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EFFECTS OF GREEN INITIATIVES ON HOTEL PERFORMANCE IN KAMPALA, UGANDA: EVIDENCE FROM A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH ON 5-STAR HOTELS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of green practices on hotel performance in four five-star hotels in Kampala (Kampala Serena Hotel, Sheraton Hotel, Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo, and Pearl of Africa Hotel). The green practices assessed include water and energy efficiency measures, waste reduction, and maintenance of service quality. The research evaluates existing practices, discusses limitations, outlines benefits, and establishes the relationship between green activities and hotel performance. A purposive and random sample of 197 respondents was surveyed using a cross-sectional design that integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative analysis employed linear regression in SPSS, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. The results indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between green practices and hotel performance ($r = .486, p < .05$). The main advantages include cost-saving, competitive advantage, customer retention, and natural conservation are reported, whereas the major disadvantages comprise high installation cost, poor teamwork among hotel staff, and unfamiliarity of visitors to green practices. The study endorses staff training, customer orientation, installation of water-saving and solar systems, rainwater harvesting, recycling, green procurement, and promotion of locally sourced organic foods to strengthen environmental responsibility and enhance competitiveness.

Key words: green practices, hotel performance, energy conservation, water conservation, waste management practices.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The hospitality industry is widely recognized as resource-intensive, characterized by substantial consumption of energy and water, and the generation of significant volumes of waste, culminating in one of the major environmental pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions (Cowan et al., 2010; Huang et al., 2015). Hotels operate 24 hours a day, consuming huge amounts of energy for heating, cooling, lighting, laundry, kitchen, and guest comfort, which results in lots of greenhouse gas emissions and water footprint (Zengeni et al., 2013). Inefficient resource management amplifies these pressures, causing an increase in operational cost and environmental degradation and, ultimately, a reduction in competitiveness (Legrand et al., 2014; Karimi, 2014). Consequently, green practices, environmentally friendly actions that reduce resource consumption, minimize waste, and promote sustainability, are increasingly emphasized as crucial to the *raison d'être* of the hotel industry.

Before 1980, environmental parameters were out of the scope of business practices. However, industrial pollution, population increase, and the subsequent energy crisis between 1973 and 1974 laid emphasis on the fragile nature of the sectors depending on resources and, thus, prompted hoteliers to prioritize energy conservation in

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their strategic agenda (Fukey & Issac, 2014). The Brundtland Report (1987) conceptualized sustainable development as a process to meet the present needs without limiting the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs, a concept invigorated by the 1992 Earth Summit, which catalyzed a series of efforts toward the environment, such as building green and certification programs (Brundtland & Khalid, 1987; Samaniego, 2017).

Since the 1990s, environmental responsibility has become part of hospitality strategy, the hotel sector making way for many internal sustainability programs (Yu & Jai, 2017). Stakeholders demanded more yet-agency-influence economic, social, and environmental impacts (Rakická, 2016; Woo et al., 2017; Langgat, 2019). These commitments were further strengthened by Agenda 21 and certain industry guidelines (Mensah, 2019; Amazonas et al., 2018).

Green Practices cover a range of activities that include energy conservation, water conservation, waste disposal, green purchasing, and environmentally sound construction (Yixiu et al., 2017; Mbasera et al., 2016). They are even considered for educating both employees and guests, protecting biodiversity, and community-building (Teng et al., 2012). For example, leading hotel chains implement diverse green practices: the Marriott Group emphasizes water and energy conservation, Hilton focuses on energy efficiency and waste reduction, while the Serena Group integrates ecology-driven policies encompassing conservation, recycling, and biodiversity protection (Marriott, 2015; Hilton, 2015; Coleb, 2016).

The literature reveals that environmental conservation through green activities is considered to be day-by-day ushering in and vaporizing the hotel sector, alongside improving financial sustainability, brand image, and customer satisfaction (Berezan et al., 2014; Chen, 2015; Deraman, 2017; Yin et al., 2019). Hence, green hotels benefit from their environmental marketing, which appeals to the ever-expanding eco-conscious consumer base. This advantage includes reductions in operational costs, brand loyalty, and sustainable profits (Mbasera et al., 2016). The obstacles to the adoption of sustainability measures include financial limitations, resistance from management, lack of know-how, and weak enforceability of rules (Coleb, 2016).

Globally, the hotel industry is a major cause of resource depletion and pollution (Teng, 2012). In Uganda, however, tourism has been gaining momentum, with tourist arrivals rising from 1.4 million in 2017 to 1.8 million in 2018 and more than 2,000 accommodation facilities currently in operation (UBOS, 2019). While such growth brings economic opportunities, the demand for water, energy, and waste disposal deepens environmental concerns (Coleb, 2016).

The Ugandan hotels confront a double challenge: balancing profit alongside environmental and social responsibility (Nath, 2015; Okumus et al., 2019). Some operators, such as Serena Hotels, perform certain eco-friendly operations, while the majority put their profits ahead of sustainability, thus jeopardizing reputation and resource inefficiency. Consumers are gaining awareness of the environmentally damaging activities of hotels and consequently advocate with their choices toward green establishments (Merli et al., 2019). With this background, try to understand the crucial question: can hotels in Uganda be profitable while at the same time being environmentally responsible?

High energy and water usage, coupled with improper waste-management practices, pose threats to the environment, along with long-term operational performance if unsustainable practices continue to operate in the sector. The excess consumption of resources raises the operational costs, lowers guest satisfaction, and weakens competitiveness (Legrand et al., 2014). Keeping this in view, while green practices are given a necessary importance worldwide, there is little empirical evidence of their adoption and impact in Uganda's hotel sector, especially in Kampala. Thus, this forms a rationale for researching the effects of green practices on hotel performance in this context.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i.** To assess the green practices undertaken by the selected hotels in Kampala.
- ii.** To determine the barriers encountered in undertaking green practices in selected Kampala hotels.
- iii.** To find out the benefits of undertaking green practices in the selected hotels in Kampala.
- iv.** To determine the relationship between green practices and the performance of the selected hotels in Kampala.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by a conceptual framework (Figure 1). The conceptual relationship between green practices and the performance of hotels is detailed in the figure below.

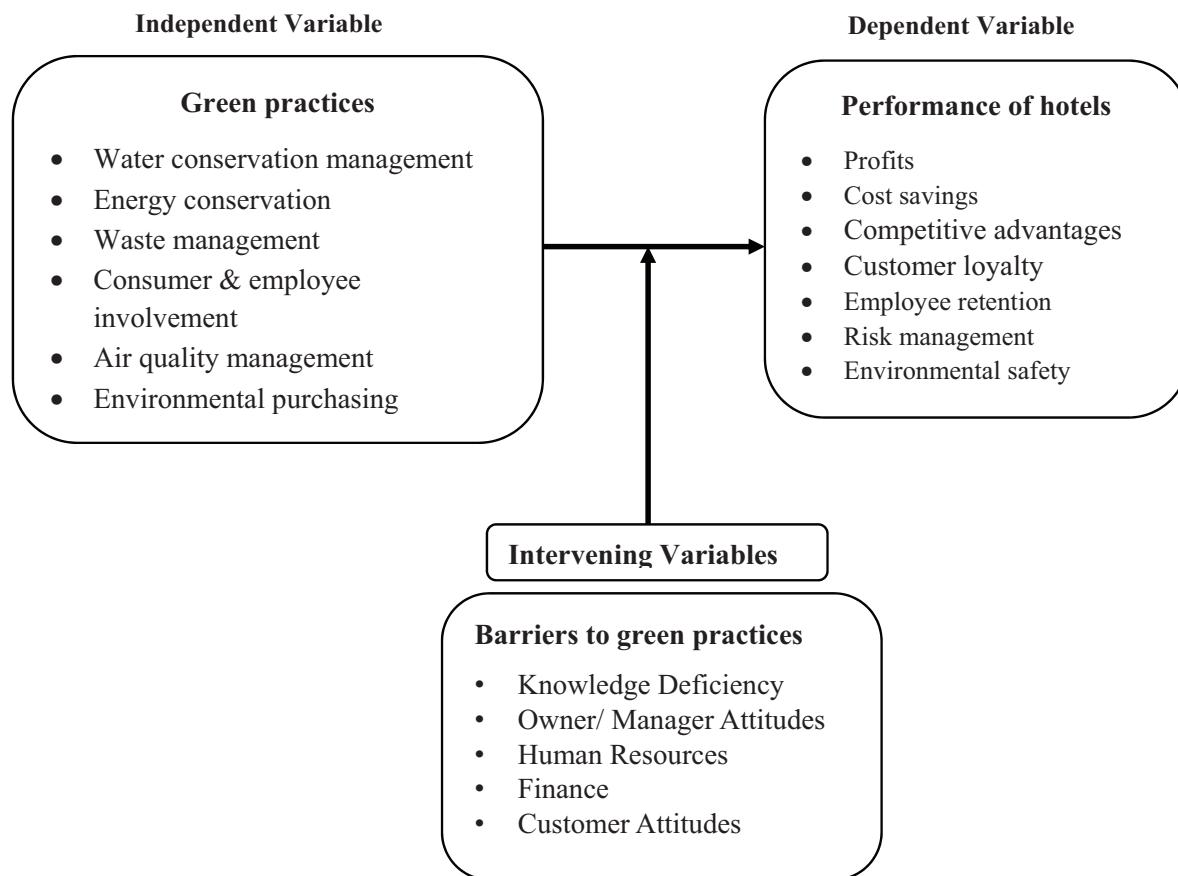


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework. Source: Developed by the researcher, 2025

2.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Green Practices in Hotels

The green practices in hotels, also called eco-friendly or environmentally sustainable approaches, aim to lessen the environmental impact by focusing on energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, good indoor air quality, and sustainable purchasing. The benefits of these practices fold in environmental well-being and economic considerations, such as competitiveness, profitability, and consumer loyalty (Al-Shourah, 2007; Fukey & Issac, 2014). Notably, disparities emerge between the statements of policy and actual practices, which differ in several regions and hotel categories. Thus, the review attempts a critical look at six fields: water conservation, energy conservation, waste disposal, consumer and employee involvement, air-quality control, and environmental purchasing, noting barriers, contradictions, and gaps.

Water Conservation Management

Hotels stand as enormous freshwater consumers mainly for use in bathing, laundry, kitchen, and recreation. Water conservation measures such as dual flushing systems, infrared taps, and harvesting of rainwater are often recommended but less so practiced (Kasim et al., 2014; Tirado et al., 2019). Such measures are usually resisted by luxury hotels with the excuse that they may cause discomfort to the guest, thereby furthering the classic association between “luxury” and resource intensity (Nthiga 2018). Programs mostly blame or expect the guest to address the issue of water wastage instead of tackling systemic inefficiencies. There are calls in the literature to link technological innovations with social constructs of comfort so that conservation becomes ingrained as a standard operating procedure in hotels rather than optional.

Energy Conservation

Energy consumption, mainly in HVAC, lighting, and kitchen areas, contributes significantly to carbon emissions by hotels (Hotel Energy Solutions, 2011). Energy conservation interventions can cut costs by as much as 25%, but barriers still exist. Solar energy and energy-efficient appliances are promoted (Kannan & Kannan, 2016; Mbasera et al., 2016), but costly installation fees, an erratic supply, and policy design gaps deter investment in developing economies (Mungai & Irungu, 2013). Guest preferences are also at play in this matter: ceiling fans, for instance, are cheap and environmentally friendly; however, tourists would rather have the air conditioner on (Australian Hotels Association, 2013). Research is mainly focusing on the small-scale behavior of employees in setting energy conservation efforts (such as turning off equipment when it is not in use), leaving an unaddressed gap between micro-energy behavior and large-scale structural decarbonization solutions, such as smart energy management, green building, and national incentives.

Waste Management

Hotels generate many waste streams, being solid, liquid, or hazardous, making management complicated (Omidiani et al., 2016). Cost cutdown and improvement in sustainability can be achieved through proper practices. However, food waste remains an issue and is caused by (among others) overproduction, portioning, and spoiling (Zengeni, 2013). Some solutions propose controlling portion sizes or menu planning, while others promote food donation programs, which are supported by Filimonau & Delysia (2019) and Okumus (2020). However, enforcement of these solutions varies from weak law-making to a lack of infrastructure and cultural connotations associated with the idea that abundance equals hospitality. Very few papers mention the role of informal recyclers, especially in developing economies where formal recycling systems do not exist, thereby resulting in an important research gap concerning systemic and institutional constraints other than hotel-level practices.

Consumer and Employee Involvement

Guests and employees bear heavy responsibility in ensuring hotel sustainability. It is reported that nearly 68% of travelers favor accommodation that is eco-friendly (Alipour et al., 2019), yet it appears their behavior does not support their values, with convenience usually overshadowing conservation (Njite & Schaffer, 2017). Employee motivation is driven by training, competitive wages, and the culture of the organization (Yixiu et al., 2017). Such discrepancies between attitude and behavior have exerted a heavy toll on the potency of green programs. Some recommend using nudges, gamification, or rewards to close the gap between declared preferences and actual behavior, yet empirical evidence on the effectiveness of such interventions remains elusive. Hence, further research is necessary to understand what kind of behavior interventions could engender compliance in the long term.

Air Quality Management

The involvement of pollutants from HVAC systems, cleaning chemicals, and refrigerants in degrading indoor air quality, thereby affecting guest health and also the brand reputation, has rightly been cited (Mbasera et al., 2016). In regard to solving the issue, the use of non-toxic materials and cleaning up ventilation systems is offered (Kapiki, 2012; Langgat, 2019). However, these steps that are encouraged gain limited adherence, especially in economies that are of an emergent variety, where regulations are weak, and there are economic constraints. Research on air quality is relatively neglected compared to water and energy conservation, presenting a bias toward practices that are easy to measure. This shortcoming suggests the emphasis that must be placed on other, less tangible yet preciously important aspects of hotel sustainability.

Environmental Purchasing

The essence of green procurement is to source products that pose the least harm to the environment, such as organic food, long-lasting goods, and eco-labeled items (Meuthia et al., 2019). However, contradictions abound, goods are often imported to fulfill guest expectations, such as sourcing being antithetical to sustainability (Mbasera et al., 2016). Although intended to be decision aids, ecolabels have brought about further confusion among managers due to their proliferation. A further element brought out in the literature is the assumption of rational cost-benefit procedures that do not take into account the immediate competitive pressure of hotels to save rather than to buy green. The practice of purchasing green, therefore, has to be enhanced by the support of governmental bodies, supplier cooperation, and standardized ecolabeling.

Environmental benefits aside, green practices in hotels also impart business benefits; however, their adoption is limited by infrastructural incompatibilities, cultural perceptions, weak regulation, and policy voids. Much literature remains notable for being descriptive, focusing on such surface-level practices while ignoring systemic, behavioral, and institutional impediments constituting adoption. Future research, therefore, must go beyond piecemeal accounts to examine structural constraints along with consumer behavior and policy alignment in consonance with individual initiatives. This paradigm shift will thus aid the hospitality industry in moving from piecemeal sustainability activities toward transformative and integrated initiatives.

2.2 Barriers to Green Practices

Hotels continually encounter internal and external barriers to the resilience of green practices (Zengeni & Zengeni, 2013; Deraman et al., 2017). The constraint arises mainly from limited knowledge concerning environmental impact for many owners and operators, along with technical skills for effective environmental management; indeed, this is again magnified by sustainability incompatibility in hospitality education (Mensah, 2019; Kularatne et al., 2019; Yin et al., 2019). The attitudes of managers inhibit: Sustainability is acknowledged more and more, but heavy layers of complacency, obsolete operations, and a perception of green projects only to be obeyed seem to thwart the progress of actual steps toward sustainability, particularly in owner-led businesses without real planning (Robin et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2017; Chan et al., 2018). Human resource constraints such as loose employee commitment, lack of dedicated environmental roles, poor communication, and the need for training also serve as hindrances to the implementation (Yin et al., 2019). There are also financial obstacles that set back further investment, most of all with the high upfront costs on audits, certifications, and capital projects, all in contrast to long-term savings (Verma & Chandra, 2018). Customer preferences also play a role, and many managers wait for a more marked guest demand, even though more and more eco-conscious travelers are accepting higher price packages (Chan & Chan, 2018; Wu & Cheng, 2016).

2.3 Benefits of Green Practices

A competitive atmosphere created by the hospitality industry forces hotels to carry out activities that are environmentally and socially responsible, thereby yielding diversified strategic, financial, and operational benefits. Environmentally speaking, green initiatives may facilitate long-term cost savings through efficient use of resources and, at the same time, try to attract revenues by promoting the eco-tourism theme, in accordance with observations from Tripadvisor's "Green Leaders" program and case studies involving Marriott and Hilton (Nath, 2015; Merli et al., 2019; Chen, 2015; Deraman et al., 2017; Mbasera et al., 2016; Marriott, 2015; Hilton, 2015). Outside the realm of pure profit, hotel operations augment their competitive edge through a boost in efficiency from implementation of such practices, branding enhancement, customer attraction, increase in market share, and the promotion of internal productivity (Singjai et al., 2018; Wan et al., 2017; Teng-Yuan & Chung-Ming, 2016). It enhances customer loyalty since environmentally conscious guests seek green accommodation and are even ready to pay a premium for such options (Wu et al., 2016; Ting et al., 2019). Additionally, it also reinforces retention, motivation, communication, and job satisfaction of employees in-house, with the benefits reinvested into staff rewards (Okumus et al., 2020). Besides risk management against environmental hazards, including pollution issues, contamination of water and land, and food safety, which ultimately aids in damage to investments and reputation (Deraman et al., 2017; Merli et al., 2019), they promote conservation of the environment in terms of energy efficiencies, water recycling, waste reduction, and environmentally friendly products, while the health of people is improved by reducing their exposure to pollutants and consequent diseases. This collection of facts portrays green practices as strategic actions that improve financial performance, enhance operational resilience, foster satisfaction among stakeholders, and improve the environment.

2.4 Relationship Between Green Practices and Hotel Performance

For empirical research, green practices have increasingly become their subject of review in terms of their effects on hotel performance; yet the findings tend to be inconsistent with each other. Some studies found a positive relationship between environmentally sustainable practices and hotel performance, while others negated this claim, pointing out differences in methodology and context. Irrespective of such contradictions, the accrual of research strengthens the claim that green practices remain strategically important to hotels, both for improving operational performance and for responding to pressure from different stakeholders.

Amoah et al. (2016) investigated hotel managers' views regarding environmental benefits and found that there are various advantages that hotel owners and operators recognize to come out of green practices. These include financial aspects, but also go on to customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, relationship building with local communities, and marketing advantages over competitors. This study, therefore, places green practices away from the notion of "simply" complying with official regulations toward viewing them as strategic tools that might bring their strategic objectives tangible or intangible organizational gains. This study, on the other hand, deals mainly with the perception rather than with the actual outcomes as far as performance is concerned, and, therefore, it cannot come up with any kind of conclusion about causality.

Along the coastal belt of Kenya, Karimi (2014) set out to establish the link between green operational practices and hotel performance and found an upward effect on operational outcomes. Such a phenomenon would broadly fit into the domain of the set of results linking a sustainable approach with efficiency and competitive edge. However, the study's small size and nonrepresentative nature of the sample lead to questions concerning its generalizability. Similarly, Langgat (2019) discuss the hotel's broader obligations in sustainable tourism, asserting that the development and marketing of green products further environmental consciousness. Their results suggest that environmental programs increase visitor numbers and revenue, and the result promotes market differentiation through sustainable methods.

Research also demonstrates the cost- and revenue-side impacts of doing green (Deraman et al., 2017; Merli et al., 2019). From this perspective, such issues help hotels in pressing with a myriad of stakeholders, including governments, customers, competitors, and local communities, who demand sustainable conduct of business

(Teng-Yuan & Chung-Ming, 2016). Hence, the cast melding environmental performance into economic performance figures as a pathway for competitive advantage and organizational efficacy (Kularatne et al., 2019).

However, these very gaps in the literature remain present and need remedying. Several of the studies tend to lean on perceptions elicited from respondents or too small local sample sizes, which hardly strengthen or confer generalizability to their findings. Longitudinal set-ups are also required to check the long-term impact of green activities on hotel performance, especially from the perspective of market segments and geographical settings. Further to this, literature commonly tends to stress the financial and operational outcomes of green practices; social and ecological ends that are emerging as inseparable from the altogether hotel performance are largely ignored.

Hence, it remains necessary for a comprehensive, multi-dimensional inquiry to reconcile inconsistencies in the literature and address methodological drawbacks. Henceforth, to ensure a broader comprehension of the way green practices sustain hotels in becoming more competitive and efficient while remaining resilient to further evolutions in society, research will have to include larger representative samples, objectification of performance measures, and take into view broader sustainability issues.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study examined the effects of green practices on business operations in Kampala's five-star hotels. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative data from questionnaires with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was selected for its cost-effectiveness, convenience, and minimal interference with respondents. Qualitative interviews with general managers and departmental heads were conducted to validate survey findings.

A pilot test was carried out in a five-star hotel not included in the main study to refine the questionnaire and ensure interviewer familiarity with the tool. The survey assessed respondents' awareness of green practices and their perceived operational effects. Multiple-choice items offered alternative green practices, while a five-point Likert scale captured the extent of adoption. Additional questions addressed hotel performance, benefits, and challenges of implementing green initiatives.

The study targeted employees from four privately owned five-star hotels in Kampala: Kampala Serena Hotel, Sheraton Hotel, Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo, and Pearl of Africa Hotel. Using Yamane's (1967) formula ($n = N/1 + Ne^2$ at a 0.05 confidence level), a total workforce of 1,652 employees yielded a sample size of 322. The distribution of respondents across hotels was determined using Sarndal's (2003) proportional allocation formula ($ni = Ni/N \times n$).

This design allowed triangulation between quantitative and qualitative data, enhancing validity and reliability. By engaging staff across organizational levels, the study captured diverse perspectives on the adoption and impacts of green practices in Kampala's five-star hospitality sector.

Table 1: Aggregate Sample Per Hotel

Sn	Name Of Hotel	Number of Employees	Aggregate Sample	Response rate	% response
1	Kampala Serena Hotel	450	88	51	57.90
2	Sheraton Hotel	202	39	39	100.00
3	Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo	500	97	60	61.80
4	Pearl of Africa Hotel	500	98	47	47.90
	Total	1652	322	197	61.1

The questionnaires were completed and returned by a total of 197 respondents, which amounts to a 77% response rate. This was attributed to the COVID-19 situation, which saw reduced staffing numbers while following

SOPs suggested by Uganda's Ministry of Health. However, the response rate is considered to be moderate, and some generalizations and conclusions were drawn. Based on the background/demographic description of the respondents (Table 2), 49% were between the ages of 30 and 39, while 55% were male. Roughly 87 % of the staff had at least a tertiary education, and 57 % spent five years or more in five-star hotels.

Table 2: Demographic Results

Item Measurement		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	109	55.33
	Female	88	44.67
	Total	197	100
Age category	20–29 Years	51	25.89
	30–39 Years	97	49.24
	40–49 Years	43	21.83
	50–Above Years	6	3.04
	Total	197	100
Education level	Secondary	21	10.66
	Tertiary	84	42.64
	University	88	44.67
	Others	4	2.03
	Total	197	100
Experience	Below 5 Years	84	42.64
	5–9 Years	91	46.19
	10 and above Years	22	11.17
	Total	197	100
Department	Front office	57	28.94
	Service	49	24.87
	Kitchen	43	21.83
	Housekeeping	26	13.20
	Guest Relations	7	3.55
	Other	15	7.61
	Total	197	100

Study participants were briefed before the conduct of the study to assure them that the purpose of the study was purely academic and responses by participants would be kept private and anonymous during data collection. Information was also collected from some key informants who were purposively selected following the study using semi-structured interviews. Among the key informants were several heads of departments. The key informants were engaged to gather more information on the implementation of green practices and the working of the five-star hotels in Kampala. The questionnaire responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 20.0 for Windows. These influences were descriptive statistics concerning the results of the five-star hotels in Kampala adopting green practices. The analyzed data were accompanied by notes for clarifying and contrasting the data collected. Inferential statistics were used to investigate the relationship between the variables under investigation. The qualitative data that were collected through key informants were subjected to thematic analysis, which categorized them into themes based on specific items.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Green practices undertaken by the selected hotels in Kampala

The researcher used mean to describe concentration, standard deviation to describe dispersion, and coefficient of variation (C.O.V) to describe the nature of the distribution of the green practices undertaken among selected hotels in Kampala. The researcher used a range of scores to describe behavior of variables.

The range $0.0 \leq \text{mean} \leq 2.5$ was interpreted as '**least undertaken**'; the range $2.5 \leq \text{mean} \leq 3.5$ was interpreted as '**moderately undertaken**'; the range $3.5 \leq \text{mean} \leq 5.0$ was interpreted as '**mostly undertaken**'. The details appear in Table 4.2 below.

Table 3: Green Practices undertaken by the selected hotels in Kampala.

Variable list	N	Mean	Std.	CV
Consumer and Employee Involvement	197	4.110	0.626	6.560
Energy Conservation	197	3.863	0.485	7.960
Environmental Purchasing	197	3.780	0.649	5.820
Waste Management	197	3.737	0.540	6.920
Water Conservation	197	3.715	0.689	5.390

The results indicate that all green practices were relatively well implemented in hotels, with a mean above 3.5. Consumer and employee involvement ($M = 4.11$; $CV = 6.56$) reflected the highest practiced green activities, emphasizing the involvement of staff and guests in sustaining green initiatives. Next were energy conservation ($M = 3.86$; $CV = 7.96$), environmental purchasing ($M = 3.78$; $CV = 5.82$), waste management ($M = 3.74$; $CV = 6.92$), and water conservation ($M = 3.72$; $CV = 5.39$). Nonetheless, the CV creates a more differentiated prioritization, marking lower values as more wanted and stable practices when the mean scores suggest that all practices are highly undertaken. As such, water conservation ($CV = 5.39$) and environmental purchasing ($CV = 5.82$) were the most consistent across hotels, followed by consumer and employee involvement, waste management, and energy conservation.

This tends to confirm findings from the interview in which two interviewees stated:

We conduct staff training on the implementation of green practices to ensure maximum energy savings at the hotel. We monitor and control the hotel's electricity, gas, and water usage (Key informant A). Heating and air-conditioning systems are turned off when rooms are unoccupied. Installation of energy-efficient interior light bulbs (Key informant B).

In their attempts to save energy, "We put cards in each room asking guests to turn off the lights when they leave or reuse towels if they can. During the check-in process, we brief guests on how best they can participate in energy conservation" (Key informants A and B).

On management of waste, we make recycling bins readily available to guests and ensure they are aware of your green programs (Key informants C and D). Stained tablecloths are converted into aprons and neckties, and cloth laundry bags are created from retired sheets (Key informant C). Garbage should be promptly collected, with the suitable dumping of garbage that can be composted but which cannot be recycled (Key informant A).

To reduce water bills, rainwater is collected for use in laundry, washing dishes and floors, and watering plants and flowers. (Key informant B).

Environmental purchasing: We try to buy organic, locally grown products directly from the firm; it requires less packaging. We promote the use of paper bags and discourage the use of plastic packaging (Kavera). We purchase less noisy equipment. (Key informants A, B, and C).

Consumer and employee involvement; we involve our staff to actively undertake environmentally friendly practices through regular training. It is said in our HR manual that the entire staff is to be custodians of environmental purity. (Key informants A and D)

The qualitative findings supported these findings. Interviewees stressed regular staff training, guest sensitization, and the adoption of energy-efficient technologies for reducing energy costs. Waste management includes recycling, repurposing textiles, and composting, while water conservation is practiced through rainwater harvesting and its reuse in housekeeping operations. Environmentally conscious purchasing would source locally grown organic products with minimal packaging. Moreover, consumer and employee involvement were buttressed by inculcating environmental responsibilities into staff training and manuals. Prior studies have documented allow the assertion of Theories that are in line with this study, serving for financial and environmental advantages from green practices: energy efficiency lowers costs from 10 to 25%, sustainable water management, waste reduction, and selective procurement are shown to increase operational efficiency and brand reputation (Kannan & Kannan, 2016).

4.2 Barriers Encountered to Undertaking Green Practices in Selected Kampala Hotels.

The researcher sought to understand the barriers hotels face in undertaking green practices. The researcher examined a set of barriers to green practice.

The details appear in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4: Barriers to Green Practice Implementation

Variable List	Mean	Std.	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. High maintenance and implementation cost	4.122	0.912	-1.222	1.689
2. Lack of sufficient knowledge and information on green practices	3.822	1.037	-1.440	1.827
3. Lack of resources (time, manpower, equipment and money)	3.807	1.085	-1.208	0.977
4. Difficulty in managing and training staff	3.766	0.956	-1.249	1.588
5. Lack of a sense of urgency and ambiguity of environmental guidelines	3.701	1.014	-1.004	0.653
6. Lack of customer and green supplier support	3.695	0.963	-0.914	0.847
7. Difficult to balance the quality of service with environmental performance.	3.650	1.081	-0.785	0.213
8. Lack of government regulations and enforcement	3.579	1.040	-0.762	0.346
9. Limited support from the owner and management	3.431	1.258	-0.705	-0.512

The results show that barriers to the implementation of green practices fall into the two categories of 'highly challenging' and 'moderately challenging'. Accordingly, there are almost no challenges that fell into the category of less challenge for the hotels (mean > 3.500), except limited support from owners and the hotel management (2.500 < mean < 3.500). The statistics generally point toward challenges faced by the investigated hotels regarding the application of green practices. Most of the participants mentioned that the costs of implementing and maintaining green practices are exorbitant (mean = 4.122; Std. = .912).

The interviews showed that cost and limited resources were cited as impediments to green practice implementation at all hotel locations (key informants A and D). Literature contends that the financial cost of green practice adoption is a setback (Deraman et al., 2017), especially during an economic depression when priorities take precedence over environmental issues. It is implementation-wise mostly dependent on whether the workforce is willing rather than on workplace policy. Operators, however, perceive the costs associated with these practices to be very high, thus serving as barriers in areas such as equipment purchases, waste disposal, recycling activities, and in-house training (Verma & Chandra, 2018; Karimi, 2014).

Lack of Knowledge and Information on Green Practice

Green practices may thus be appreciated; however, attempts at implementation with limited knowledge are a big challenge (Yin et al., 2019). They went on to observe that: 'Limited knowledge in matters of environmental protection issues and strategies, compounded by a perceived lack of information and support, has consistently been identified as one of the major constraints. The interviewee also noted: 'People's mindset is not positive enough and some don't seem to know about green practices' (Key informants B and C).

Besides, there is a concern that the lack of knowledge and information on green practices is worsened by weak communication and deficient training from the management. Robin et al, on the contrary, suggested that environmental policy should be introduced in the human resource manual as an essential element of the orientation program of recruits to ensure that the message is etched in them from the very beginning.

Limited resources

Environmentally friendly practices require quite some time and a bit of effort to adopt and implement. *One has limited resources to implement green practices, in terms of time, staffing, equipment, and cost* (Key informant A). Meaning that the need for more staff arises, recycling machinery is needed, and the cost for energy-saving equipment is high.

Limited customer support: *The issue of limited hotel guest support was cited as a barrier by Key Informant B.* This really means that guests may not care so much about whether a hotel has taken any green steps or not (Coleb, 2016). Wu & Cheng (2016) state that customers who seek hospitality services "expect to be pampered with nice hot water showers, high pressure showers, freshly laundered linen and ample supply of towels". He noted that when such environmental practices are used by hotels, it must be either with the consent of customers themselves or in a manner that they cannot perceive any deterioration of service.

The difficulty of balancing environmental performance with service quality

This possibility explains why many hotels disallow initiatives that may jeopardize the satisfaction and enjoyment of the customer (Chan & Chan, 2018). *One interviewee said, "It is difficult to keep the level of service high and environmentally friendly at the same time in housekeeping, sauna, gym, and restaurant. Customers want luxury service, which is rarely achieved when green practices take the main stage"* (key informant C).

It requires lots of support from owners and managers of hotels, both short- and long-term profit figures being on their minds (Key informants A, B, C, & D). Further, it has been observed that reluctance to change from conventional procedures has so far been conspicuously manifested in hotel operations and stands in the way of green practices implementation. The research also highlighted those key resistance barriers impeding the implementation of green practices in the selected hotels, such as being very expensive to maintain, difficult management of staff, and a lack of support from customers and suppliers. These latter results further indicate that most participants viewed these barriers almost unanimously, shown by the extremely low standard deviation scores (0.912–0.963). Conversely, indifferent support from ownership and top management was considered a mild to moderate inhibitive force, indicating general acceptance by hotels to implement sustainability initiatives when faced with constraints. The distribution analysis suggests the same: negative skewness values, although departing from normality, lie within acceptable limits, while kurtosis values assert that the majority of variables are strongly clustered. This means that the observations obtained are both trustworthy and representative of the larger population under study. Basically, the result suggests that financial and operational issues notwithstanding, prejudicial management does not stand much in the way of green interventions in Kampala hotels.

4.3 Benefits of undertaking green practices in the selected hotels in Kampala.

This study used value percentages to assess the green practices undertaken among selected hotels in Kampala. The researcher coded responses so that “strongly disagree” and “disagree” indicated disagreement, while “agree” and “strongly agree” indicated agreement. The variables were then ordered in Table 5 in ascending order of level of agreement.

Table 5: Benefits of Undertaking Green Practices

Variable List	Disagreement (%)	Not sure (%)	Agreement (%)
1. I am aware that the implementation of green practices in my hotel may lead to increased profits	1.500	7.100	91.400
2. A lot of cost savings are realized when green practices are implemented	3.000	7.600	89.300
3. Eco-friendly practices make the hotel more competitive in the market	1.000	12.200	86.800
4. Customers in my hotel tend to come back when they get involved in green practices	1.500	23.900	74.600
5. Staff members tend to feel part of the hotel when they get involved in the green practices	3.000	17.800	79.200
Average	2.000	13.720	84.260

There was found to be a general agreement of 84.3% on the claims raised about the advantages of green practices in the said establishments. At least 9 out of every 10 participants (91.4%) knew that implementing green practices may increase profits in the hotels. Almost 9 out of 10 participants (89.3%) agreed that green practices save hotels a lot of costs. At least 8 out of 10 participants (86.8%) agreed that green practices increase the competitiveness of a hotel. These statistics suggest that green practices have, in fact, worked toward making hotels more profitable, competitive, and cost-efficient.

The researcher also made the following observations:

Replacing incandescent bulbs with high-efficiency bulbs is an option if the bulbs last longer and consume less electricity. Advanced toilets allow selective use of water volumes. In-room recycling would save on paper expenses and landfill space, whereas using roof space for solar panels would allow a hotel to generate its own power. Linen reuse programs save time, money, and effort. In essence, these can be marketed to environmentally concerned guests.

It has also been observed that water use reduction can be achieved through water-saving fixtures and appliances, installing basins, fountains, showers, toilets, dishwashers, and washing machines in the hotel.

Implementation of green practices in hotels leads to increased profits.

The key informants shed light upon the benefits of green practices during the interview process; *we achieved targets and realized profits, saved on precious resources, and had costs reduced as a result of the green practices implementation in our hotel* (key informant A).

The above results are supported by literature from many researchers who identified the benefits of green methods in carrier hotels that include cost reduction and revenues, which would then increase profitability (Deraman et al., 2017; Mbasera et al., 2016). There is also evidence of financial savings and more profits after green practice implementations in Marriott and Hilton Hotels and Resorts (Marriott, 2015; Hilton, 2015). This ties well with the line of thought by Kularatne et al. (2019) and Han et al. (2019), who say further that economic benefits come attached to the implementation of green practices in hotels. Langgat (2019) and Zengeni et al. (2013) supported the same viewpoint, that monetary benefits come as a result of the application of green practices in hotels.

Green practice implementations lead to cost savings in hotels.

Adapting the practices has helped in reducing any extra costs, for instance, energy and water use have since been greatly cut down, and so have waste management costs (key informant B, 9th June 2020). This is confirmed by Kapiki (2012) and Berezan et al (2014) in their studies that the major impetus for the implementation of green practices in hotels was to reduce costs in various sectors. **Green practices make the hotel competitive in the market.**

Environmental practices have allowed us to gain a competitive advantage over many other hotels in the market. We have attracted international and local clients who are environmentally sensitive, thus growing our market share (key informant C).

Singjai et al. (2018) supported the argument that environmentally responsible conduct in any hospitality organization conveys a competitive advantage over the entire sector because it leads to higher attraction to customers, better market share, new development for market scope, and increased productivity of its employees. Competitive advantage can be achieved through green practices, such as cultivating a favorable image for the hotel, customer retention, and employee loyalty (Teng-Yuan & Chung-Ming, 2016; Kasim & Ismail, 2012). The studies have indicated that green practices help hotels attract customers, increase their market shares, and open up new market opportunities.

Eco-friendly practices increase customer retention.

Besides, at least 7 in every 10 participants (74.6%) considered that customers involved in green practices would come back, while nearly 8 in every 10 participants (79.2%) deemed that when employees are engaged in the implementation of green practices, they feel part of the hotel. These statistics show that green practices are beneficial to both customers and employees.

One interviewee said, “*The environmentally friendly practices have helped us to achieve our objective of retaining customers. We try to meet the needs of all our customers, including the environmentally sensitive ones*” (key informant C). Another interviewee also said, “*The environmentally friendly practices in our hotel are meant to keep nature pure and for marketing reasons in order to retain customers who are environmentally sensitive and to gain a competitive advantage*” (key informant D). If the hotel guest has a positive perception of and recognition of a green hotel, he/she will be attracted by the concept and hence may create awareness and contribute towards protecting the environment by being fully cooperative in following green practices in that hotel (Wu et al., 2016). Being environmentally sound will enhance the attraction of green customers to patronize that hotel (Ting et al., 2019). Further, Wan et al. (2017) support the idea that hotels being sensitive to environmentally friendly practices and their implementation in various sections of the hotel help address customers’ environmental concerns through hotel policies and programs.

Setting the eco practices in place also takes staff commitment to the hotel to a higher level.

One of the interviewees commented, stating that, *for many of the workers, there is a sense of pride in associating with the hotel, mainly because of the prestige it enjoys in the minds of the public and the confidence customers place in our establishment as a hotel* (key informant B). Green practices in hotels produce a positive image, which fosters a greater willingness in personnel to identify themselves with the hotel. In the same way, Okumus et al. put it that when you offer environmental programs as a staff incentive, you can bolster employees’ excitement and motivation to pursue teamwork (Okumus et al., 2020).

Environmental protection.

The hotel has ensured environmental safety and purity through its eco-friendly practices. Thus, the machines of the hotel make very little noise, the hotel purchases recycled packaging and stationery, air pollution related to the hotel operations is kept

to the minimum possible, and much attention is given to the efficient use of available resources such as water and energy (key informants A and C). Literature depicts that changing to energy-efficient appliances could reduce carbon emissions by a further 19% (Teng et al., 2012).

Sustainable hospitality hotel practices witnessed in the hotel are as follows. Setting up a botanical garden enhances guests' stay and relaxation with views of nature and environmental upliftment. Use of compostable napkins produced from biodegradable materials reduces environmental impact and is also gentle on the skin. Present waste management includes donating surplus food, unwanted furniture, and guest amenities to local charities, bespeaking environmental consciousness and social welfare. The engagement of employees includes training in some eco-friendly practices, such as saving on energy, stopping drips, and setting the room temperature. Encouragement, therefore, demands shared responsibility of staff and continuous improvement in environmentally friendly hotel operations.

4.4 Relationship Between Green Practices and Performance of the Selected Hotels in Kampala.

Table 6: Regression coefficients.

Variable list	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.357***	0.288		8.185	0.000
Energy Conservation	-0.015	0.072	-0.016	-0.214	0.830
Water Conservation	0.094	0.054	0.137	1.735	0.084
Waste Management	0.226**	0.080	0.259	2.808	0.006
Consumer and Employee Involvement	0.121*	0.057	0.161	2.131	0.034
Environmental Purchasing	0.048	0.064	0.065	0.742	0.459
R	0.486(a)				
R Square	0.236				
Adjusted R Square	0.216				
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.418				
Regression sum of squares	10.301				
Residual sum of squares	33.304				

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

a: Predictors: (Constant), Environmental Purchasing, Energy Conservation, Consumer and Employee Involvement, Water Conservation, Waste Management

b: Dependent Variable: Hotel Performance

It shows a moderate correlation, statistically significant, between green practices and hotel performance ($r = .486$, $N = 197$, $p < .05$), meaning green practices bring safety in performance, and the negation would diminish it. Additionally, regression analysis also shows that green practices evoke 23.6% ($R^2 = .236$) of hotel performance, meaning other factors have accounted for the rest, which include employee commitment (Chan et al., 2018), training and innovation (Mbasera, 2016), marketing through eco-labels and word of-mouth (Berezan et al., 2014), customer relationship building (Njite & Schaffer, 2017), service quality (Fatoki, 2019), and leadership (Langgat, 2019). At the component level, regression coefficients show that water management ($\beta = .259$, $p = .006$) and consumer/employee involvement ($\beta = .161$, $p = .034$) are significant indicators of the performance, implying that stakeholder engagement is crucial for conservation. On the contrary, energy conservation ($\beta = -.016$, $p = .83$), environmental purchasing ($\beta = .065$, $p = .459$), and water conservation ($\beta = .137$, $p = .084$) are insignificant, as

heavy investments in these practices, we might suspect, are, however, unable to guarantee performance improvements.

These findings are in accordance with earlier research. Kularatne et al. (2019) and Han et al. (2019) refer to green practices offering economic and environmental benefits, while Kapiki (2012) and Berezan et al. (2014) draw attention to cost reduction and increased revenues. Green practices will provide competitiveness through better brand perception, retention, and employee loyalty (Teng-Yuan & Chung-Ming, 2016). Furthermore, positive impressions given by guests of green hotels encourage environmental commitment and repeat patronage (Wu et al., 2016; Ting et al., 2019).

This research, therefore, concludes that hotels prioritizing water management and stakeholder involvement tend to perform better than those spending mostly on energy conservation or green purchasing. Hence, linking green practices to strategy checkmarks can enhance financial performance, customer satisfaction, and environmental care.

Contributions

Practically, the findings offer useful suggestions for hotel management. These energy conservation strategies involve efficient operation of the HVAC system, lighting, cooking, and the use of solar or biomass fuel to cut down on operational costs. In water conservation measures, low-flow faucets, waterless steamers, and rainwater harvesting serve efficient criteria. Such waste management activities as sorting, recycling, composting, and donating to charitable organizations require sustainability and corporate social responsibility considerations. Training employees, while running awareness campaigns for guests, further amplifies the impact of such practices. Drawing the cost savings into employee incentives thus motivates them to actively participate in nurturing an environmentally conscious culture at their hotels.

From a policy standpoint, this study underscores the need for governmental support to promote green practices in the hospitality sector. Mechanisms could include setting eco-certification standards, training programs, subsidies for green technologies and sustainable investments, and facilitating green supplier networks. Policy interventions could reduce the barriers noted, such as high maintenance costs, limited staff knowledge, and customers' unwillingness, and enable the widespread adoption of eco-friendly practices.

CONCLUSION

It emerged that green practices such as conserving energy and water, waste management, as well as orientations for guests and employees, are crucial contributors to the performance of hospitals in Kampala in the sense that they increase revenues, decrease operating costs, and foster environmental stewardship. The study proved that there indeed exists a positive correlation; however, the green practices account for just 23.6% variation in performance, and hence all other elements like service quality, marketing, innovation, and leadership would, therefore, come into the limelight. However, economic issues, resistance from employees, and a lack of cooperation from customers are major barriers to the adoption of green practices. The findings suggest that rejection of green practices would definitely have an adverse impact on business performance and environmental performance. The negative effect of green practices on business and environmental performance stands confirmed by the evidence presented. So, green practices are no longer simply sustainable measures but an actual strategy for marketing and operating a responsible hotel.

Limitations

In some ways, the study was limited. First, some respondents withheld information for reasons of confidentiality, though this was countered by assurances of anonymity, potentially constraining data depth. Second, the research was spatially limited to Kampala, and, on this account, time and financial constraints curbed its univer-

sal applicability across Uganda. Third, since the study entirely depended on self-reports of practice, certain performances may seldom be performed under routine operations; in other words, managers may have reported that policies exist, but they have not provided clear evidence of whether staff or guests do consistently implement those policies. This implies that the limitations do not diminish the usefulness and relevance that come through from the findings, but they should be interpreted with caution.

Areas for Further Research

Research should expand into other Ugandan cities or across East Africa to ensure wider generalizability. In addition, future research should include other factors, such as guest satisfaction, green marketing, sustainability certifications, and leadership practices. Besides that, it would be useful to delve into the existing gap between reported and actual practices, maybe through direct observations, audits, or longitudinal studies to assess the consistency of the practices over time. Another pertinent topic that could be studied includes incentives offered by governments, supplier networks, and eco-labeling, with a view to supporting the hotels. These investigations will add heft to the evidence supporting sustainability as a key consideration in hospitality strategy, practice, and policymaking.

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