

Sustainability Practices, Opportunities, and Challenges of Hospitality Industry in the New Normal

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive correlational research explored the sustainability practices, opportunities and challenges, of the hospitality industry during the new normal in the Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines, for the year 2023. Respondents were selected using quota sampling, considering variables such as age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification. Using non-parametric statistics, findings indicated that respondents, primarily aged 40 and below, male, with bachelor's degrees, and 4 to 6 years in the industry, showed consistently very desirable sustainability practices, greatest opportunities, and great challenged. Noteworthy sustainability practices included high energy conservation but lower scores for providing comfort and enjoyment. Despite demographic variations, respondents demonstrated very desirable in sustainability practices, greatest opportunities, and greatest challenged. Moreover, demographic factors showed no significant effect on sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges, suggesting stability and standardization in the industry's response to the new normal. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive associations among sustainable practices, opportunities, and challenges, underscoring the need for a strategic approach to balance these elements in the evolving hospitality landscape.

Keywords: Sustainability Practices, Opportunities, and Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the modern era, travelers, diners, hotel guests, and retailers around the world want to be sure that they are patronizing businesses that adhere to ethical business practices in terms of the environment, society, and culture. Indeed, sustainability practices are crucial in hotels, restaurants, and other tourism establishments. For Lacalle (2021), green initiatives are practices that hotels put into action to be more sustainable. The ultimate goal of sustainability is to minimize your hotel's impact on the region by reducing the unnecessary use of energy, supporting the use of alternative energy, and reducing greenhouse gases to change the course of global warming. When it comes to sustainability, the hotel sector has been adjusting its emphasis and adopting a proactive stance. The sector is aiming to promote ethical business and tourism, from better managing energy and water usage to banning single-use plastics and food waste. Companies are reviewing their sustainability practices, shifting beyond symbolic programs to those that genuinely battle climate

change, in an effort to correctly evaluate their impact and provide transparency to investors, consumers, and employees. Companies are using technology to quantify less obvious indirect emissions that are harming the environment and reveal their true environmental impact (Conte, 2021).

In the case of hospitality industry in the province of Negros Occidental located in Region VI Philippines, hotels are contributors to local economic growth and sustainability practices are fundamental to businesses in different areas to provide a valuable contribution to economic development and growth in the new normal. At the same time, the role of the hospitality industry is important, hotel managers also play important roles in the success of its sustainability practices in the industry, as well as have a strong influence in conserving its resources.

To support the local government and hospitality industry's economic and social objectives when it comes to sustainable tourism and hospitality industry, there is a need to ensure that practices fall within the bounds of policies and in accord with the standards of transparency and accountability. Likewise, seizing the opportunities to pursue the sustainable practices of the hotels. The researcher observed that only few of the hotels in the province have already created a separate department to ensure sustainability. Thus, this study conceptualized, and deemed necessary to determine the operations and practices of the hotels in the province of Negros in terms of its sustainability practices, opportunities, and encountered challenges as a basis for operations enhancement likewise, this would benefit the community and could be used as a reference of other LGUs, the tourism, and the hospitality industry in pursuing to create sustainable establishments.

Statements of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the sustainability practices, opportunities and challenges of the hospitality industry in the new normal in the Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines for the Fiscal Year 2023.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
2. What are the sustainability practices of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
3. What are the opportunities of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
4. What are the challenges encountered by the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
5. Are there significant differences in the sustainability practices of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
6. Are there significant differences in the opportunities of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
7. Are there significant differences in the challenges encountered by the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
8. Are there significant relationships among sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges of hospitality industry in the new normal?

Hypotheses

1. There are no significant differences in the sustainability practices of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification.
2. There are no significant differences in the opportunities of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification.
3. There are no significant differences in the challenges encountered by the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification.
5. There are no significant relationships among sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges of hospitality industry in the new normal.

Theoretical Framework

For sustainability practices, this study used the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) of Hamid and Salmi (2015). The TPB is a theory for making predictions regarding the formulation and execution of plans and actions. It looks at how behaviors are changed through influencing intention. In the theory, the proximal

predictor of one's behavior is his/her intention to engage in the behavior. The intention is determined by attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The first component of TPB is an attitude which it measures the extent to which an individual has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behavior. This in turn is predicted by the sum of the products of beliefs about the outcome of the behavior and evaluations of those outcomes. The second component is subjective norm, used to measure the influence of other people on behavior. This influence is predicted by the sum of normative beliefs and motivations to comply. The third component is perceived behavioral control, reflecting beliefs regarding access to resources and opportunities needed to perform behavior. It has 2 mechanisms where the first reflects the availability of resources needed to engage in the behavior such as access to money, time, and other resources. The second component reflects the focal person's self-confidence in their ability to conduct the behavior. Moreover, the theory is capable of explaining 20% of the variance in prospective measure of actual behavior. The meta-analysis on TPB showed that perceived behavior control posited that perceived behavior control influences intention behavior directly and indirectly.

TPB is a theory that can be used to predict managers' behavior from the perspective of sustainable practices and industrialists. It can also be applied to predict industrialists' behaviors toward the sustainable hospitality industry. The sustainable tourism and hospitality industry focuses on three important pillars of sustainability: economy, society, and environment. Therefore, implementing TPB to understand the behaviors of hospitality industry managers and owners is useful for identifying their motivation toward sustainability practices in hotels and other establishments. TPB is considered a theory that requires further investigation to predict entrepreneur behavior in sustainability practices.

For Opportunities, this study used the Systems Theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1901-1972), a modern management theory. When applied to business, experts shorten 'general systems theory' to just 'System Theory'. In fact, System Theory is more of a perspective than a fully formed practice. Systems Theory encourages you to realize that your business is a system and is governed by the same laws and behaviors that affect every other biological organization.

This theory supported the policy framework that served as the basis for the creation and implementation of sustainability practices in the hotels, as stated in Republic Act No. 9593, also known as "the Tourism Act of 2009." This act declares tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance. It emphasizes the need to harness tourism as an engine of socio-economic growth, cultural affirmation, and national development. The state aims to ensure the development of Philippine tourism that is for and by the Filipino people, conserve and promote their heritage and national identity, recognize sustainable tourism development as integral to national socioeconomic development efforts, and promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities.

For Challenges, this study was linked to the Stakeholder Theory of R. Edward Freeman (1984). This Stakeholder Theory of organizational management and business ethics addresses morals and values in managing an organization. It presents a view of capitalism that emphasizes the interconnected relationships between a business and its customers, suppliers, employees, investors, communities, and others who have a stake in the organization. The theory argues that a firm should create value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders.

This theory emphasizes the challenges faced by stakeholders and shareholders, specifically hotel managers. More importantly, these challenges can be transformed into opportunities for sustainability practices while prioritizing shareholders' wealth as the fundamental objective of the business.

Conceptual Framework

This study aimed to determine the sustainability practices, challenges, and opportunities of the hospitality industry in the new normal in the Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines for the Fiscal Year 2023.

The independent variables included respondents' profile, such as age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification. On the other hand, dependent variables were sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges.

Regarding age, respondents were categorized as "young" (40 years old and below) and "old" (41 years old and above). It was presumed that older employees prefer to broaden and refine their current knowledge on sustainability, maintain a strong need to control how and when they faced or overcome challenges and carefully examining how to maximize opportunities in hotels compared to younger respondents.

For sex, respondents were categorized as "male" and "female". It was presumed that females had different levels of sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges compared to males.

Educational attainment categorized respondents as holders of "Bachelor's Degree", "Master's Degree", and "Doctorate Degree". The researcher believed that those with higher education had more opportunities and challenges in sustainability practices in hotels. Challenges encountered were assumed to be converted into opportunities due to their higher level of knowledge and skills.

Years in the hospitality industry were classified based on length of service: "3 years and below", "4 to 6 years", "7-9 years", and "10 years and above". It was presumed that those with 10 years and above in service had a

higher level of sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges due to their experience and familiarity with operations.

Regarding area of assignment, classifications included "food and beverage", "housekeeping", "sales and marketing", "food preparation", "finance", and "human resource and management." The researcher presumed that sustainability practices were highly practiced in the food and beverage area.

Hotel classification included "5-star", "4-star", "3-star", and "economy". It was assumed that 5-star hotels had higher levels of sustainability practices, as well as challenges and opportunities.

Lastly, the researcher assumed that there were opportunities to implement sustainability practices in the new normal, along with challenges in hotel operations. Effective sustainability practices and resource management were assumed to convert these challenges into opportunities. These concepts are illustrated in Figure 1.

Research Paradigm

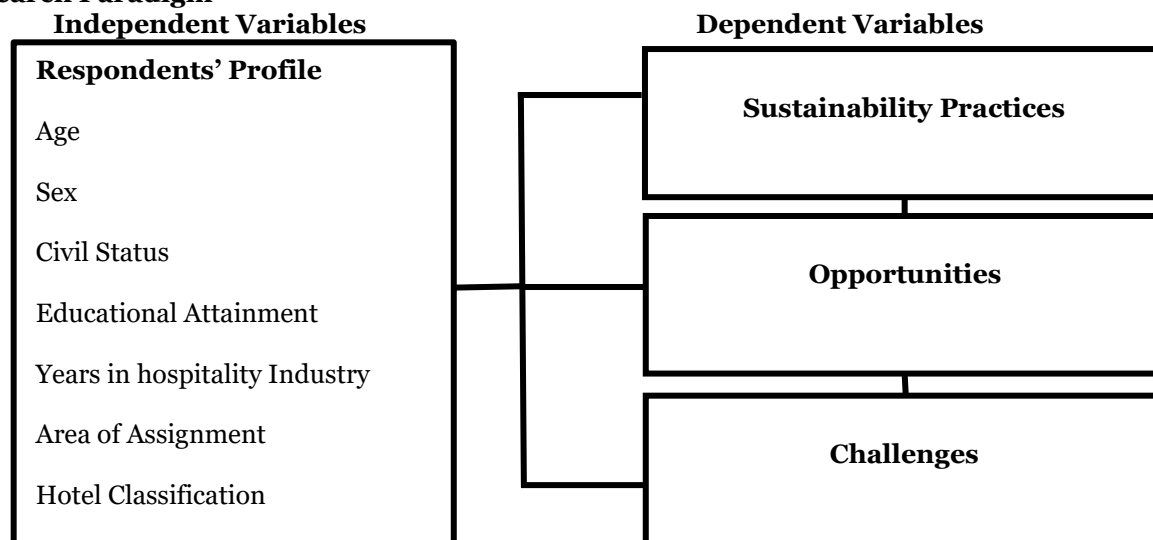


Figure 1. Schematic diagram showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This section deals with the literature and studies relevant to the present research. It is divided into four major parts: conceptual literature, foreign studies, local studies, and relevance of literature and studies.

Conceptual Literature

On Sustainability Practices of Hospitality Industry

Management practices usually refer to the working methods and innovations that managers use to improve the effectiveness of work systems (Siebers et al., 2008). Common management practices include empowering staff, training staff, introducing schemes for improving quality, and introducing various forms of new technology. Processes slightly formal developed by the organizations to guide the entrepreneurial action and direction and to influence the behavior of people (Muñoz-Maya et al., 2021). Management practices are the working methods and innovations that managers use to make the organization more efficient (Luenendonk, 2017).

Roy, M. A., et al. (2021) identified consumers' current preferences and dislikes and their behavioral responses towards Contactless Hospitality. The study also revealed the difficulties and remedies to overcome and reduce the risk of infection spread with contactless practices.

Building and maintaining a sustainable workforce and eliminating turnover intentions of organizational employees have become one of the foremost global issues confronted by hospitality organizations (Yam et al., 2018; Murray and Holmes, 2021).

According to Southwales (2023), sustainability is widely regarded as the key to a successful business in the 21st century. Sustainability, or social responsibility, is fast becoming a prime concern for public and private sectors alike, and the hotel industry is no exception. In addition, business concerns such as rising costs, increased government pressures, and competitors' actions have only motivated hoteliers to embrace sustainability and make it an integral part of the corporate agenda. Tourists themselves are also increasingly aware of the issue of sustainability, expecting hotels to assume responsibility and conduct their business sustainably.

Sustainability practices are the main concept of development, and tourism has enormous economic, environmental, and social impacts in the modern world. Therefore, the development of this sector is linked with all three mentioned dimensions of sustainability. As the global economy, social, and technological development processes continue to expand, the analysis of new and specific forms present in business is

necessary in tourism as well to achieve sustainable development. One of these involves clusters, gaining greater significance by locating geographical companies and establishments within one network, closely cooperating and focusing on mutual business results, and complementing each other. The innovations are expected to contribute to breakthroughs at the international level and may determine companies' operations under new, effective organizational forms that generalize ideas, provide a competitive advantage, and open new possibilities in tourism as well (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017). Therefore, sustainable tourism development issues are closely linked with competitiveness through increasing innovations in all areas relevant to business operations. Additionally, tourism is described as a business distinguished by its great variety, integrity, and multi-planning. The great interconnection of structural components shaping tourism business allows for presumptions for the companies providing tourism services to cooperate in the implementation of innovations (Madhavan and Rastogi, 2018).

Lacalle (2021) asserted that green initiatives are practices that hotels implement to become more sustainable. The primary objective of sustainability is to minimize a hotel's impact on the environment by reducing unnecessary energy use, promoting alternative energy sources, and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions to combat global warming.

According to Fredricks (2020), hotels worldwide are adopting various green initiatives such as smart showers, solar power installations, and waste diversion. However, what works for one hotel may not be feasible for others. Sustainability is crucial in the business world for achieving growth and meeting customer expectations. With an increasing number of consumers favoring eco-friendly businesses, the travel industry is taking note. For instance, TripAdvisor has launched its GreenLeaders Program, highlighting hotels with environmentally friendly practices for conscious travelers, including those with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

Furthermore, hotels can anticipate significant cost savings by embracing sustainability practices. This involves reducing energy and water consumption, as well as optimizing staffing for maintenance and guest services.

According to Conte (2021), when it comes to sustainability, the hotel sector has been adjusting its emphasis and adopting a proactive stance. The sector is aiming to promote ethical business and tourism, from better managing energy and water usage to banning single-use plastics and food waste. Companies are reviewing their sustainability practices, shifting beyond symbolic programs to those that genuinely battle climate change, in an effort to correctly evaluate their impact and provide transparency to investors, consumers, and employees. Companies are using technology to quantify less obvious indirect emissions that are harming the environment and reveal their true environmental impact.

According to Diamatris (2022), there was no denying, however, that pressure is mounting on hospitality businesses to prioritize sustainability. And there are two directions from which this pressure is applied. The first is at the stakeholder level, where environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors are becoming more important as investment criteria. This is already taking root in the United States and expanding quickly in Europe, with the UK setting the pace.

Eco-friendly has historically meant more expensive and therefore, guests must be on board to make this work. Eco-friendly, sustainable, and green practices can have limitations and be costly to set up, have continuous training required, can be time-consuming, may have a limited range of products, require a leadership level of expertise, and can be impacted by location. A true eco-friendly hotel effort requires research, planning, training, and education for stakeholders and making sustainability part of a hotel's strategic efforts. Eco-friendly efforts may save money overall, and therefore position a hotel as a community, environmental and guest connector (Jishi, 2021).

On Opportunities of Hospitality Industry

According to Proven Partners (2022), a vast array of alternatives for sustainability in hotels become available as consumer demand for a more sustainable lifestyle spurs innovation and creativity. There isn't a single, universal approach; rather, it comes down to personalizing what sustainability means to your company. Sustainability and green initiatives not only help your business save money, but they also become a part of your culture to enrich your location and pique the interest of your target audience. These initiatives can range from eco-friendly hotel amenities to supporting regional organic producers and artisans or even local cultural and natural heritage.

Adeola and Ezenwafor (2016) suggested private-public partnerships between government agencies, hospitality colleges, and businesses; strategic partnerships between expert hospitality institutions and business schools; cooperation among hospitality business owners; and improvement in managerial practices to enhance the hospitality sector in Nigeria.

In the corporate sector, sustainability is crucial for generating growth and retaining clients. Consumers are increasingly looking for green companies and paying extra for environmentally friendly goods and services. Three out of ten customers favor eco-friendly businesses, and the tourism sector is taking notice. Becoming green will also likely result in significant financial savings for hotels. Reducing your energy and water usage and staffing for things like maintenance and guest services are all part of moving toward sustainability (Fredericks, 2020).

According to Walet (2019), any hotel has the potential to increase efficiency and sustainability while also reaping major financial rewards. His study outlines various ways to achieve so, including updating the lighting and HVAC in guest rooms, installing renewable energy sources, replacing water fixtures, and local composting. However, a large portion of the hotel sector is passing up significant operational and technical potential for cost-savings and efficiency. Hotels that adopt sustainability efforts experience rapid benefits.

An eco-friendly hotel also works to reduce its environmental impact by employing sustainable best practices in maintenance, services, and supply chains, e.g., reducing energy and water consumption, aiming for zero waste generation, and using environmentally friendly products (Operto, 2021).

Additionally, many hotels have adopted environmentally friendly practices to cater to their guests' pro-environmental attitudes (Xu and Pratt, 2018). Merli et al. (2019) noted that travelers' perceptions of a hotel's commitment to sustainability refer to the extent to which travelers feel that the eco-friendly hotel is committed to sustainability practices.

On Challenges of Hospitality Industry

Cheng et al. (2018) and Ahmed et al. (2020) agreed that there is evidence that the crisis will present different challenges and results for the tourism and hospitality industries, with corresponding implications for the hotel sector and employment in these industries.

Eco-friendly has historically meant more expensive and therefore, guests must be on board to make this work. Eco-friendly, sustainable, and green practices can have limitations and be costly to set up, have continuous training required, can be time-consuming, may have a limited range of products, require a leadership level of expertise, and can be impacted by location. A true eco-friendly hotel effort requires research, planning, training, and education for stakeholders and making sustainability part of a hotel's strategic efforts. Eco-friendly efforts may save money overall, and therefore position a hotel as a community, environmental, and guest connector (Adapted from Jishi, 2021).

According to Pierce (2021), two significant interrelated environmental challenges that have a significant impact on the hotel sector are biodiversity loss and climate change. In addition to hotels on the US coast fearing flooding and restaurants considering mass fish extinction, ski resorts in the Alps are losing their snow.

According to Skift (2019), a poll of international hotel chains and airlines, including Accor, Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, Indian Hotels, and Scandic, produced a list of their top worries about how climate change may affect their future operations. Drought and insufficient water supplies, hurricanes and cyclones, flooding, increasing sea levels, and higher average temperatures were at the top of the list.

According to research, the hospitality sector must cut its carbon emissions per room by more than 90% by 2050. This is required to guarantee that the growth predictions do not result in a comparable rise in carbon emissions. Hotels will need to make far more efforts to keep global warming to 1.5°C to avoid the worst effects of climate change. To reduce their environmental impact, some of the biggest hotel groups have already embraced sustainable practices (Oakly, 2022).

Caruana et al. (2018) found that self-proclaimed responsible tourists thought that "responsibility" could be translated into many different dimensions, including "honest marketing" at one end of the spectrum and deeply immersive cultural and educational exchanges with local people at the other. Not only does this show that there are varying levels of awareness about what concepts such as sustainability and responsibility mean to consumers, but it highlights the malleability of the ideas and ideals behind them, and demonstrates that consumers can adopt a range of styles and positions on different occasions and in different situations, highlighting the challenges of identifying specifically sustainable market segments. This makes the task of marketers and marketing more complex and calls for a better understanding of the varying "shades" of sustainability in the market.

A sustainability consumerism approach means that firms and social organizations will aim to meet the needs of consumers with relevant pro-environmental or responsible offers, often by highlighting their firm's sustainability based on certain criteria. This approach faces numerous challenges, such as raising awareness of consumers, often at a time when they are not predisposed to it, and convincing them that the alternative offered will fulfill their needs. It assumes that marketing and communication can make sustainability relevant to the decision-making and purchasing behavior of the consumer. There is much evidence that shows this is weak in tourism, through evidence showing how Eco labels have not reached sufficient market impact (Chong and Verma, 2018) or because they have not been sufficiently market-relevant (Rex and Baumann, 2017).

LaCalle (2021), suggested that operational themes are important for hotels to operate in an eco-friendly manner. For example, eco-friendly themes in a hotel include, energy conservation, amenities selections, waste reduction and efficiency, promoting sustainable means of transportation, choosing cleaning products wisely with minimum impact on the environment, selection of local food products at the hotel restaurant, promoting eco-tourism, water conservation and encouraging guests to make sustainable decisions like reuse of towels, not requesting daily housekeeping and more. Operational themes tend to be consistent from hotel to hotel and the biggest challenge for a hotel is engaging employees and engaging guests in the eco-friendly and sustainable practices of a hotel.

Foreign Studies

Meeroff et al. (2020) in their study, "Implementation of Sustainability Practices in the Hospitality Industry," identified the factors that affect or influence the performance of specific practices to reduce waste, improve energy efficiency, conserve water, and improve air quality. This paper reports the environmental and economic performance as well as the social behavioral impacts of sustainability initiatives implemented by participating hotels. Examples illustrate policies and products that a lodging property can implement to generate environmental and economic benefits. Case studies provide insight into successful implementation of sustainability practices as well as future initiatives needed to maximize the positive impacts. A major takeaway was that many options are easily implementable in the hospitality sector. However, two issues work against meeting planned goals: 1) buy-in from management and 2) understanding the inter-relationships between operations and green lodging goals.

Jackson (2017) in his study, "A Case Study of Hospitality and Tourism Challenges and Opportunities in Malawi," identified that the industry is facing impediments such as physical infrastructure development, management issues, lack of ICT technologies, and marketing challenges. The industry is also characterized by lack or insufficient related rules and policies, high bank interest rates, erratic electricity and high levels of corruption by government officials. The methodology for the research included the online questionnaire and telephone interviews to a sample of 250 participants. Only 194 participants responded to the questionnaire. The targeted group was managers and the owners of the hospitality and tourism business entities. The findings were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. It is believed that quantitative approach gives a lot of information and makes it easier to compile the data onto a chart or graph because of the numbers that are made available. On the other hand, qualitative techniques make it easier to gain a better understanding of the research findings.

Nain (2018) in his study, "A Study on Major Challenges Faced by Hotel Industry Globally" implied that results from the survey of 2016 US and UK internet users; one bad experience is enough to turn off guests from using a particular brand in hotel industry. Today's hotel industry is globally dealing with vast set of major challenges like economic influx (fluctuations in economy), labor shortage and retaining quality personnel, rising technological demand, providing and maintaining absolute cleanliness and hygiene, providing & maintaining excellent and exceptional guest service standards, providing meaningful and memorable personal experiences, sustainability, increasing competition, lack of latest and sophisticated marketing techniques, difficulties in managing energy and resources, providing impeccable safety and security & providing nutshell cyber security and data privacy etc. Today's hotels need to ensure that they exceed expectations at every stage of their guest's stay if they have to ensure long-term profitable growth. To succeed in hotel business, the hotel managers globally need to start working on the above-mentioned challenges by formulating effective strategies with immediate effect.

Awasthi et al. (2021) in their study, "Hospitality and Tourism Industry amid COVID-19 Pandemic" found that there was a change in the perception, expectation, and behavior of consumers as this pandemic has impacted customer buying behaviors & expectations concerning their safety and sanitization which lead to a new set of spelling patterns. While the economy worsening and low expenditure power are aiming to be the key short-term challenges, one of the most important long-run challenges is to fastidiously watch and innovatively act on the dynamic forces of crafting new shopper behaviors, consumption patterns, perceptions, expectations, and trends. Hopefully, like every different market crisis, this too shall pass. However, international and regional travel restrictions have already exhibited a survival threat to the trade with challenges that require utmost attention. The hospitality industry has the responsibility to contribute to shaping a replacement world of cordial reception by redefining safety, sustainability, and productivity. The hotel revenue managers are going to struggle to manage price wars, occupancy drops, and pressures to reduce rates. Hoteliers need to act wisely as promoting dramatic price cuts will impact businesses and quality experiences in the long run. Low occupancy rates are going to be challenging for hotel owners in the initial recovery phase. The focus needs to be diverted from a panicked to a positive approach.

Jones et al. (2016), in their study titled "Sustainability in the Hospitality Industry: Some Personal Reflections on Corporate Challenges and Research Agendas," identified sustainability as a teasing paradox for the hospitality industry and provided a short discussion of the characteristics of sustainability. It then explores the growing interest in corporate sustainability and offers a review of the range of academic research into sustainability within the hospitality industry literature. More generally, the authors suggest three fundamental sets of issues that currently face the industry, namely, defining sustainability within the industry, materiality and independent external assurance and sustainable consumption and the industry's commitment to continuing economic growth. In addressing these three sets of issues, the authors make several suggestions. First that definitions of sustainability within the hospitality industry can be interpreted as being constructed around business imperatives rather than an ongoing commitment to sustainability. Second that materiality and external assurance are not treated comprehensively within the industry, which undermines the credibility of the sustainability reporting process. Third that the concept of sustainable consumption and any critique of the industry's commitment to economic growth are conspicuous by their absence in the both the research literature on sustainability and in sustainability reporting within the industry.

Local Studies

Apritado and Borbonr (2022) in their study, “Challenges and Opportunities in the Hospitality and Tourism Education: A Phenomenological Study” revealed that in this generation with fully established virtual classrooms, tourism and hospitality educators are acutely aware of their weak points and areas in which they must improve. Educators are currently responding to technological developments in the learning management system and training teachers to improve teaching tactics and resources in responding to the challenges. With this, it was recommended for the college may ensure technological and technical literacy by providing intensive faculty development to ensure high-quality online instruction. The administration may consider using a hybrid teaching and learning model that combines new and effective online resources with the face-to-face instruction that students find so valuable and appreciated for further use.

Espiritu and Lawas (2019) in their study, “Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities in Sustainable Tourism Development in Central Visayas: Specific and Common Concerns of Cebu and Bohol” explored the status, issues and concerns, and challenges and opportunities in sustainable tourism development in Central Visayas using the framework of sustainable development, with its three aspects of socio-cultural sustainability, ecological sustainability, and economic sustainability. Cebu and Bohol, the top two tourist destinations in Central Visayas, are popular for the following: world-class hotels, beaches, and resorts; meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) tourism; community-based ecotourism; cultural tourism; and agri-tourism. Both provinces have issues and concerns, challenges, and opportunities—some of which are specific to each, while some are common to both. Among the specific issues and concerns in Cebu are the need for good governance and inter-agency coordination for sustainable tourism, particularly in ecotourism sites, and the need to develop and strengthen more types of alternative tourism. Bohol is concerned with restoring and preserving its heritage structures and ensuring equitable economic growth and environmental sustainability. Their common issues include tourism-induced prostitution, climate change, disaster risk preparedness, growing traffic congestion, water sustainability, solid waste management, air pollution controls, quality of water in seas, preservation of marine resources, the need for an efficient public transportation system, and the implementation of their tourism and environmental codes to ensure sustainability.

Cagurangan (2021) in his study, “Sustainability of Hotel Establishments in Tuguegarao City” utilized the descriptive-survey method secure adequate and reliable sources on the Sustainability practices of hotel establishments in Tuguegarao City in terms of economic, environment, social aspect, employee motivation, customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. Their primary motivation is long-term profitability of the hotel business. Economically, they always offer affordable products. When it comes to environment, they invest in renewable energy resources. From the social aspect, they are friendly to their co-workers. From the employee motivation, they value their employees. And from the customer satisfaction, they have better communication skills with their customers, participants agreed on the perceptions of business ethics and their motivation to practice business sustainability but their level of motivation and employee motivation is often manifested and hotel establishments may participate in the activities of government like consumer welfare month or those activities with advocacy in helping the environment. Owners can give rewards to customers for frequent purchases like loyalty cards, discounts, and other forms to promote products to customers.

Señara and Tabas (2022) in their study, “Challenges and Sustainability of Hotel Industry amidst the Pandemic: “A Survival Quest” implied that the challenges and sustainability of hotel industry amidst the pandemic: a survival quest faces problems in economic gain wherein realizing it can be attainable when business and environment resume to normal and people are responsive and if there is a diversification strategy. The government must find ways and facilitate different employment options to answer the needs of the growing unemployment rate during this pandemic times. There should be an agreement between the government and people to meet halfway and effective implementation of travel restrictions as we faced the test of time during this pandemic. Flexible means of applying the quarantine protocol are needed giving places not severely hit by this pandemic to operate the business at full capacity in making the economy grow. Extending support to hotel business is needed for them to be able to restore their enthusiasm and focus more on strategic activity for economic recovery.

Andulana et al. (2021) in their study, “Challenges and Opportunities in Philippine Tourism amid the COVID-19 Pandemic” discussed the multifaceted challenges and opportunities of the Philippine tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges and opportunities are organized by following the elements of anti-pandemic strategies in the COVID-19 Management Framework. Some pressing challenges are the decline in tourism demand, layoff of workers, demand for online/digital transactions, avoidance of tourists to occupy hotel rooms used as quarantine facilities, and compliance with disaster management and control preparedness protocols. However, tourism industry can thrive through ample opportunities like exploring local tourism, training employees on digital services and safety protocols, rebuilding company brand, improving business facilities, adapting to modern technology, and collaborating with consultants on disaster and risk management. These challenges and opportunities provide the bases for suggestions and recommendations to improve policies for future pandemic planning to cushion any potential impact on the tourism industry.

Relevance of Related Literature and Studies Cited

The review of related literature provided the researcher with a deep understanding of the published research related to the topic under investigation. It covered topics on the concept of sustainability practices, perceived opportunities, and encountered challenges in hotel operations and the hospitality industry, as well as their significance. Sustainability practices in hotels and the hospitality industry should be adhered to, following the policies and guidelines outlined in Republic Act No. 9593, also known as the Tourism Act of 2009. This act declares tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and seeks to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities.

The numerous literatures also increased the researcher's awareness of the wide range of studies on theories and methodologies related to the proposed research, building knowledge on the assessment of sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges encountered in the implementation of particular acts or policies and mandates provided by the national government for the tourism and hospitality industry. It also provided insights to the researcher on how these concepts were applied in his study. Furthermore, it provided a better understanding of the research findings in this particular discipline.

While this study focused on assessing the sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges encountered in the hospitality industry, prior studies in this discipline have explored the implementation of sustainability practices. These studies identify factors that affect or influence the performance of specific practices aimed at reducing waste, improving energy efficiency, conserving water, and enhancing air quality (Meeroff et al., 2020). Additionally, related studies by Jackson (2017), Nain (2018), Jones et al. (2016), and Señara and Tabas (2022) have discussed strategies to augment sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part provides and discusses the details about the research design, respondents of the study, data gathering instruments, validity, and reliability of the instruments, data gathering procedure, and statistical tools to be used.

Research Design

The quantitative method of research was applied in this study, employing a descriptive-correlational research design. Quantitative research is characterized by deductive approaches to the research process aimed at proving, disproving, or lending credence to existing theories. This type of research involves measuring variables and testing relationships between variables in order to reveal patterns, correlations, or causal relationships. The values underlying quantitative research include neutrality, objectivity, and the acquisition of a sizable scope of knowledge (e.g., a statistical overview from a large sample). This approach is generally appropriate when the primary purpose is to explain or evaluate (Leavy, 2018).

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), the purpose of descriptive research is to gain an accurate profile of events, persons, or situations. Descriptive research may be an extension of a piece of exploratory research or a forerunner to a piece of explanatory research. It is necessary to have a clear picture of the phenomenon on which you wish to collect data prior to the collection of the data. This design is appropriate for this study since the study aimed to determine the sustainability practices, opportunities, and encountered challenges of the hospitality industry in the Province of Negros Occidental using questionnaires to collect data from a large scope of hotel respondents.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 100 conveniently selected personnel employed at the 22 DOT-accredited hotels in Bacolod City, Cadiz, Sipalay, and Manapla in the Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines.

The researcher used non-probability sampling to identify the respondents based on their availability. The researcher wrote the names of hotels gathered in a sampling list on pieces of paper. The total number of the employees involved in the operations of each hotel was obtained from the Human Resource Office, and the sample was selected using quota sampling. Every 5 hotel employees selected were in charge of the sustainability department who actually looked into such program. The distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents

Hotels	n	%
ACACIA HOTEL BACOLOD	5	0.5
AVENUE SUITES	5	0.5
BELL HOTEL	5	0.5
CADIZ HOTEL INC.	5	0.5
EASTVIEW HOTEL	5	0.5
GO HOTEL BACOLOD	5	0.5
GT HOTEL BACOLOD	5	0.5
JAMONT HOTEL	5	0.5
L' FISHER CHALET	5	0.5
L' FISHER ECOTEL	5	0.5
L' FISHER HOTEL	5	0.5
LUXUR PLACE	5	0.5
NORTHLAND RESORT HOTEL	5	0.5
O HOTEL	5	0.5
PARK INN BY RADISSON BACOLOD	5	0.5
PLANTA CENTRO BACOLOD HOTEL	5	0.5
REGINA CARMELI PENSION	5	0.5
RFC METRO INN	5	0.5
SEDA CAPITOL CENTRAL	5	0.5
STONEHILL SUITES INC.	5	0.5
SUGARLAND HOTEL CORPORATION	5	0.5
TNR HOTELS CORPORATION	5	0.5
Total	100	100

Data Gathering Instrument

In gathering the necessary information from the hotel personnel, the researcher utilized the questionnaire method to collect relevant data from the respondents, which contributed to achieving the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was divided into four (4) parts.

Part I asked for personal information about the respondents' age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification. Parts II, III, and IV comprised a 45-item checklist related to the sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges encountered in the hospitality industry in the Province of Negros Occidental. Respondents were to answer using a scale from "5-Strongly Agree" to "1-Strongly Disagree".

The respondents were requested to answer the questionnaires using the following numerical weights and descriptions as references:

Weight	Description
5	Strongly agree
4	Agree
3	Uncertain
2	Disagree
1	Strongly disagree

The researcher constructed a Likert Scale Instrument to measure the sustainability practices, opportunities, and encountered challenges of the hospitality industry in the Province of Negros Occidental. Representation of the respondents' perceptions was measured using a five-point Likert scale with numerical values, statistical boundaries, and corresponding verbal descriptions. This instrument gauged the extent to which sustainability practices, ranging from "Very Desirable", "Desirable", "Slightly Desirable", "Less Desirable", and "Undesirable", for opportunities, "Greatest Opportunity", "Great Opportunity", "Moderate Opportunity", "Less Opportunity", and "No Opportunity", and for encountered challenges were perceived, ranging from "Greatest Challenged", "Great Challenged", "Moderate Challenged", "Less Challenged", and "Not A Challenge". After completing the entire data-gathering procedure, the data were analyzed, tabulated, interpreted, and conclusions were drawn based on the results. To interpret the data, the following numerical scale and descriptions were used:

On the other hand, to describe sustainability practices, the following scale and corresponding description were used.

Scale Means	of	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00		Very Desirable	In hotels all activities are undertaken to maintain the business operation in the new normal.
3.41 – 4.20		Desirable	In hotels most activities are undertaken to maintain the business operation in the new normal.
2.61 – 3.40		Slightly Desirable	In hotels some activities are undertaken to maintain the business operation in the new normal.
1.81 – 2.60		Less Desirable	In hotels few activities are undertaken to maintain the business operation in the new normal.
1.00 – 1.80		Undesirable	In hotels none activities are undertaken to maintain the business operation in the new normal.

For Opportunities of Hospitality Industry

Scale Means	of	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00		Greatest Opportunity	The hospitality industry is noted to be beneficial in the Province of Negros Occidental all the time.
3.41 – 4.20		Great Opportunity	The hospitality industry is noted to be beneficial in the Province of Negros Occidental most of the time.
2.61 – 3.40		Moderate Opportunity	The hospitality industry is noted to be beneficial in the Province of Negros Occidental sometimes.
1.81 – 2.60		Less Opportunity	The hospitality industry is noted to be beneficial in the Province of Negros Occidental few of the time.
1.00 – 1.80		No Opportunity	The hospitality industry is noted to be beneficial in the Province of Negros Occidental no time at all.

For Challenges of Hospitality Industry

Scale of Means	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Greatest Challenged	All of the hotels encountered trials which require great effort and determination to sustain the operation in the new normal.
3.41 – 4.20	Great Challenged	Most of the hotels encountered trials which require great effort and determination to sustain the operation in the new normal.
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate Challenged	Some of the hotels encountered trials which require great effort and determination to sustain the operation in the new normal.
1.81 – 2.60	Less Challenge	Few of the hotels encountered trials which require great effort and determination to sustain the operation in the new normal.
1.00 – 1.80	Not A Challenge	None of the hotels encountered trials which require great effort and determination to sustain the operation in the new normal.

Validity of the Research Instrument

To ensure the validity of the questionnaires, the researcher consulted experts to assess the face and content validity of the instrument before conducting the actual survey. Each item in the questionnaire was evaluated according to the criteria established by Good and Scates to determine whether it was appropriate, inappropriate, or in need of revision. The comments and suggestions provided by the experts were considered and incorporated to significantly improve the instrument.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

After confirming the validity of the instrument, it was pre-tested with 30 employees of a pension house in Bacolod City who were not part of the actual study to assess the instrument's clarity, accuracy, and precision. Reliability was established before administering it to the intended respondents.

Cronbach's alpha statistic was used to assess the reliability or internal consistency of responses across a set of questions (scale items) designed to measure a particular concept (scale). It produces an alpha coefficient with a value between 0 and 1. Values of 0.7 or above suggest that the questions in the scale are internally consistent (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019). After completing the reliability testing, the results were 0.879 for sustainability practices, 0.867 for opportunities, and 0.934 for challenges. These coefficients were considered reliable.

Data Gathering Procedure

After establishing the validity and reliability of the data-gathering instrument, it was reproduced and ready for fielding. The researcher employed three phases in conducting the study: the Pre-Investigation phase, the Investigation phase, and the Post-Investigation phase.

In the Pre-Investigation phase, the researcher constructed a researcher-modified questionnaire with dichotomous answers. The questionnaire was then submitted to a panel of experts to ascertain its validity. After this step, the researcher obtained initial approval from the Graduate School to conduct the study. Following approval, copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the identified respondents.

In the Investigation Phase, the researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents and explained each item on the questionnaire to ensure proper data collection. The results of the data gathering were kept confidential. The questionnaires were administered on the spot and collected by the researcher to ensure a 100% receipt rate and to identify any unanswered items. The researcher also observed prescribed minimum health and safety protocols during the data gathering, such as wearing face masks and shields and maintaining social distancing, for the safety of both the researcher and the respondents.

To guarantee ethical conduct in the research process, the researchers ensured the following: respondents' names were not mentioned in any part of the research to prevent emotional or physical harm; proper and accurate sourcing of dates and materials was done to avoid copyright infringement or plagiarism; a communication letter was presented to those who helped in the validity and verification of questionnaire questions, ensuring that the distribution and organization of the questionnaire did not violate ethical standards.

In the Post-Investigation Phase, the collected data were encoded and processed using the Microsoft Excel application and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Statistical Tools

The statistical tools used in the study were the frequency count, percentages, means, Mann-Whitney U-Test, Kruskal-Wallis H-Test, and Spearman's Rho. Therefore, it would be a non-parametric test.

Frequency count. Frequency count was used to determine the distribution of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification.

Percentage. Percentage was used to determine the distribution of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification.

Mean. Mean was used to assess the level of sustainability practices, challenges, and opportunities in the hospitality industry. The average of the responses for each item was calculated and interpreted based on the range of the average obtained.

Mann Whitney U Test. Mann Whitney U Test was used to determine significant differences in sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges among hotel industries as assessed by respondents in terms of age, sex, and civil status.

Kruskal Wallis H Test. The Kruskal Wallis H Test was used to determine significant differences in sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges among hotel industries in terms of educational attainment, number of years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification.

Spearman Rho. Spearman Rho was used to measure the strength of the relationship between three variables and their association with each other. For this study, it was used to assess the significant relationships among sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges in hotel industries in the Province of Negros Occidental.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the summary of findings and results, conclusions, and recommendation of the study to determine the sustainability practices, opportunities and challenges, of the hospitality industry in the new normal in the Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines for the Fiscal Year 2023.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
2. What are the sustainability practices of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?

3. What are the opportunities of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
4. What are the challenges encountered by the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
5. Are there significant differences in the sustainability practices of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
6. Are there significant differences in the opportunities of the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
7. Are there significant differences in the challenges encountered by the hospitality industry in the new normal as assessed by respondents when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification?
8. Are there significant relationships among sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges of hospitality industry in the new normal?

Summary

This descriptive correlational research aimed to determine the sustainability practices, challenges, and opportunities of the hospitality industry in the new normal in the Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines for the Fiscal Year 2023.

The entire respondents in the Province of Negros Occidental in Year 2023, were randomly selected using unrestricted random sampling.

The independent variables included age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification. The dependent variables were the practices, opportunities, and challenges of the hospitality industry in the new normal. The sample size was determined using quota sampling.

Part I of the revised researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather data on the respondents' profiles, including personal information such as name (optional), age (40 years old and below and 41 years old and above), sex (male and female), civil status (single and married), educational attainment (bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate degree), years in the hospitality industry (3 years and below, 4 to 6 years, 7 to 9 years, and 10 years and above), area of assignment (front desk, food and beverage, housekeeping, food preparation, sales and marketing, human resources, and finance), and hotel classification (5-star, 4-star, 3-star, and economy).

Part II consisted of a questionnaire with 15 items about the practices of the hospitality industry in the new normal. Part III contained a questionnaire with 15 items about the opportunities of the hospitality industry in the new normal, and Part IV included a questionnaire with 15 items about the challenges of the hospitality industry in the new normal. The testing was conducted in one of the hotels in the Province of Negros Occidental in Year 2023.

The statistical tools used were Frequency Count, Percentage, Mean, U-Test, and Spearman Rho. All statistical computations were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software version 25. The margin of error was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

The Findings of the Study

In this study, the findings were the following:

1. The majority of the respondents were 40 years and below, male, with a bachelor's degree, single, with 4 to 6 years in hospitality, working in food and beverage, and affiliated with a 4-star hotel.
2. The sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges of the hospitality industry in the new normal were assessed as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification. This implied that the respondents' practices, opportunities, and challenges in the hospitality industry during the new normal, considering factors such as age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification, consistently exceeded expectations and were very desirable.
3. The survey questions under the sustainability practices showed that the highest mean was "practice energy conservation." On the other hand, the lowest mean was "provide comfort, convenience, and enjoyment." The results showed that all of the indicators determined that respondents had excellent and very desirable, respectively, in the hospitality industry during the new normal in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification, very desirable.
4. The results showed that sustainability practices in the hospitality industry during the new normal, when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification, were very desirable. The results also revealed that those aged 40 years old and below, females, married individuals, doctorate degree holders,

with 4 to 6 years of experience in the hospitality industry, working in finance and economy hotels, determined their sustainability practices in the hospitality industry during the new normal as very desirable.

5. The results showed that the hospitality industry has the greatest opportunities during the new normal as assessed by the respondents, when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification. The results also revealed that those aged 41 years old and above, females, married individuals, bachelor's degree holders, with 4 to 6 years of experience in the hospitality industry, working in housekeeping and 5-star hotels, determined their opportunities in the hospitality industry during the new normal as greatest opportunity.
6. Results showed that the hospitality industry has greatest challenged in the new normal as assessed by respondents, when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the hospitality industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification. Additionally, the results revealed that individuals aged 41 years old and above, females, married individuals, bachelor's degree holders, with 4 to 6 years of experience in the hospitality industry, working in housekeeping and 5-star hotels, determined their challenges in the hospitality industry during the new normal as greatest challenged. It appeared that variables describing greatest challenged were not surprising, as there were more challenges faced by the hospitality industry in the new normal.
7. Differences in sustainability practices within the hospitality industry during the new normal based on demographic and professional variables were examined. Age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification showed no significant impact on practices. This uniformity suggested stability and standardization in the industry's responses to the new normal.
8. Differences in opportunities in the hospitality industry during the new normal were explored based on various factors. Age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification did not significantly influence opportunities. This consistency implied a stable availability of opportunities in the industry during the new normal.
9. Differences in challenges faced by professionals in the hospitality industry during the new normal were examined. Age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification did not significantly affect the challenges experienced. This suggested a consistent pattern of challenges across various demographic and professional categories.
10. The relationship among sustainable practices, opportunities, and challenges in the hospitality industry during the new normal was examined. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive correlations between sustainable practices and opportunities, opportunities and challenges, and sustainable practices and challenges. This intricate relationship emphasized the need for a strategic approach to balance sustainability, opportunities, and challenges in the evolving hospitality landscape.

Conclusions

1. This study provides valuable insights into the sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges within the hospitality industry during the new normal. The majority of respondents were young, male, with bachelor's degrees, single, and had 4 to 6 years of experience in the industry, mainly in food and beverage in 4-star hotels.
2. The analysis revealed that sustainability practices, opportunities, and challenges in the industry during the new normal remained consistently above average across different demographic and professional categories. Respondents demonstrated very desirable, with a particular focus on energy conservation. Moreover, the opportunities were evaluated as greatest opportunities and challenges were perceived as greatest challenged, especially by specific demographics, highlighting the resilience and adaptability of professionals in the face of evolving circumstances.
3. Notably, age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years in the industry, area of assignment, and hotel classification did not significantly influence sustainability practices, opportunities, or challenges. This suggested a standardized and stable response within the industry, emphasizing the need for a strategic and balanced approach to sustainability and growth.
4. The study unveiled a complex relationship between sustainable practices, opportunities, and challenges. Enhancing sustainable practices positively correlated with increased opportunities but also brought about higher challenges, indicating the need for a well-planned approach to maintain equilibrium in the evolving hospitality landscape.
5. Overall, this study highlighted the industry's ability to adapt and excel in the new normal, underscoring the importance of continued research and strategic planning to ensure the industry's sustainable growth and resilience amidst changing circumstances.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were advanced:

1. The hotel and accommodation establishment owners should focus on sustaining and further improving its practices, particularly in energy conservation.
2. Hotel employees' effort should be made to maintain the perceived opportunities and address the challenges effectively, especially for the age group of 41 years and above, females, married individuals, those with a bachelor's degree, and professionals with 4 to 6 years of experience in the industry, particularly in housekeeping and 5-star hotels.
3. Considering the consistent performance across demographic and professional categories, it is advisable to hotel employees to maintain stability and standardization in the industry's responses to the new normal.
4. A strategic approach should be adopted by Department of Tourism Officers and hospitality industry owners to balance sustainability, opportunities, and challenges, ensuring the industry's resilience and growth in the evolving hospitality landscape.
5. Hotel and accommodation establishment managers should have continuous research and strategic planning as crucial guide to the industry's decision-making, support sustainable practices, and optimize opportunities, ultimately contributing to the industry's long-term success and adaptability in changing circumstances.

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