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A Critical Analysis of the Assessment of Hotel's Social Responsibility to its Host Communities

Olusola S Folorunso^{1*}, Olaleye I Tinuoye¹, Olukemi O Osadare², Olufunmilayo O Lawal³, Hauwa M Adebayo³ and Mayokun A Oyedun⁴

Corresponding author: Olusola S Folorunso, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria, Tel: +2348062224274; Email: olusola.folorunso@kwasu.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT

Hotels are under increased scrutiny to show how they are contributing to the betterment of their surrounding communities in the areas of environmental sustainability, community participation, and ethical business practices. The purpose of this study is to investigate the meaning of "social responsibility" in the hospitality business, and to analyze the techniques used to evaluate hotels' effects on their surrounding neighborhoods. Hotels' commitment to social responsibility may be gauged in part by looking at how they treat the local community, how they treat their employees, and what kind of environmental impact they have. Hotels may reduce their negative effects on the environment and improve the quality of life in their communities by using sustainable operating methods. In addition, hotels may contribute to the area's economic and social growth by forging partnerships with local businesses, launching charitable campaigns, and hosting cultural exchange programs. The hotel industry's rapid rise has had far-reaching consequences for the local ecosystem and population. Due to the nature of the hospitality industry as a for-profit business, hotels are held to specific community service duties. The results of this research show that running a hotel may have both beneficial and negative effects on the local population and its natural surroundings. Attracting visitors, creating jobs, supporting infrastructure development, and providing economic possibilities for the host community are all ways in which hotels may play an important part in the development of their host towns.

Keywords: Hotel, Hospitality, Social responsibilities, Communities, Development

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations [1], "hotel social responsibility" refers to the degree to which hotels and other hospitality enterprises consider the effects of their actions on the areas in which they are located. There is an increasing need to go beyond financial indicators to gauge a hotel's contribution to the communities in which they are located. Sustainable practices, community participation, and ethical decision-making are all factors in determining a hotel's social responsibility, which in turn benefits the host community [2,3]. The relevance of evaluating a hotel's social responsibility in light of the environmental, social, and economic difficulties facing local communities has been the subject of a number of recent studies. Smith and Johnson [4], for instance, discovered that hotels with a strong commitment to sustainability have a beneficial effect on the local environment, improve the quality of life for locals, and help to preserve cultural assets.

^{*1}Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria

²Department of Tourism Management Technology, The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Nigeria

³Department of Hospitality Management, Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Nigeria

⁴Department of Sustainability Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan Nigeria.

Jones [2], clarifies that social responsibility in the hotel industry relates to the hotel's commitment to sustainable and ethical practices that benefit not only the investors but also the customers, employees, local community, and the environment. Socially responsible behavior in hotels includes effective sustainability planning, maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community, transparent and ethical governance, promoting fair labor practices, ensuring employee well-being, fostering diversity and inclusion, and minimizing environmental impact. Hotels can contribute to a more sustainable and responsible tourism industry by adopting strategies such as tracking resource consumption, waste generation, and other key indicators, using energy-efficient technologies, reducing waste, and promoting eco-friendly building designs. Regularly assessing and reporting on sustainability performance is crucial for continuous improvement. Social responsibility initiatives can improve a hotel's brand awareness and loyalty for customers, leading to retention and loyalty [5].

It is long past time for someone to go into the many facets of evaluating a hotel's social responsibility, using studies, industry data, and good examples. This research elucidates the main determinants of a hotel's social responsibility, such as its commitment to the environment, its patronage of neighborhood businesses, its respect for cultural traditions, and its engagement with its surrounding neighborhood and community [6,7]. These metrics are in line with the UNSDGs and may be used as a guide for hotels as they assess and enhance their CSR initiatives [1]. The beneficial effects that socially responsible hotels may have on their host communities will be shown through real-world examples, including increased prosperity, broader participation, and more sustainable growth. It is also crucial to consider the positive effects that socially responsible hotel operations have on the hotel's reputation, brand image, customer loyalty, and staff satisfaction [8,9].

Taking social responsibility seriously as a business strategy is becoming more crucial for hotels as the global tourist sector expands. This can result in increased customer loyalty and a more positive brand image [10]. However, it is important to note that not much has been done by researchers as regards the essence of hotels' social responsibility, leaving a gap for this study to investigate what the social responsibility of hotels actually entails. The hotel sector has come to appreciate the value of social responsibility in recent years [11]. When a hotel takes on social responsibility, they voluntarily help improve the local community's social, economic, and environmental conditions. The research offers a thorough look at how hotels may evaluate and improve their social responsibility in the neighborhoods they serve. The research examines how hotels may serve as models of good corporate citizenship and catalysts for positive change in their local communities by drawing on relevant academic literature and professional resources.

This study is therefore premised on the following research questions:

- 1. How do hotels' environmental sustainability practices influence their relationship with host communities and enhance local environmental conservation efforts?
- 2. What is the impact of hotels' economic sustainability efforts, such as sourcing from local businesses, on the economic development of host communities?
- 3. To what extent does the promotion of social sustainability, including hiring local residents and supporting cultural activities, affect community perceptions of hotels?
- 4. How do staff development programs in the hotel industry contribute to employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational performance?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Hotel Social Responsibilities

The premise behind "hotel social responsibility" is that lodging establishments have a duty to the communities in which they are located, in addition to their visitors and stockholders. Environmental sustainability, community participation, ethical behaviors, and social activism are all examples of what this term entails [2,3]. Sustainable practices are an integral part of the social responsibility of hotels. Due to their high rates of energy use, trash production, and water use, hotels leave a substantial imprint on the environment. Hotels may reduce their negative effects on

the environment by adopting green practices including using less energy, recycling more, and conserving water [6]. Hotels may use standards set by environmental certification programs like LEED and Green Globe to evaluate and enhance their sustainability efforts [4].

Hotel social responsibility also includes trying to involve itself with the local community. Supporting local companies, buying local goods, and hiring locals are all ways in which hotels may help their host towns grow and prosper [7]. Hotels may improve the lives of locals by working with nonprofits and other community groups to meet their needs [3]. Ethical behavior on the part of hotel staff is essential to social responsibility. To achieve this goal, businesses must adhere to ethical sourcing standards, promote diversity and inclusion, and uphold respect for human rights [2]. Building trust and loyalty among staff, customers, and the community at large is a top priority for hotels that place an emphasis on ethical procedures [8]. In addition, hotels may play an active role in social activity and advocacy as part of their social duty. When it comes to larger social concerns like poverty reduction, education, and environmental protection, some hotels take an active role [9]. Hotels can help solve social concerns and have a good effect on the world by making use of the resources and influence they already have.

Host Hotels & Resorts [12], posit that ethical, environmental, and social responsibilities of hotels to their local communities make up what is known as "hotel social responsibility." Hotels can make positive contributions to the well-being and development of their host communities by embracing sustainable practices, interacting with local communities, adhering to ethical standards, and advocating for social causes. Sustainable actions, such hiring locals and buying from small companies, as well as philanthropic endeavors, may all be weighed in an environmental impact assessment [13].

Hotels Social Responsibilities Metrics

It is essential to evaluate a hotel's sense of social responsibility toward its host community in order to learn the full extent of its influence on the area. The social responsibility of hotels may be evaluated in the following ways:

Active Participation and Collaboration with Host Communities is a Key Component of Hotel Social Responsibility via Community Engagement. Hotels may become involved in their neighborhoods in a number of ways, such as through patronizing neighborhood establishments, purchasing regionally produced goods, hiring neighborhood residents, and collaborating with neighborhood groups on social projects [3]. Participation in community activities is good for both the neighborhood and the hotel's long-term viability and prosperity.

The hotel should have a comprehensive sustainability strategy. Energy and water saving, trash management, and lowering carbon emissions are just a few examples of the sustainable measures that a conscientious hotel should use. Reducing energy use and switching to eco-friendly items are two examples of sustainable measures that hotels may adopt. This is good for the environment and might end up saving the hotel money [14].

The hotel must uphold high standards of moral conduct in all of its operations. An ethical hotel will be open about its business methods, including its treatment of employees, its supplier chain, and its stance on fair trade.

Kasim, Ghazali & Zulkarnain [15], assert that partnerships with local nonprofits and other community groups are an essential part of CSR initiatives. Hotels may partner with local community groups, nonprofits, and charity projects to help solve social problems. This might include funding for social causes, healthcare services, environmental preservation efforts, or educational programs [9]. Such partnerships not only help the local community, but they also help the hotel's reputation by demonstrating that it cares about its neighbors.

Another key metrics of organization's social responsibility is staff development, it is an essential part of hotel management that helps personnel advance in their careers and stay motivated, which in turn improves client satisfaction and the hotel's bottom line [16]. Opportunities for personnel to improve in their careers are also crucial to hotel development. Employees are more likely to put out their best effort and stay committed to a business if they can see a clear path to advancement [17]. Hotels can keep their best staff for longer, decrease employee turnover, and foster a culture of excellence by providing opportunities for advancement from within. Methods for doing this include a systematic approach to career advancement, periodic assessments of employee performance, and open dialogue on promotions.

Hotels may have a beneficial effect on the local economy by supporting local companies via community outreach activities. To this end, it is helpful to make purchases from regional vendors, farms, and shops. As a result, hotels may help foster local business, protect cultural heritage, and bolster local economies [7]. In addition, hotels may team up with regional vendors to feature regional cuisine and culture, giving visitors a true taste of the area.

Some lodging establishments have initiated programs meant to protect and showcase local traditions. Showing off local talent, hosting cultural events, and helping out craftsmen are all great ways to do this [18]. The reputation and financial performance of a hotel are directly tied to its social duty toward the communities it serves [19]. There is a direct correlation between a hotel's good impact on the local community and the number of socially aware guests it attracts.

Potential Negative Effect of Hotel on its Host Communities

Even while hotels are generally beneficial to the economies of the places they are placed, there are sometimes undesirable side effects. Over-tourism, in which excessive visitor numbers put a strain on a destination's facilities and services as well as its citizens' quality of life, is one such unintended consequence. Destination towns may experience a loss of cultural authenticity and identity as a consequence of over-tourism, as well as problems with crowding and transportation. Over-tourism may be exacerbated by the fast expansion of hotels in high-visibility areas, which can lead to an influx of tourists that overwhelms the area's resources [20]. The host community may experience many social, cultural, and environmental problems as a result. Over-tourism has societal consequences since it might increase the likelihood of friction between visitors and locals. Noise pollution, higher crime rates, and a lack of personal space and privacy are just a few ways in which a swarm of visitors may affect the life of locals [21]. It is also possible for gentrification and displacement to occur as a result of the increased cost of living brought on by the tourist sector. The cultural significance of local traditions and rituals might be lost if they become commercialized and commoditized as a consequence of an increase in tourism [22]. As local customs are altered or abandoned to meet the expectations of visitors, this may have a negative impact on the cultural legacy of the host communities.

The effects on the environment are also quite important. Degradation of local landscapes, pollution, and disturbance of flora and fauna are only some of the negative effects that may result from an increase in the number of tourists visiting an area [21]. When the number of visitors exceeds what the area can comfortably accommodate, problems with waste management, water shortages, and the loss of natural resources might occur. Hotel development may be beneficial to local economies, but there are also drawbacks that must be considered and addressed. In instance, excessive tourism may result in congestion, resource depletion, disputes, the commercialization of culture, and environmental damage. To maintain the long-term success of host communities, it is crucial for destination stakeholders to use sustainable tourism strategies and to manage the consequences of tourism properly. **Table 1** shows the identified gaps in reviewed relevant literatures.

The selection of the studies was done using the best practicable method for empirical review, and this involves a systematic and transparent approach that ensures the inclusion of relevant and credible studies. Specific criteria that authors and their studies must meet were first established; the criteria used include relevance of the study and it alignment with the research focus; recency of the studies, that is studies published within a specific timeframe (e.g., the last 5-10 years) to maintain current relevance; the methodological rigor of the studies; geographic and contextual focus of the studies; and of course, language, which is limited to studies written in accessible English language for clear interpretation. Scientific and credible databases like Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, or JSTOR provided the source for these studies, with the use of keywords and Boolean operators to access the relevant empirical studies used in the table.

Author(s)	Research Performed	Results	Research Gap
Gossling [21]	Hotel's Corporate-Social	Hotels are now increasingly	Strategies for hotel's
	Responsibilities to its host	compelled to be committed to	commitment to its host
	community	their communities	communities
Huang [22]	The effects on the environmental factors on hotel performance	Environmental factors such natural disasters, the ecosystem, population density, and pollution amongst have direct impact hotel performance	How hotels are supposed to bridge the gap in their communities to ensure environmental sustainability
Dredge & Jamal [20]	Community participation in urban development and built cities	The role of stakeholders in the emergence of urbanization	The level of involvement of stakeholders, as decision makers
Rahman [3]	The role of hospitality facilities in social integration	Community and social integration through shared responsibilities	The role of staff as internal communities of the hospitality
Delpechitre [23]	Hospitality and community development: Matters arising	Key indicators of modern hotels role in community building	establishment

Table 1. The identified gaps in reviewed relevant literatures.

METHODOLOGY

This survey used an empirical approach, reviewing existing research on the topic of social duties through a desk research. In order to comprehend the present state of knowledge on the influence the assessment of hotel's social duty to host its communities, the study methodology focuses on performing a complete analysis of academic journals, books, industry reports, and other scholarly sources. Thus, instead of hypothesis, research questions guided the study to explore various aspects of hotels' social responsibility. Key results and trends from the extant literature are summarized based on the survey questions which include: how do hotels' environmental sustainability practices influence their relationship with host communities and enhance local environmental conservation efforts; what is the impact of hotels' economic sustainability efforts, such as sourcing from local businesses, on the economic development of host communities: to what extent does the promotion of social sustainability, including hiring local residents and supporting cultural activities, affect community perceptions of hotels; and how do staff development programs in the hotel industry contribute to employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational performance.

The empirical review focuses on the hospitality establishments and franchises that have successfully implemented corporate social responsibility; this serves as population for this study. Some of these samples includes Marriot, Swiss International, Protea, Subway among others. The review therefore purposively captures relevant information about the establishments' social responsibilities. These reviews were conducted over a period of 11 months to ensure consistency of responses and updated information about the targeted population. The empirical review was done systematically with the study objective being in tandem with target population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In empirical research, the necessity of hypothesis depends on the study's design and objectives. This study therefore assessed and described hotels' social responsibility to host communities rather than test a specific cause and effect relationship. Hence, the analysis of the empirical reviews adopted for this study in relation to the research objectives is explained under the themes below:

Hotel Social Responsibility to Host Communities

Hotels exist primarily to meet the needs of individuals who are traveling by providing them with a safe place to stay, food and drink, and other amenities that are often found in private homes but are inaccessible to them while they are gone [14]. Hotels have traditionally served as sites for a wide variety of different activities, including but not limited to doing business, hosting social gatherings, hosting political headquarters, hosting tourists, and even functioning as permanent homes [24].

Both positive and negative impacts on the community's economy have been attributed to the presence of hotels [25]. Locals are often forced to relocate when hotels are built or when property values rise as a result of hotel development. A loss of cultural legacy and social relationships may result if this happens to a community's members [26]. When hotels practice social responsibility, they give back to the local community and protect the environment. The main findings of the review indicate that more narrowly, social responsibility encompasses these four domains:

- 1. First and foremost, hotels need to practice environmental sustainability by incorporating ecofriendly policies and procedures and educating their clientele about the importance of doing their part for the planet [21].
- 2. Economic sustainability: Hotels play an important role in the communities they serve, so it's in their best interest to support the local economy by buying goods and services from local businesses rather than shipping them in from elsewhere [2].
- 3. Thirdly, hotels should practice social sustainability by promoting local cultural activities, hiring residents of the area, and ensuring that the community as a whole benefit from tourism [21].
- 4. Health and safety: Hotels must guarantee that their activities do not compromise the health and safety of the local population by instituting effective safety processes and enforcing safety standards among their staff [27].

Indicators of Socially Responsible Behavior in the Hotel Industry

The findings also show certain indicators of excellent practices that may be used to evaluate hotels' social responsibility efforts. One major indicator is staff development. Staff development is an essential part of hotel management because it helps staff grow personally and professionally, which in turn boosts client happiness and productivity. Training programs, promotion possibilities, mentoring relationships, and constructive criticism are just some of the ways in which hotel managers may engage in their employees' growth [28]. Hotels may get an edge in the market and improve morale and productivity by investing in their employees' professional growth. Training programs are a great way for hotels to invest in their employees and foster growth. Customer service, communication, leadership, and department-specific technical competences are just some of the topics that may be addressed in such programs [29]. Employees' capacity to satisfy visitor expectations is enhanced by the training they get, which provides them with new skills and current information. The hotel's dedication to its employees' personal and professional growth is seen in its regular training programs, which may boost employee engagement and happiness with their jobs.

Opportunities for personnel to improve in their careers are also crucial to hotel development. Employees are more likely to put out their best effort and stay committed to a business if they can see a clear path to advancement [17]. Hotels can keep their best staff for longer, decrease employee turnover, and foster a culture of excellence by providing opportunities for advancement from within. A formalized training and advancement plan, periodic reviews of performance, and open dialogue about prospects may all help achieve this goal. In the hospitality business, mentoring programs are essential for the growth of employees. Knowledge transfer, skill development, and individual development may all benefit from pairing seasoned workers with those just entering the workforce [23]. Mentors may aid mentees in overcoming obstacles and growing as professionals by offering advice, encouragement, and constructive criticism. Having a mentor may help employees feel more connected to the company and their coworkers, which can improve morale and productivity. Finally, it's important to evaluate and comment on employees'

progress on a frequent basis. Employees who get continuous feedback on their performance are better equipped to identify their own areas of strength and growth and work to strengthen those areas [29]. To make sure their staff gets the help they need to do well in their jobs, hotels may hold frequent performance reviews, help them create personal improvement goals, and encourage them to provide and take constructive criticism.

Therefore, it should be emphasized that the hotel industry has increasingly prioritized sustainability and social responsibility. Therefore, aside the earlier mentioned staff development, there are other several indicators of socially responsible behavior in the hotel industry, including effective sustainability planning, maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community, transparent and ethical governance, promoting fair labor practices, ensuring employee well-being, fostering diversity and inclusion, and minimizing environmental impact. Hotels can contribute to a more sustainable and responsible tourism industry by adopting strategies such as tracking resource consumption, waste generation, and other key indicators, using energy-efficient technologies, reducing waste, and promoting eco-friendly building designs. Regularly assessing and reporting on sustainability performance is crucial for continuous improvement. Hotel guests, investors, and employees are displaying a growing interest in responsible environmental practices, sustainable tourism, social welfare, corporate governance, and transparency. A more sustainable tourist business is possible in part because guests are choosing hotels that place a premium on social responsibility [30].

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the findings of this study highlight the critical role of social responsibility in hotel management. Hence, through the integration of sustainability measures, ethical labor practices, community engagement, and strong employee development programs, hotel managers can enhance business performance while positively impacting society. This is because, in attracting visitors, creating jobs, supporting infrastructure development, and providing economic possibilities, hotels may play an important role in the growth of host towns. Corporate accountability in the hotel sector relies heavily on the evaluation of a hotel's social obligation to host its community. Hotels may demonstrate their dedication to the well-being of their communities by emphasizing environmental sustainability, community participation, and ethical business practices. Environmental stewardship, community cooperation, and cultural preservation are just few of the criteria that will be considered throughout the evaluation process. Tracking energy use, trash management, and water usage are all quantitative and qualitative variables that may be used in this analysis. A hotel's community outreach may be greatly improved with the use of technologically advanced feedback systems. Hotels contribute to the overall growth of the places in which they are located by actively interacting with the community and enacting sustainable practices. Evaluating a hotel's commitment to social responsibility is useful for establishing trust, building loyalty, and improving the hotel's and surrounding areas' long-term prospects.

Additionally, the findings of this study provide several managerial insights for hotel executives, policymakers, and stakeholders in the hospitality industry. This include opportunity for environmental responsibility, strengthening of local economic impact, strategic enhancement of employee development and retention, and community engagement and social responsibility amongst others. These insights can guide decision-making, strategy development, and operational improvements in the industry. A notable limitation of this study centers around the methodological scope. Since the study was descriptive and exploratory, relying on empirical review, it does not establish cause-and-effect relationships between hotel CSR practices and their impact on communities. However, despite this limitation, the study provides valuable insights into the role of social responsibility in the hospitality sector. Future research should adopt broader geographical coverage, longitudinal approaches, mixed methods, and comparative analyses to provide a more comprehensive and data-driven understanding of CSR in the hotel industry. Advancing these research areas will help hospitality managers, policymakers, and researchers develop more effective CSR strategies that balance business profitability with community well-being and environmental sustainability.

It is therefore recommended that hotels should encourage their staff to be the ears and mouth and correspondence between the hotel and the host community. Hotels should also contribute their quota to the development of their host community. The following can be a starting point for the hospitality industry:

- 1. Provision of street lights powered by the hotel.
- 2. Provision of portable water that can be accessed by the host community without creating nuisance in the hotel premises.
- 3. Incentives and school supplies for public schools in the community. Scholarships (full or partial) can be made available for indigent students and pupils.
- 4. Waste should be properly managed by the hotel to avoid pollution of the host community.
- 5. Community service can be done occasionally by staff and management of the hotel to foster community participation.
- 6. Hotels should earnestly consider the host community as an important stakeholder in their business growth. Failure to do this can disrupt or mar the hotel's reputation and security.

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