

Ecological responsibility in Serbian hotel industry

MSc Nikica Radović¹, MSc Nikola Minić¹
Višnja Vušković Minić, M. Arch²

Scientific paper
UDC:379.832:504.34

INTRODUCTION

The accommodation facilities is the most represented component of the energy consumption within the tourist destination. According to the data presented by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia there are 911 accommodation facilities in Serbia, which include hotels, motels, boarding houses, camps and other. The most common type of accommodation facilities are hotels, which Serbia, according to the records of the relevant ministry, has 328, with a total of 27.934 beds. The total turnover in 2013 was 64.685 million RSD.

Bearing in mind the economic crisis and the privatization process which was previously held in Serbia, a number of hotel companies are in poor condition. Specifically, a certain number of hotels are either in bankruptcy or restructuring, some have been privatized, but the new owners are not from the hospitality industry, therefore are not interested in new investment and modernization of the business, so those hotels are operating in the terms and conditions in which they were at the time before privatization. The exception are international hotel chains that have emerged in Serbia with recognizable brands, standards and quality of services which are identical wherever they operate in the world. There are also successfully privatized hotel companies in which the new owners recognize perspective, the importance and profitability of the hotel business. They have usually implemented their activities as a brownfield investments, investing capital in modernization of existing purchased buildings in order to modernize operations, raising standards in business processes, as well as the categorization of objects with the aim of improving operations of enterprises, as well as the destination itself.

Contemporary trends in the hotel business include corporate social responsibility and sustainable development of the destination in which the company operates. In this regard, the trend is in business using environmental responsibility through the concepts of green management and green hotels.

GREEN HOTEL

Green hotels are ecological buildings whose managers set up programs to save water, energy and reduce solid waste, thereby saving money and also help preserve the environment. These hotels have guidelines so that guests can stay in a safe, non-toxic and energy efficient lodging. The aforementioned guidelines include:

- The usage of non-toxic substances for cleaning and laundry;
- 100% cotton sheet, towels and mattresses;
- Non-smoking environment;
- Renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind energy;
- Recycle bins in the rooms and lobby;
- Towels for reuse;
- Energy efficient lighting;
- Green vehicles transportation;
- Serving of organic and local food;
- Disposable tableware;
- Paper recycling programme.

Green hotels are introducing environmental standards and use elements of environmentally friendly new technologies, thereby making a significant contribution to the protection of the environment and achieve better operational results. According to the study conducted by International Hotels Environment Initiative and French hotel chain Accor 90% of hotel guest would rather stay in a hotel that cares about environmental protection than in standard hotel. Also, a study from 2007

Author's address: ¹Singidunum University, Danijelova 32, Belgrade, ²Faculty of forestry, Belgrade University, Kneza Višeslava 1, Belgrade
Paper received: 20. 04. 2015.
Paper accepted: 28. 05. 2015.

showed that 75% of the guests are willing to participate in an ecological initiative of the hotel they are staying in, while the second study showed that 65% of the guests think that the good green management helps the image and competitiveness of the hotel. That is why more and more hotels and hotel chains are trying to, besides having better category, provide a green certification. Hotels can be certified by international standards defined by various associations or green hotel chains. Hotels constructed in accordance with the green construction principles (with the appropriate LEED certificate) on average spend 26% less energy, emit 33% less CO₂, use 30% less water and create 50-75% less waste compared to non-certified classic hotels.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

General information

For the purpose of this paper, 60 hotels in Serbia were surveyed. Majority of the hotels that were surveyed are Three- or Four-star hotels, making a total of 74% of all surveyed, followed by Two-star hotels (Table 1). This also complies with the overall hotel category structure in Serbia. Speaking of regional structure, majority of survey

hotels are in Belgrade and Vojvodina region (54%), followed by Central and South Serbia and then Western and Eastern Serbia (Table 2).

Majority of Three- and Four-star hotels are from Belgrade region, while Five-star hotels are from Vojvodina region (Table 3). In Central Serbia most hotels belong to the Three-star category, as well as in South Serbia. In Western Serbia there is an equal share of Three- and Four-star hotels, while in Eastern Serbia four categories have an equal share.

Table 1 - Hotel category

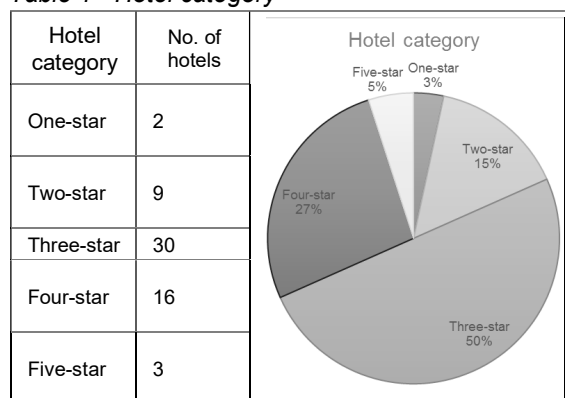


Table 2 - Hotel location

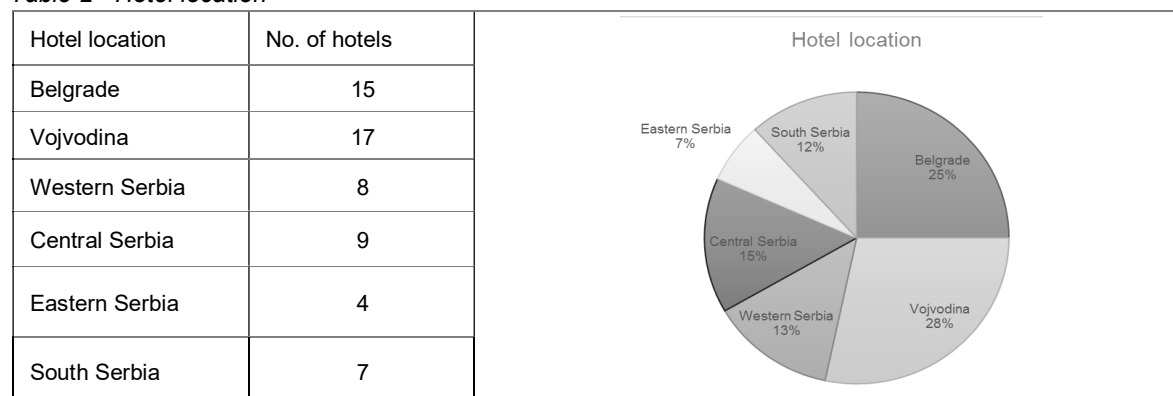


Table 3: Hotels by category and location

		Hotel location						Total
		Belgrade	Central Serbia	Eastern Serbia	South Serbia	Vojvodina	Western Serbia	
Hotel category	One-star	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
	Two-star	0	2	1	2	2	2	9
	Three-star	9	6	1	3	8	3	30
	Four-star	6	1	1	1	4	3	16
	Five-star	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Total		15	9	4	7	17	8	60

Speaking of hotel size, dominant are medium sized hotels (between 10 and 200 rooms), having a 77% share, belonging to the Three-star category. The average number of employees is 51 (12 in small hotels, 37 in medium and 237 in large hotels, or 7 in One-star hotels, 22 in Two-star hotels, 36 in Three-star hotels, 57 in Four-star hotels and 180 in Five-star hotels).

Ecological practices

The purpose of this research was to determine the level of implementation of environmental activities in the hotel industry Serbia. The results have shown that 83% of surveyed hotels mostly apply environmental activities, 73% know of the term green management, but it has limited use. Also, in 77% of the surveyed hotels employees are familiar with the environmental practices and

policies used in hotels. However, the level of usage is on relatively low level, for only 65% of the surveyed hotels recycle waste materials, 29% use renewable energy sources and 43% practices waste management.

Of the environmental methods practiced in the hotel (Figure 1), the most commonly practiced is the usage of energy efficient lightbulbs and paper recycling (practiced in 60% of surveyed hotels), followed by bottles and cans recycling (57%) and reuse of plastic bags (54%). On the other hand, only 29% of surveyed hotels purchase organic food, 14% recycle process water and only 6% manages atmospheric precipitation. Interestingly, none of the surveyed hotels recycle the air in the ventilation, even though previous researches have shown that the use of air recuperators and air recycle contribute to the reduction of energy use.

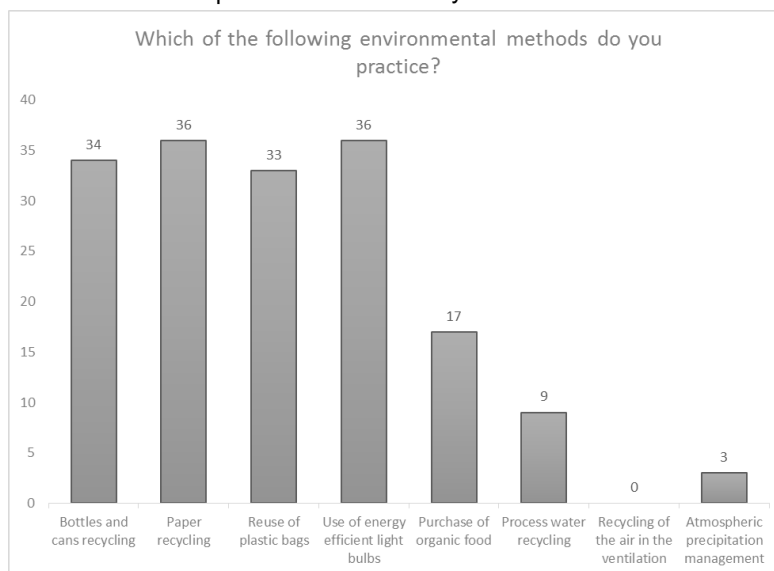


Figure 1 - Environmental methods used in hotels

Speaking of the environmental activities practiced in the rooms, it is evident that the largest number of hotels use dispensers for shampoo and liquid soap (63% of the surveyed), followed by the use of energy efficient lightbulbs in the sleeping area (57%) and in the bathroom (54%). The key card for activation of the electricity in the rooms are used in 49% of the surveyed hotels, while only 40% practices bed linen change only on request. Also, none of the surveyed hotels practice multiple use of towels, but they change them every day. Recycling bins can be found in the rooms of 50% of surveyed hotels. Toilets with reduced water flow have 20% of the surveyed hotels, taps with the reduced water

flow have only 9% and showers with reduced water flow only 6% of the surveyed hotels (Figure 2).

As previously mentioned, renewable energy sources use 29% of the surveyed hotels (17 hotels in total), of which majority (13 hotels) use solar panels, while biomass and geothermal energy use 2 hotels each. No hotels use wind turbines.

On the other hand, waste management is practiced in 43% of the survey hotels (26 hotels), which mostly practice safe waste removal (15 hotels or 58%). The collection of waste materials (e.g., waste cooking oil) is practiced on 8 hotels (31%), wastewater management in 7 hotels (27%) and only 3 surveyed hotels (12%) use waste as an energy source.

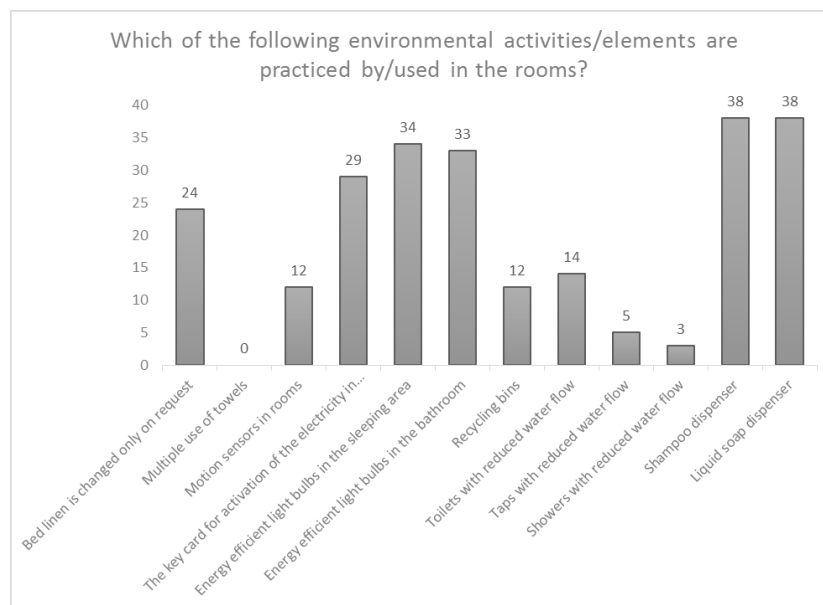


Figure 2 - Environmental methods practiced in the rooms

CONCLUSION

Looking at global trends in green tourism and hospitality caused by turbulent development, which carry with them a number of negative consequences, the purpose of this paper is to point out the advantages provided by the green hotels and affirm them, so that Serbia can become more competitive destination taking into account its potential and resources.

The primary objectives of introducing a green management in the hotel industry of Serbia is the concern about the preservation of nature and natural tourism resources, as very important element of the tourist offer, which constitute a compatible part of an offer of Serbia in the tourism market.

The implementation of business rules that apply to green management hotel companies in Serbia could raise the quality of accommodation facilities, employees and local population would be educated in terms of environmental protection, and consequently achieve greater customer satisfaction, which would certainly result in better business results.

LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

ECOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SERBIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY

Corporate social responsibility means the decision of companies to contribute to the development of society and the environment within which it operates. A significant trend in the world is a priority in creating the strategies for the preservation of the environment. Bearing in mind the importance of environmental sustainability, the authors of this paper point to environmental responsibility, which is part of corporate social responsibility, which makes it an indispensable part of modern hotel business. The concept of environmental responsibility in hotel companies contributes to the maintenance of ecological balance and natural resources of destinations in which it operates, as well as improves the economic results of operations. The aim of this paper is to present, on the basis of reasoned theoretical considerations, the results of the research on environmental responsibility and awareness of managers of hotels in Serbia.

Key words: green management, ecological activities, renewable energy, recycling, waste management.

IZVOD

EKOLOŠKA ODGOVORNOST U HOTELIJERSTVU SRBIJE

Društveno odgovorno poslovanje podrazumeva odluku preduzeća da da doprinos razvoju društva i okruženja u okviru kog posluje. Sve značajniji trend u svetu je prioritet u kreiranju strategija za očuvanje životne sredine. Imajući u vidu važnost održivosti životne sredine, autori će u ovom radu ukazati na ekološku odgovornost, koja je deo društvene odgovornosti preduzeća, a koja čini nezaobilazni deo savremenog hotelskog poslovanja. Koncept ekološke odgovornosti u poslovanju hotelskih preduzeća doprinosi održanju ekološke ravnoteže i prirodnih resursa destinacije u okviru koje posluje, ali i poboljšanju ekonomskih rezultata poslovanja. Cilj ovog rada je da budu prezentovani, na osnovu obrazloženih teoretskih razmatranja, dobijeni rezultati sprovedenog istraživanja o ekološkoj odgovornosti i svesti menadžera hotelskih preduzeća u Srbiji.

Ključne reči: zeleni menadžment, ekološke aktivnosti, obnovljivi izvori energije, reciklaža, upravljanje otpadom.