of the hotels have dug their own wells fixed with pump machines to complement the pipe-borne water. It was also revealed in the study that almost all the hotels use water tanks to store water and none of the hotels was involved in water harvesting or water recycling. Currently, most recycling products are rubber and some metals; this therefore leaves all other recyclable products to be largely ignored. This in turn leads to several recyclable products being seen on dump sites as well as piling on the streets of the country (Kuuder et al., 2013). Looking at the reason why all managers were not able to group their green activities among the green concepts of reduce, reuse and recycle, it could be argued that this is as a result of inadequate attention to green issues in Ghana. Also, with respect to the towel systems in place, the hotel managers claimed to have the towels replaced on request. Furthermore, it was evident from the interviews with some of the hotel managers that the laundry sometimes use the sun to dry towels, aprons, napkins etc. This stance was evident from one of the manager's statement:

The sun is a very useful resource for us. We have been practising some form of greening. We use solar energy, by installing solar panels. Our laundry service also sometimes dry towels and napkins in the sun. However, there are regular reported cases of theft of towels that are dried outside, which sometimes discourage us from continuing with this activity. We are revamping our security system to help curtail these occurrences (Manager, Fieldwork, 2015).

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Cooperation of Customers in Hotel Greening Practices

Ashley *et al* (2006) showed a reduction in the incidence rates of Traveller's Diarrhoea by 72% between 1996 and 2002 in Jamaica was as result of an initiative by the Jamaican Ministry of Health to improve the environmental health and food safety standards of hotels. Generally, the public especially in developed countries and developing counties are attaching serious attention to client security, health and environmental sustainability (Lynes & Dredge, 2006; Mensah, 2007; Akyeampong & Asiedu, 2008; Fennell, 2008; Chen & Chen, 2012). From the study, 62.5% of the managers cited the environment as the most important factor during the selection process of their hotels by customers. Furthermore, 87.5% of them said location was the most important factor considered by customer when selecting a hotel, 12.5% of them were middling, and none however disagreed on the factor. The issue of location was a prime consideration, as made evident in this quote:

Air pollution from their hotel kitchens as well as guests who smoked on the hotel premises, visual littering by some guests and employees was another source of pollution they faced, as sections of their premises are usually rented out to other guests who usually hold outdoor programs (Customer, Fieldwork, 2015).

Furthermore, the study sought to find out the factors that customers consider before choosing a particular hotel as well as perceptions of managers and employees as to what customers go for in selecting a hotel. 'MI' represents most important, 'A' represents average and 'LI' represents least important (Table 4). The Table 4 shows 37% of customers will consider price as the most important factor before choosing a hotel, 12% run-of-the-mill, where as 14% say it's least important. Quality of service is considered by 36% of the customers to be very important, 16% were indifferent and 12% considered quality of service to be unimportant in selecting a hotel. When it comes to the tradition of the hotel 48% of the customers consider it to be very important, 24% of the customers were middling about it, and 28% of the customers recognised it as least important in the selection process. Concern for the environment was recognised as a more important factor to look for in hotel selection by 66% of the employees, 18% however thought of it on average and 16% considered it to be least important.

The location of the hotel was most important to 84% of the customers, eight were in an average position about it, leaving eight percent yet again seeing it to be the least important. As a high as 50% of the managers recognised price as the most important factor for customers concerning their decision of selecting a particular hotel, 39.5% perceived it as a medium factor in their decision making, and 12.5% saw it to be the least important factor in the decision making of the customers. Table 4 also shows 67.5% of employees identifying price as the most important factor for customers in the choice of hotel, 27.5% were indifferent and five percent said it was the least important factor customers consider in the selecting a hotel. Moreover, as high as 90% of employees also indicated that quality of service was the most important factor for customers when selecting a hotel. Kotler et al. (2006), reemphasise that, in the service industry, of which tourism and hospitality is integral, quality can offer competitive advantage.

Table 4. Factors considered by Tourists in Hotel selection

Statement	Managers			Employees			Customers		
	MI	A	LI	MI	A	LI	MI	A	LI
Price	4 (50)	3 (37.0)	1 (12.5)	27 (67.5)	11 (27.5)	2(5)	37 (74)	6 (12)	7 (14)
Quality of service	8 (100)	-	-	36 (90.0)	2 (5.0)	2 (5.0)	36 (72.0)	8 (16.0)	6 (12.0)
Tradition of the hotel	4(50.0)	3 (37.5)	1 (12.5)	25 (62.5)	9 (22.5)	6(15.0)	24 (48.0)	12 (24.0)	14 (28.0)
Concern for the environment	5 (62.5)	2 (25.0)	1 (12.5)	20 (50.0)	14 (35.0)	6 (15.0)	33 (66.0)	9 (18.0)	8 (16.0)
Location	7(87.5)	1 (12.5)	-	32(80.0)	4(10.0)	4(10.0)	42(84.0)	4(8.0)	4(8.0)

Source: Authors' Compilation

Out of the 40 employees, 62.5% indicated the tradition of the hotel was the least important factor for customers' selecting a hotel, 22.5% of them run-of-the-mill with 15% identifying the factor as the least important. This finding contrasts sharply with the managers, where as high as 50% of managers cited tradition of their hotel as being the most important factor for customers in selecting them. All the managers agreed to service quality as being the most important factor that customers consider when selecting their hotels. Moreover, 62.5% of the managers agreed to environment as being the most important factor during the selection process of a hotel on the part of customers. This finding is consistent with the fact that, customers were willing to pay more for hotels which partake in greening activities (Kong et al., 2001; Kasim, 2004; Ashley et al., 2006; Mensah,2007). Also, this finding shows that Ghana attracts often high earning visitors (Akyeampong & Asiedu, 2008; Eshun & Tagoe-Darko, 2015). According to Kotler et al. (2002), location of hotels is a key success factor. For example, as high as 87.5% of the managers affirmed that their location was the most important factor considered by customer when selecting their hotels. Perreault and McCarthy (2006) and Kotler and Keller (2009) show that the location of a company can give it an edge over its competitors.

Barriers in Going Green in the Selected Hotels

Tourism and greening are also compatible approaches towards achieving sustainability (Fennell, 2008; Pennisi, 2010; Chen & Hsieh, 2011). However, hoteliers are often concerned with the initial costs of setting up energy saving programs (Polonsky, 1994; Lee, 2002). Thuot et al. (2010) expatiate that cost factors involved in initiating green measures are a very important reason why most hotels refuse to practice hotel sustainability. Although, greening is not a panacea for environmental ills associated with hotels, the enforcement of environmental sustainability practices in developing counties is often lax (Bohdanowicz, 2006; Mensah, 2007; Eshun, 2011). Many other factors exist in developing countries that impede greening in hotels. For instance, although hotels in Ghana rely on gas and diesel, they are heavily dependent on hydroelectric power, so when there is power shortage, most hotels had to use petroleum powered electrical generators in providing electricity, which increases operation cost and carbon emissions green (Mensah, 2007; Lanjewar, 2015).

The tourism sector also significantly contributes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; approximately five percent of global emissions in 2005 is attributed to tourism-related activities (Scott *et al*., 2010). This has generated discussion about initiating alternative sources of energy such as solar energy and other renewable alternatives. However, the high capital cost of acquiring these, coupled with the

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individual attitudinal changes on both management and customers, remains a barrier in going green (Mensah, 2007; Chen & Chen, 2012, Lanjewar, 2015). From this study, specific ways of ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in energy generation and use in hotels included (Table 5).

Table 5. Ways of Ensuring Effectiveness and Efficiency in Energy Generation

Ways of Ensuring Effectiveness and Efficiency in Energy Generation

- Changing incandescent filaments light bulbs/lamps to low consuming CFL (compact fluorescent lamps) or LED (light emitting diode) bulbs.

- Installing sensors that bring the light on and off automatically (occupancy detector)

- Electronic key card, which in some cases when slotted in brings the light on and off

- Iron during off-peak periods and Ironing in bulk instead of one item a time

- Air conditioners account for about 6.5% of energy used in hotels, so visitors are sensitised on its wise use.

- Food must be cool before being put in fridge

- The Ghana legislation LI 1970 Energy Efficiency Standards, vouch for replacing old fridges and putting a ban on importing second-hand fridges

- Installing roof-top heating plants for both domestic and industry use

- Exploring alternative energy sources: solar, biogas, biomass and biofuels

- Complementing Ghana Energy Commission efforts in distributing free CFLs. Already six million have been distributed.

Source: Authors' Compilation

Teng et al. (2012) averred that energy-efficient lighting is the most common method of realising energy savings in hotels. McLeish (2007), added, reducing energy use by 10% across the hospitality industry could save US$285 million per annum. On waste management, companies are mostly set up for waste disposal rather than recycling in Ghana (Bohdanowicz, 2006; Eshun, 2011). Waste is collected mostly to dump sites or landfill sites; many a times these waste materials could have been recycled or reused to generate other forms of raw material resources. Radwan et al., (2012) reached similar conclusions at their research in Wales, where most hotels were highly reliant on landfill for the disposal of solid waste and felt negatively about the implementation of more sustainable waste management alternatives. Fennell (2008) and Honey (2008) therefore argue that hotels are often involved in conventional environmental management practices, other than innovations that would have inured to the environmental benefit. These facts have been a disadvantage to hotels since hotels cannot save back on cost, but rather they have to pay huge sums of money in getting rid of waste materials which could have been reused or recycled (Han et al., 2010). However, research shows that a reduction in energy consumption in hotels, increases profit and also greatly reduces carbon emissions (Cespedes-Lorente et al., 2003; Tsai & Tsai, 2008; Leonard & Dlamini, 2015).

In the Face of these seeming unwillingness, yet, some hotels practice reuse of water dispenser bottles. They give empty containers back to their supplies to refill them. South Africa is Africa's leader when it comes to greening hotels. Reshma and Urmilla (2014) have indicated that, South Africa has initiated efforts to address environmental concerns and more especially energy conservation. Such efforts are evident in a number of policies, legislations, and agreements that are aimed at environmental and energy management. Despite the efforts towards greening in Africa, there are other challenges that need to be addressed. For instance, there is lack of manpower with the right expertise to work on the state of the art operating machines in especially recycling and reusing (McLeish, 2007; Mensah, 2007;

Akyeampong & Asiedu, 2008). Also these machines are often very expensive, when looking at them in their immediate utility (Polonsky, 1994). Bohdanowicz (2006) add that the additional cost of training the right workforce contributes to managers' hesitations towards going green in the hospitality sector.

Another hindrance to greening potentials in Ghana is based on issues of management. Currently, Ghana Tourism Authority handles everything in connection with tourism in the country *inter alia* giving of operational permits, introducing regulations and its enforcement (Mensah, 2007; Akyeampong & Asiedu, 2008; Tsai & Tsai, 2008, Eshun 2011; Eshun & Tagoe-Darko, 2015). However, environmental management issues are often left to the country's Environmental Protection Agency without much collaboration with the Ghana Tourism Authority and Ministry of Tourism (Eshun, 2011). One of the selected hotel managers buttressed:

The Hotel Association leadership are supposed to be championing our affairs, although some improvement have been seen in our use of technology, in terms of security, I can say not much has been done when it comes to issues of how we can green our hotels. The first time I heard about greening, I thought you were asking about how we do landscaping around here. We need to collaborate and look at global best practices to help make greening hotels widespread in the country (Hotel Manager, Fieldwork, 2015).

Mensah (2007) and Akyeampong and Asiedu (2008) have earlier indicated that, there is the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing issues of greening in the hospitality sector in Ghana. As a consequence, the conclusion section, provides further hue on this.

6 Conclusion

This study unravels green practices of selected hotels within the Kumasi Metropolis in Ghana, and the case of how customers who patronise these hotels perceive the concept of greening. The research shows that, in Ghana, acquiring some green technology may be very expensive, which sometimes frustrates attempts at going green in the hospitality sector. Mensah (2007) argues that government should assist by reducing the taxes involved in importing such green technology into the country. This notwithstanding, attitudinal changes are needed in exploring less expensive options. For example, there should be regular use of sunlight to dry towels and napkins, switching lights off when leaving room, requesting for change of bedsheets on demand among others. Also, there is the need for innovation in the hospitality sector in Ghana that is less expensive and yet addresses urgent concerns. As a point in case, architectural designs that use local materials and allow for natural circulation of air in accommodations should be explored. Akyeampong and Asiedu (2008) further add that the accommodation sector in Ghana, is increasingly receiving foreign ownership, especially through franchising. In terms of greening, Eshun (2011) buttresses that the franchisors in the accommodation sector in Ghana, often make the franchisees to adhere to some level of greening practices to accentuate best global practices.

The study further recommends that the Ghana Tourism Authority together with the Environmental Protection Agency should partner with other private organisations in spearheading greening hotel operations in Ghana. Such partnerships could involve initiation of Green Certification programs and training programs in the tourism and hospitality sector in the country. Award programs should be put in place to motivate hotels in going forward with the trend of greening. In addition, there is the need to encourage public private partnerships to help train these hotels in getting involved in greening as well as help regulate these hotels in pursuance of greening objectives in the country. Currently, the Environmental Protection Agency under the Akoben Project, awards mining companies which are

doing well to protect the environment, while those which are hurting the environment are public in all the major dailies in Ghana. Furthermore, tourism and hospitality related NGO like Centre for Tourism Research Ghana (CTR-Ghana) could partner these quasi-governmental organisations to initiate the Green Certification in the tourism and hospitality in the country. Many researchers have shown that green certifications can increase a hotel's competitive edge.

The study has posited, further, that hotels engaged in greening may gain competitive edge over their competitors. This could lead to Ghana acquiring its own LEED standards along with its own green seal. The current energy crisis in the country should push for alternative sources of energy which are green such as bio-fuel and bio-gas. Companies like AngloGold Ghana and Newmont Ghana could partner up in launching solar energy production on a large scale which could benefit the country as a whole. Serious concern for the pro-environmental tourism practices need to be prioritised in issues of national concerns. The Government of Ghana should therefore, provide attractive permits which come with incentives to attract companies who have the means of establishing recycling plants throughout the country, as this will help reduce the waste produced in the country. Similarly, it is recommended that local authorities and central governments should influence and encourage better waste management practices in hotels for the benefit of good business, environment and human well-being. In addition, the study showed that composting seems to be the main approach to converting waste from hospitality outlets for agricultural cultivations. However, the practice of converting the scraps from the served food in their restaurants into animal feed, may also provide a new source of extra revenue to some hotels. There is increasing love for especially dogs and cats as pet in Ghana, especially among the middle class, and with the middle class expected to grow, animal feed packaging is a business opportunity that is borne to be very profitable. In sum, the paper has shown the barriers and opportunities associated with greening in the hospitality industry in Ghana.

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