

A SYSTEMATIC VIEW REGARDING BUSINESS RETHINKING IN THE CONTEXT OF SUPPLY CHAINS SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

The crisis generated by the pandemic has challenged the hospitality industry on multiple layers. We are not talking only about the reduced number of customers and instability of the tourists flows, apart of the total lockdown from the beginning of the pandemic, but, we are referring to the managerial and marketing capabilities of hospitality companies to deal with profound changes along their supply chains. The present paper proposes a systematic review aimed to highlight the main directions in which the scientific literature from the field is analyzing the complex issue of hospitality supply chain sustainability implementation. Authors have been selected only articles from journals, conferences or books indexed in the last five years within Web of Science databases. The results of the analysis are showing that implementation

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of sustainability related principles along the supply chains, combined with a proper sustainable human resources management and a special view upon the customer relationship management offers to the hospitality field companies a certain sum of strategic instruments in order to cope with the huge challenge imposed by the pandemic. The future business models adapted entirely to a post-pandemic economy should emphasize a sustainable type of consumer behavior and a supply-delivery chain based on intelligent” out of the box” collaboration between organizations along the chain.

Keywords: *supply chain management; hospitality industry; sustainable strategy, green tourism, systematic review.*

JEL Classification: L83, Z30, Z33

Introduction

The aim of this systematic review is to examine the recent literature on sustainable supply chain management and synthesize it by analyzing the most recent (2017–2021) and important (Web of Science) sources. We have attempted to prove that sustainability standards and metrics are valuable analytical tools. The actuality and novelty of our systematic review are configured by focusing on a hot emerging topic - the sustainable supply chain management within hospitality industry. The research problem presented within the article is the degree in which different organizations acting as active players in the hospitality field succeed to implement sustainable supply chains and strategies into their activity. In this article, we cumulate previous research findings indicating that, despite the fact that sustainability and the green approach of business models in the field of hospitality has been a hot topic for many specialists over the last years, actually, organizations in the field do not succeed every time to implement an operational sustainable oriented strategy. Our main objective is to analyze the mechanism of adoption of sustainable practices within hospitality field and to reveal the importance of a proper sustainable supply chain management. Within hospitality field, the concept of supply chain has a special importance due to the nature of relationship between main hospitality service providers and the other members of the chain – the capacity of the supply chain to manage properly the customers’ dynamic needs and to help the implementation of sustainable business models.

We contribute to the literature on sustainable supply chain management related to the field of hospitality with a comprehensive view of the complex endeavor that

should be made by a hospitality organization in the present time. We try to clarify the importance of such a demarche in close relation to the COVID-19 pandemic that is a unique and huge challenge for all the players in the field.

Within the specialized literature that has approached in a general way the issue of sustainability and the sustainable supply chain in the field of hospitality, there is a certain “staging” of the content of the papers dedicated to these topics. Thus, between 2000 and 2004, the barriers and the motivational factors that were associated with the sustainable practices in the field of hospitality were mainly investigated. The period 2005-2009 was followed by a phase characterized by studies that addressed the technical applications of sustainable practices such as waste reduction and energy saving programs, with an emphasis on financial or marketing benefits [Kim, et al., 2017].

After 2012, articles that studied topics related to supply chain sustainability and sustainable hospitality practices focused on identifying the effects that these practices have on customer and employee relationships [Kim, et al., 2017]. In its evolution, the empirical and theoretical dimension of studies in the field has managed to individualize the required conditions as well as the benefits resulting from the implementation of sustainable practices [Abdel-Baset, et al., 2019].

A required distinction is that in the implementation of a sustainable approach at the level of economical agents in the field of hospitality according to the opinions of hotel managers interviewed, aims to create competitive advantages, net benefits in business strategies and less environmental protection [Sharma, et al., 2020]. From the perspective of drivers who can be identified for the development and initiation of sustainable practices, the size of the company, the commitment of the company's management and the legal regulations in the field were highlighted [Sharma, et al., 2020]. However, studies indicate that of the three categories of factors, commitment from managers is a prevalent factor because of the positive orientation of managers that can increase the potential applicability of sustainable practices, as they are more willing to overcome various types of barriers and obstacles that may arise [Wut, et al., 2021]. The effective implementation of ecological practices is determined in the field of hospitality by identifying clear benefits by the economic agents involved - in the case of smaller accommodation units for example the application of materials recycling and food waste reduction programs instead of investments of greater magnitude [Arici, & Uysal, 2021].

The literature in the field is focused on the successful proactive implementation of ecological practices, which involves, among other things, the management of an

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optimal number of ecological certificates, a large number of them being able to cause confusion among stakeholders [Khan, et al., 2021].

Methodology

We performed a systematic review of recent relevant literature on sustainable supply chain and sustainable practices in the field of hospitality using as a reference Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA) guidelines. Papers and sources have been included within our analysis using the following criteria: a) publications indexed in Web of Science databases, b) only original research papers or reviews has been considered, c) the publication date range is between 2017-2021, d) the specific scientific topics taken into consideration. In order to employ our quantitative literature review we have used search terms referring to: green tourism, sustainable hospitality industry, hospitability green supply chain management, hospitality sustainable strategy, hospitability green human resource management.

Green Tourism

The field of hospitality is close related to development and implementation of green tourism specific activities. Implementing sustainable principles and practices takes account of the development of "greener" and more sustainable strategies by tourism-based companies and destinations and helps to reflect the growing environmental concerns that influence the behavior and consumption patterns of tourists [Satta, et al., 2019].

There is growing pressure on organizations operating in the events and tourism services market to apply sustainable techniques to their operations, with a notable focus on adopting principles of loss reduction, reuse and recycling. Consideration is largely given to minimize losses and especially the accent put on the use of recyclable products, as well as the use of electronic promotion of tourism and events [S raphin, & Nolan (Eds.), 2018]. Therefore, the way in which tourism will develop in the context of the low-carbon green economy has become the main problem of tourism development [Han, & Li, 2021]. At the same time, the issue regarding the consumers' education into the field has the same amount of importance in order to promote an optimal development of the concept of green tourism and the possibility to apply it into practice. For example, into the field of ecological marine tourism, implementing and promoting specific activities has a tremendous impact over the awareness degree of citizens regarding the protection

of marine habitat, the rights and interests of this habitat and the promotion of a full scale strategy for developing marine areas [Shen, 2020]. Also, from the point of view of the impact of the ecological tourism practices over local communities, the development of ecological tourism can solve a series of complex problems that manifest themselves in rural areas where the phenomenon of depression of the local economy has been registered [Kravchuk, et al., 2019].

Identifying solutions to enable the development of rural tourism in a friendly natural environment and promoting intensive development instead of extensive expansion are top priorities for the development of eco-tourism [Qin, & Yinhu, 2019].

As a form of sustainable tourism development, green tourism is a mean of environmental protection and one of the evolutionary forms of contemporary tourism. Research on managers of tourism enterprises indicates that, in the formation of an ecological tourism supply chain, most of these enterprises are stimulated to have an ecological behavior [Huang, et al., 2019].

The green touristic services consumer behavior can have different ways to manifest according to the interests and consumption experience of tourists, being possible the development of different scenarios, taking account also of other elements from within the supply chain [Ma, et al., 2021].

Climate change and other factors specific to globalization have driven changes in consumer behavior in tourism services, from mass consumption to consumption specific to eco-tourism. The development of eco-tourism has boosted the manifestation of ecological entrepreneurship. The limited knowledge regarding ecological tourism, the lack of awareness of the need to conserve the environment, the lack of support measures from state institutions can be taken into account as inhibitory factors for the development of eco-tourism [Rahmawati, et al., 2021]. The results of various studies have shown that ecological motives and green business strategies enable the achievement of sustainable development goals in the hospitality industry [Yousaf, et al., 2021]. Despite the heterogeneity of sustainable entrepreneurs, companies in the field of tourism may develop sustainable networks that can support efforts to change rural areas and different forms of supply chains [Panzer-Krause, 2019].

Sustainable Hospitality Industry

In order to develop or implement the concept of sustainable supply chain within hospitality field a certain background has to be put in place referring to the sustainable dimensions of the entire industry itself. One of the main topics in this

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respect deals with creation and development of sustainable competitive advantages within the hospitality industry.

A survey of 457 respondents among hotel managers in Malaysia found that [Hossain, et al., 2020]:

(1) absorption capacity, team culture, competitive intelligence awareness has a significant impact on learning capacity;

(2) the learning capacity has a significant mediating effect between the absorption capacity, the team culture, the awareness of competitive intelligence and the sustainability of the hotel organization's competitive advantage;

(3) entrepreneurial behavior has an insignificant impact on learning capacity and sustainable competitive advantage;

(4) learning capacity has a significant impact on sustainable competitive advantage;

(5) innovation actively moderates between learning capacity and sustainable competitive advantage.

Creating sustainable competitive advantages has a specific importance in order to promote the sustainable orientation within the hospitality industry. The results of a study conducted in Asian hotels highlight that the incorporation of local arts and culture in the sustainable design of services can generate unique value and experiences for customers. From a sustainable development perspective, these hotels seek to add value by using local creative and cultural resources to ensure that they have a solid commercial base from which to present their cultural characteristics. As such, the study recommends that the hotel industry turn its attention to a paradigm that provides a strategic and sustainable vision to create value for society, while protecting local natural and cultural resources. A model that integrate the points of contact with consumers, ecological practices and the competencies of the front line employees is proposed. The design of services in the spirit of sustainable orientation aims at an improved level of customer satisfaction [Chen, & Chen, 2021]. The sustainable dimension at hospitability cannot remain outside of the customer satisfaction paradigm. A survey of 288 tourists from Sardinia found that sustainable hospitality practices generate a direct and positive link with consumer satisfaction and an indirect one, also positive, with consumer loyalty, while satisfaction mediates the impact of sustainable and sustainable practices on loyalty [Modica, et al., 2020]. Different approaches regarding the implementation of sustainable principles within the hospitality field take into consideration the efficient use of spaces and infrastructure. A qualitative research in

the form of an in-depth interview revealed the opinions of managers involved in the specific activity of the hospitality industry regarding the benefits and advantages of adaptive reuse of hospitality-specific spaces and infrastructure seen as a specific technique for a sustainable approach. Adaptive reuse is considered a timely method to ensure the sustainable development of hospitality. The social, environmental and economic benefits of this method outweigh the challenges and extend to regional and even national levels. From a practical perspective, adaptive reuse projects have the capacity to stimulate a better use of space and transform entire communities - especially if there is extensive and improved support from local and relevant authorities. With sufficient incentives to make projects economically viable, the result would be a higher level of cultural and historical conservation, building materials, energy and other resources relevant to the demolition and construction process [Liang, & Wong, 2020].

Another approach that contributes to the implementation of sustainability in hospitality field lays on inclusion of durable efforts within the hotel brand personality. Research based on secondary sources has demonstrated the importance of integrating sustainable efforts into the brand's personality, with hospitality companies being able to design authentic goals that are organically embedded in the brand vision, strengthening brand equity and creating value while increasing customer loyalty. The importance of integrating these efforts in the activity specific to the social responsibility of companies in the hospitality industry is also highlighted [Matteucci, 2020]. In the same area, the results of a quantitative research, conducted on a sample of 360 customers, illustrate a link between brand capital, innovation in marketing, sustainable competitive advantage and market performance in the hospitality industry. Thus, sustainable marketing resources have a positive and strong effect on market performance. Also, the sustainable competitive advantage fully mediates the relationship between brand capital and market performance. The conclusions highlight the importance of elements related to sustainability in terms of formulating marketing strategies in order to attract customers [Hussain, et al., 2020].

The availability of managers and other decisional factors to implement and develop sustainable solutions within hotels activity is a positive factor that can contribute directly to the development of sustainable practices. A quantitative survey conducted on 102 respondents reveals favorable opinions towards the implementation of sustainable solutions in hotel activity in the case of more than 90% of respondents. This finding confirms the importance of resource management

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in the hospitality industry related to food, water, energy and waste management. At the same time, there is an unfavorable attitude towards the willingness to pay higher prices in order to implement sustainable solutions in hotels [Floričić, 2020].

It has been underlined that the development of tourism brings many benefits to the areas where this activity takes place (jobs, income for the community and for individuals, etc.), but also has some shortcomings, such as environmental degradation and impact on local traditions. To stop these negative effects, the concept of sustainable development must be applied. A qualitative research revealed the perceptions of tourists regarding the application of the concept of sustainability in the tourism industry, being highlighted a low degree of penetration of these notions at the level of the general public. Efforts are needed to educate tourists and raise their awareness in the direction of accepting and promoting these concepts [Madar, & Neașu, 2020].

In the post-epidemic period, it is important to encourage the behavior of economic agents in the field of hospitality to implement innovation in green technology, thus reducing resource consumption and environmental pollution in order to promote development. Sustainable industrial diffusion of technology can take place in the network of partners of the economic agents within the industry, both with the help of informal communication channels and through social networks [Sun, et al., 2021].

Hospitality Green Supply Chain Management

The development of an analysis framework for the green supply chain management within the hospitality field needs a short introduction aimed to highlight some practical issues regarding green supply chain management content in general. Thus, green supply chain management can be defined as being an organization philosophy able to offer competitive advantages for the organization based on high product and high services quality features, minimum wastes policy, zero pollution approach, high return of investment and a better image on the market [Dubey, et al., 2017]. In the same time, a sustainable approach on supply chain management presupposes a set of managerial practices that takes into consideration the impact on environment as being an imperative, a special attention to all stages across the entire value chain and a multi-disciplinary perspective, encompassing the entire product life-cycle [Gupta, & Palsule-Desai, 2011]. Green supply chain management practices can be classified into four main categories, namely the activities related with (1) inbound operations, (2) production operations, (3) outbound operations, and (4) reverse logistics [Sari, 2017].

Making sustainable practices efficient within the supply chain requires a continuous effort aimed to manage the supply chain and fully implement a sustainable strategy. Sustainable management of the hospitality supply chain involves the management of materials, information and capital flows and the development of collaboration between companies along the supply chain in order to achieve objectives at each level of sustainability - economic, environmental and social [Dubey, et al., 2017].

The sustainable management of the supply chain has a strong relationship with internal management practices of the hospitality organizations. In a research conducted on 269 respondents that are hotel managers in the hospitality industry in Vietnam, the results have shown that the management of the internal environment has a significant impact on the external environment and on the image of the destination. The study has also revealed a direct and positive relationship between the practices regarding the sustainable management of the supply chain and the image of the destination [Do, et al., 2020]. At the same time, besides internal approach of managerial techniques, the attitude developed by owners-managers, consumers and the state policies have a strong effect over sustainable practices designated for the supply chain management [Kerdpitak, 2019]. The attitude of managers and the feedback provided by the consumers related with topics that concern sustainable practices create in time a background useful for the practical development of such actions. Studies based on classification robust technique and neutrosophic sets theory highlight as important factors that have a great impact over sustainable practices of supply chain management reversed logistics, suppliers' environment collaboration management and carbon emission management [Abdel-Baset, et al., 2019].

From the point of view of sustainability innovation criteria framework capable to foster sustainable supply chain management, a research made in the context of Indian manufacturing sector considers financial availability for innovation the most important criterion, followed by technical expertise availability and investment in R&D for green practices, green manufacturing and operational capabilities development, and cultural, social values and norms [Kusi-Sarpong, et al., 2019]. The relationship between sustainability and innovation goes also back.

As regarding the assessment of the supply chain performance in the field of hospitality we may encounter a framework based on green awareness, know-how, and implementation, framework that has to overcome the insufficient support of hotels management towards green practices [Al-Aomar, & Hussain, 2017]. Supply

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chain performance given by a proper set of sustainable practices has a strong correlation with organizational performance and with financial performances in particular [Acquah, et al., 2021]. Focusing on the Vietnam's tourism enterprises, Nguyen et al. (2020) assessed the influence of green supply chain management practices on the financial and non-financial performance of this sector. According to their findings the implementation of green supply chain management practices in tourism has positive impact both on financial and non-financial performance [Nguyen, et al., 2020].

Supply chain performance is dependent also on the competitiveness of the company and on green customer awareness, along with owner managers' attitude and the government regulations [Jermsittiparsert, et al., 2019; Kerdpitak, 2019]. No less important is also the hotel innovation strategy in order to achieve a desirable level of economic sustainability, with indicators referring to technology usage, standardized services, service quality, and product introduction readiness [Njoroge, et al., 2020].

Tourism and the hospitality industry in general is a sensitive and vulnerable sector to any risk situation caused by external factors, whether we talk about a natural disaster, an economic crisis, an international conflict, terrorism or epidemics. The literature dealing with supply chain issues usually identifies two types of risks that supply chains may face - operational risks that may cause disruptions in the form of demand fluctuations and risks that cause the simultaneous spread of disruptions throughout the chain and demand - manifestation of a ripple effect [Kinra, et al., 2019].

In the context of the present pandemic situation, the possibility to manage a sustainable supply chain in the field of hospitality has become almost a dream, because of the strong negative effect that was accounted for almost every type of touristic services all around the world. A recent research shows that, in order to diminish the very negative effect of the pandemic, top managers from three different hotel chains highlight several managerial approaches regarding relationship with government (financial incentives coordination, labor field coordination, market demand coordination), relationship with tour operators (coordination within the supply field) and, of course, relationship with competitors (coordination from the point of view of demand and regulations) [González-Torres, et al., 2021].

Also, in the current situation, depicted by the negative effects of the pandemic, the business objectives of hotel chains should evolve from reducing costs and

targeting operational efficiency to limiting losses, maintaining employment, reactivating international arrivals, attracting customers, reducing dependence on tour operators and achieving fair relationships and greater control over the final customer and, ultimately, ensuring an industry-friendly regulatory framework. The most discussed relationships are those between tour operators and destinations, tour operators and travel agencies; hotels and airlines and competing hotels.

On the other hand, the results reveal that, in order to overcome the risks of disruptions caused by the pandemic, the hospitality industry needs financial support from governments. The recovery of hotel chains will depend on coordination agreements with the government to stimulate demand.

Using tour operators is the most cost-effective way for the hospitality industry to distribute accommodation services. Studies have shown that many hotel chains rely almost entirely on these agents to expand their sales and marketing efforts [González-Torres, et al., 2021]. An interesting idea for overcoming the situation caused by the pandemic is the collaboration between competitors in those areas where there is no rivalry – like in terms of promoting destinations, and influencing the direction of a regulatory framework favorable to industry at the sectorial level.

Consequently, in order to achieve sectoral differentiation to attract demand, cooperating firms should focus on creating health standards or certifications attesting the lack of contamination with COVID-19. These types of initiatives allow companies to create more value than they would achieve by acting individually. From a sectoral perspective, for highly fragmented sectors, such as hospitality, it is difficult to achieve favorable conditions, despite the industry's contribution to national income. Therefore, focusing on lobbying would be particularly useful to increase bargaining power in order to influence regulatory frameworks in the context of an economic turmoil [González-Torres, et al., 2021].

Hospitality Sustainable Strategy

The topic about sustainability and sustainable green practices within the supply chain management requires to take into consideration the meaning of the strategy concept. Obtaining a sustainable orientation in the field of hospitality involves investigating the relationship between intellectual capital, leadership in the organization, quality of services, supply chain, the impact of the hotel and its strategy. Such a relationship was tested on 84 high-end hotels in Greece and analyzed using the method of structural equations. The results of the study bring into the light the idea that a high level of leadership excellence has a positive

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influence at the level of intellectual capital. In the same time, the proper implementation of leadership has a positive effect on quality of the service, hotel impact on the market and the specific decisions that are implementing the hotel strategy. The same positive influence has been highlighted in case of supply chain of the hotels, meaning that the superior leadership contribute to the efficiency of the hotel from the point of view of the integration within the supply chain [Metaxas, et al., 2019].

We can say that the hospitality industry is "dependent" on the specific approach to sustainability. There are many ways to achieve this goal, one of the most common being the one based on effective communication. However, the effects that this communication produces at the level of convincing customers in the direction of adopting a consumer behavior, that can be in turn, sustainable, are not entirely conclusive. The authors of a desktop type research identified in the literature a typology of communication approaches at the international level, which is summarized in the form of two strategies (a verbal and a nonverbal approach) and 7 tactics of communication with customers regarding the concept of sustainability (accuracy, being comparable, positivity, being certified, being visible, being authentic and being internalized) [Shen, et al., 2020].

A major problem in order to develop a real sustainable strategy within the hospitality field is related to the continuous effort to implement innovation. The business innovation model can be a potential mechanism for integrating business sustainability. Very few companies have a clear innovation strategy, and fewer have a green development strategy and even fewer have a green innovation strategy. The tourism and hospitality industry faces some environmental challenges in a more explicit way than other industries [Presenza, et al., 2019; Messeni Petruzzelli, & Ardito, 2019].

Although over time there has been a growing interest in innovative and sustainable proposals in the field of tourism, the hospitality industry has known a continuous controversy. A number of countries have not yet succeeded in implementing sustainable development goals in the field of hospitality, while others have made significant progress. In this direction, it is necessary to collaborate between stakeholders, at all levels, as well as to engage organizations that are able to operate on a large scale [Seraphin, & Gowreesunkar, 2021; Jones, & Comfort, 2020].

Strategic approach within the field of hospitality in term of sustainable practices has to be implemented starting from the clear green marketing orientations. In

order to implement optimally such an approach, managers of hospitality companies have to take into consideration market orientation, resource orientation, environmental orientation and brand orientation [Ho, et al., 2021, Ertac & Cankan, 2021, Andronie et al, 2019].

One of the main orientations that can bring further lines of development even in the case of a sustainable approach is the one that concerns the green brands image that can encompass the marketing communication for hospitality organizations. A research with a sample of 400 respondents has been conducted in order to emphasize the strategic decisions related with a sustainable strategy approach from the point of view of hospitality services consumers' perceptions on green hotel brands. The results of the study show that the green brand image, along with awareness of the green brand and perceived value of the brand as a green asset has a positive impact over the brand management [Shanti, & Joshi, 2021]. Regardless the type of strategy implied, sustainable dimension is assured through a continuous effort that can connect in an optimal way the past, the present and the future of the organization. From this point of view, even at the level of a touristic destination, we can manage a certain lifecycle, which imposes from the point of view of a sustainable approach the proper evaluation of past strategies. Numerous factors like technological progress, local features of the destination, specificity of tourists' needs and consumption motives, etc. can determine different results for the process of evaluation [Gore, et al., 2020].

The link between past and future strategies in the field of hospitality is assured in a proper manner by the creativity used to develop and implement different models of initiatives regarding touristic products. From this point of view, studies have individualized five main models that can assure a sustainable approach: repeated stand-alone offers; series of creative activities and other initiatives under a common theme; localized networks for creative tourism; small-scale festivals that include creative tourism activities; and creative accommodations [Duxbury, et al., 2021]. Such approach can be particularly useful in times such the present one, characterized by the COVID-19 pandemic, because it can give to a specific local community the tools and resources to revitalize the touristic offer putting the emphasis on cultural vitality, distinctive elements of local identity, connections and flows between different players in the spirit of collaboration, exchange and development.

One of the most important requirements from the perspective of a sustainable approach to hospitality activities, especially in the current context, is the one that

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refers to the need to develop integrated, holistic, systemic and participative strategies. Sustainability, even in the context of hospitality field, has the role of balancing corporative interests and needs of the stakeholders. In order to facilitate this role, managers have to build a productive management relationship through which all the parties can understand the implications of their actions from the point of view of sustainability [dos Santos, et al., 2020].

More than that, acquiring a true sustainable orientation means that objectives related to environment and efficiency of the processes within hospitality services are harmonizing with the fulfillment of other categories of needs, like the ones expressed by other stakeholders – consumers and investors. Actually, we talk about a culture of sustainability that can be implemented in an equilibrated manner, integrating all categories of expectations and interests, as hospitality services are complex processes that need a synergy from all the implied parties [Bernal Escoto, et al., 2019]. In line with this idea we can cite also the research of ElShafei which highlight the importance of risk perception at the level of hospitality companies' managers in order to implement a sustainable consumption of resources, in harmony with stakeholders' perception [ElShafei, 2020].

Hospitability Green Human Resource Management

One of the most preeminent issues about sustainable supply chain management within the hospitality field deals with the need to implement green human resources practices. In order to promote a sustainable orientation of hospitality organizations it is necessary to define correctly and completely the practices of ecological management of human resources at all levels of the organization. In this way it becomes possible to encourage employees to promote environmentally responsible behavior. The environmental performance of the organization represents a complex objective that can be properly attained only through the implication of all employees from all organization's levels from the point of view of a positive response regarding green human resources management practices. Only in the moment that those practices are fully explained and defined for all the employees' levels, people have the capacity to really improve the environmental performance of their organization. Every single employee is capable to have a responsible behavior toward the environment preservation. Ecological human resources management can be defined as the totality of human resources practices that promote the sustainable use of the company's resources by increasing the awareness and commitment of staff in relation to solving environmental problems

[Tulsi, & Ji, 2020]. Ecological human resources management involves activities aligned with the three pillars of sustainability related to environment, society and economy, being in the same time closed connected with the need to insure financial stability [Abdeen, & Ahmed, 2019].

Studies in the field indicate that, in the context of the hospitality industry, employees are more willing to actively support environmental practices when managers in the next higher echelon are also engaged in such practices. Integration in daily work determines the emergence of an organizational culture oriented towards sustainability [Tulsi, & Ji, 2020]. Also, sustainable staff training is considered a crucial factor in the ecological management of human resources, stimulating performance in the internal environment of organizations. Given the proactive maturity of the management of the internal environment of hospitality companies, the development of staff skills from the perspective of managing work processes on sustainable principles determines a natural transition to sustainable hospitality management [Cabral, & Jabbour, 2020]. As a final conclusion the implementation of sustainable principles that are reflected in the employees' level starts from the promotion of an appreciative culture within the organization that targets both the employees and the consumers of hospitality services, as well as the promotion of a socially responsible image oriented towards the general public [Heimerl, et al., 2020]. The company's corporate environmental responsibility is integrated with green human resources management, green competitive advantages and green supply chain management in order to assess the full potential of a proper development strategy within the hospitality field [Tulsi, & Ji, 2020; Jabbour, & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016].

Conclusions

Many specialists argued that sustainable development should become central for the hospitality industry as a part of the general effort towards a „new normality”, with measures that cover social distancing, transport systems, sport events and hotels check-in.

Countries that have a special situation, as the hospitality industry represents a major sector of the economy, could offer an increased role for the state, with a full cooperation between governments and hospitality industry. COVID-19 crisis was the biggest challenge ever for the hospitality industry because of its global scale. If certain natural disaster like a tsunami or a local epidemic have caused problems for the hotel industry in a certain region or country, major touristic players can have

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always like a back-up plan. Here, companies could use their financial resources, both to reduce the overall impact of the event and to try to quickly bring back to business the facilities in the affected areas. In such circumstances, large companies may also seek to relocate customers to the company's hotels, cruises and vacation packages to other parts of the world and thus protect, at least in part, their revenue streams. But, in present conditions with a global full limitation of the touristic activities, such solutions don't work anymore. The situation in which local touristic businesses can evolve better because majority of tourists wants to stay home and go with friends or relatives in close locations, away from any human agglomeration can bring some advantages for the local economies but it will be way too little in order for the entire industry to revive itself. Some of the specialists actually consider the crisis as a huge test for the future coming challenges including climacteric changes and potential other pandemic situations. As a consequence, the integration of sustainable principles along supply chains in hospitality industry and the implementation on a large scale of other sustainable activities and managerial decisions are a prerequisite for the survival and future development plans. More than that, there are voices arguing that mankind will face the need to change structural elements regarding our very lifestyle and the relationship with the environment not only at governmental or business level but as individuals. The COVID-19 crisis was an objective proof about how a global negative event can effectively turn upside down individual lives and business models alike forcing everybody to find solutions for a real sustainable approach.

Our research points out some clear aspects regarding the way in which specialized literature in the field approach the issue at hand – sustainable supply chain management within hospitality field. We have discussed also how the present challenges have affected the capacity of companies from the field to cope with different pressure elements. As for future directions of research we may propose subsequent literature review efforts that can highlight the current changes that took place at the level of empiric practice and theoretical conceptualization in the field. In the same time, we think that a qualitative type research aimed to explore the perceptions of managers from the industry regarding sustainable practices and optimal ways to manage a green supply chain alongside with relationship with other organizations from the market can bring new insights that could picture an objective and clear perspective over the special situation that characterize hospitality companies nowadays.

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