

Pro-environmental practices and green solutions adoption in Western Balkans hotels: transformative path to enhance sustainability

Proekološke prakse i usvajanje zelenih rešenja u hotelima Zapadnog Balkana: transformativni put za unapređenje održivosti

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Abstract

In the rapidly evolving landscape of hospitality, the emphasis on sustainability and environmental stewardship has gained unprecedented momentum. Hotels, as significant consumers of resources and contributors to waste, are increasingly recognizing the imperative of adopting green solutions. The paper started from the initial hypothesis H that different green solutions are a long-term path to achieving sustainable and responsible business in hotels. Research conducted among managers and owners of hotels in mountain centers of the Western Balkans showed that among employees there is a need for a transition from classic to sustainable business. Central to this transition are two factors: green training and green rewards, which together foster a culture of sustainability within the hotel industry. This paper explores the essential role of green training in equipping hotel staff with the knowledge and skills needed for sustainable operations, the various green rewards programs that incentivize eco-friendly practices, and the overall environmental performance indicators that reflect a hotel's commitment to sustainability. By analyzing these interconnected facets, it becomes evident that a holistic approach to environmental responsibility not only enhances the reputation of hotels but also contributes to a more sustainable future.

Keywords: green solutions, green training, green rewards, sustainability, Western Balkan hotels

Sažetak

U pejzažu ugostiteljstva koji se brzo razvija, naglasak na održivosti i brizi o životnoj sredini je dobio neviđeni zamah. Hoteli, kao značajni potrošači resursa i doprinosi otpadu, sve više prepoznaju imperativ usvajanja zelenih praksi. Rad je počeo od početne hipoteze H da su različita zelena rešenja dugoročan put ka postizanju održivog i odgovornog poslovanja u hotelima. Istraživanje sprovedeno među menadžerima i vlasnicima hotela u planinskim centrima Zapadnog Balkana pokazalo je da među zaposlenima postoji potreba za prelaskom sa klasičnog na održivo poslovanje. Centralna za ovu tranziciju su dva faktora: zelena obuka i zelene nagrade, koji zajedno neguju kulturu održivosti u hotelskoj industriji. Ovaj rad istražuje suštinsku ulogu zelene obuke u opremanju hotelskog osoblja znanjem i veštinama potrebnim za održivo poslovanje, različite zelene programe nagrađivanja koji podstiču ekološke prakse i sveukupne indikatore ekološkog učinka koji odražavaju posvećenost hotela održivosti. Analizom ovih međusobno povezanih aspekata, postaje očigledno da holistički pristup ekološkoj odgovornosti ne samo da poboljšava reputaciju hotela već i doprinosi održivijoj budućnosti.

Ključne reči: zelena rešenja, zelena obuka, zelene nagrade, održivost, hoteli Zapadnog Balkana

1. Introduction

The path to sustainability is not merely a trend but an essential strategy for ensuring the long-term viability of

tourism in the region. According to Zhao et al. (2025) the hospitality industry is at a critical juncture where environmental sustainability has become a key concern for stakeholders ranging from hotel operators to guests

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(Jerez-Jerez, 2025). Pro-environmental practices significantly reduce operational costs for hotels, making them an attractive option for hoteliers looking to enhance their bottom line while promoting sustainability (Patwary et al., 2024). One of the most effective strategies is the adoption of energy-efficient technologies, such as LED lighting and smart thermostats, which can drastically lower utility bills (Guerra-Lombardi et al., 2024). According to Kruesi & Remy (2024) hotels that invest in these technologies often witness a substantial decrease in energy consumption, resulting in lower monthly expenses (Míguez et al., 2023). Additionally, waste reduction practices, including recycling programs and composting initiatives, minimize disposal costs (Álvarez Gil et al., 2001). By diverting waste from landfills, hotels not only reduce their waste management fees but also contribute positively to the environment (Bianco et al., 2023). Furthermore, sustainable sourcing of materials plays a crucial role in long-term savings. While the initial costs of eco-friendly products might be higher, the durability and reduced need for replacements can lead to significant savings over time. According to Barbara et al. (2024), using sustainable building materials can result in lower maintenance costs and enhance the lifespan of hotel facilities. Thus, the financial benefits of adopting pro-environmental practices create a compelling argument for hotels to embrace sustainability as a core aspect of their operations (Guerra-Lombardi et al., 2024).

The implementation of green solutions in hotels leads to better regulatory compliance and access to various incentives, which further solidifies the case for sustainability in the hospitality sector (Sheikh et al., 2024). By adopting pro-environmental practices, hotels can ensure compliance with these regulations, thereby avoiding costly fines and penalties that could arise from negligence. Moreover, many governments offer incentives and subsidies for hotels that invest in green technologies, such as tax breaks or grants that offset the initial costs of implementation (Xin & Wang, 2023; Aslam Janjua et al. 2024; Shehawy et al., 2024). These financial benefits can alleviate the burden of investment, making it more feasible for hotels to transition to eco-friendly practices. By aligning their operations with regulatory frameworks and taking advantage of available incentives, hotels not only enhance their sustainability profile but also position themselves favorably within the rapidly evolving landscape of environmental responsibility. Thus, the regulatory environment serves as both a catalyst for change and a safeguard for businesses committed to sustainable practices (Tanveer et al., 2023).

In the Western Balkans, a region characterized by its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, hotels face the dual challenge of maintaining economic viability while embracing pro-environmental practices (Göler, 2018; Kennell et al., 2020). With increasing awareness of environmental issues, the need for the hospitality sector to adopt sustainable practices has never been more pressing (Knezović et al., 2020). Studying similar practices in different hotels, scientists dealing with the hotel industry of the Western Balkans agree that changes are necessary, but also that hotel managers need changes because they

are aware of the importance of the transition from classic to sustainable hotel business (Lehmann & Gronau, 2019; Knežević et al., 2024). The impact of pro-environmental practices on sustainability and guest experience is multifaceted, yielding both economic and experiential benefits (Vukolić et al., 2025). Hotels that implement sustainable practices often witness a reduction in operational costs, as energy-efficient technologies and waste reduction strategies lead to lower utility bills and improved profitability. Furthermore, the increasing demand for eco-friendly accommodations among travelers has made sustainability a selling point for many establishments. Knežević et al. (2024) indicates that a significant percentage of tourists, particularly millennials, prioritize sustainability when choosing accommodations, prompting hotels to market their green initiatives effectively.

The research commenced with the foundational hypothesis H, which posits that various green solutions represent a viable long-term strategy for attaining sustainable and responsible business practices within the hotel industry. Investigations carried out among managers and proprietors of hotels situated in the mountain regions of the Western Balkans revealed a prevailing necessity among employees for a shift from traditional business models to sustainable practices. Central to this transition are two factors: green training and green rewards. The results of the research coincided with similar research conducted by scientists in other hotels, with the aim of examining ways of transition and acceptance of sustainable practices. Researchers generally agree that the transition is preceded by various green trainings, and that the establishment of loyalty programs and green rewards accelerate the process. (Filimonau et al., 2023; Madan et al., 2024; Gulakdeniz & Karadas, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). The research showed that among hotel managers and employees there is an awareness of the importance of implementing green solutions in hotel business, but such solutions have not yet been fully implemented. However, continuous actions are being implemented that gradually change business practices from classic to sustainable. Guest perceptions are evolving, with visitors increasingly appreciative of hotels that demonstrate a commitment to environmental stewardship. This shift not only enhances guest satisfaction (Zrnić et al., 2024) but also fosters brand loyalty, as conscientious travelers are more likely to return to establishments that align with their values. Moreover, the long-term sustainability outcomes for the hotel industry in the Western Balkans appear promising, as the integration of pro-environmental practices not only safeguards the region's natural resources but also contributes to a more resilient tourism sector. As the hospitality landscape continues to evolve, the adoption of sustainable practices will likely become a crucial component of business strategy in the Western Balkans.

2. Literature review

The current state of pro-environmental practices in Western Balkans hotels presents a mixed picture, influenced by both regulatory frameworks and voluntary initiatives (Lehmann & Gronau, 2019). On one hand,

countries in the region have begun to establish environmental policies aimed at promoting sustainability within the tourism sector. According to Mansi et al. (2020) the European Union's directives on environmental protection have prompted many Western Balkan countries to align their regulations with EU standards. However, the enforcement of these regulations often varies, leading to a disparity in the implementation of sustainability initiatives among hotels. A significant number of hotels have embraced eco-certification programs, such as Green Key, which provide guidelines for sustainable operation (Knežević et al., 2024). Yet, according to Knežević et al. (2024) a comparative analysis reveals that while some hotels, particularly those in mountain and other tourist areas, have made substantial investments in sustainability, others—often smaller, family-run establishments—lag behind due to financial constraints or lack of awareness. As a result, the implementation of pro-environmental practices in the Western Balkans reflects a patchwork of efforts, highlighting the need for a more cohesive approach to sustainability across the region's hospitality sector (Mitić et al., 2022).

In response to the growing demand for sustainable tourism, many hotels in the Western Balkans have begun to adopt various green solutions (Melović et al., 2019). A notable trend is the investment in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power, which can significantly reduce a hotel's carbon footprint. For example, some hotels have implemented a solar panel system that not only powers its facilities but also reduces energy costs (Galli et al., 2018). Additionally, water conservation technologies have gained traction, with hotels installing low-flow fixtures and rainwater harvesting systems to minimize water waste (Licastro & Sergi, 2021). Waste management systems, including composting and recycling programs, have also been integrated into the operational frameworks of several hotels, leading to a more sustainable approach to resource management. Case studies, such as the eco-friendly initiatives of Hotel Aurel in Serbia, showcase how integrating green technologies can lead to substantial cost savings and operational efficiency (Radović et al., 2023). By harnessing these technologies, hotels in the Western Balkans are not only addressing environmental concerns but also positioning themselves as leaders in sustainable tourism, thus enhancing their competitive edge in the market.

According to Ng et al. (2025) the effectiveness of green training and rewards programs is measured through key indicators of environmental performance in hotels (Jovanović Nikolić & Stojković Trajković, 2022; Vujko et al., 2022). These indicators provide tangible metrics for assessing a hotel's commitment to sustainability and include energy efficiency metrics, water conservation statistics, and waste management practices (Pham et al., 2020). According to Hoang et al. (2025), a hotel may track its energy consumption through smart meters, allowing management to identify peak usage times and implement strategies for improvement. Similarly, water conservation efforts can be quantified through the monitoring of usage rates, leading to initiatives like low-flow fixtures and

drought-resistant landscaping (Aboramadan et al., 2022). Studies have shown that hotels adopting such measures can reduce water usage by up to 30%, significantly lowering operational costs while contributing to broader environmental goals (MacAskill et al., 2023; McCarroll et al., 2024). Additionally, waste diversion rates, which reflect the percentage of waste that is recycled or composted, serve as another critical performance indicator (Pickering et al., 2020). By regularly assessing these metrics, hotels can not only demonstrate their environmental impact to stakeholders but also identify areas for further improvement. Ultimately, a commitment to monitoring and enhancing environmental performance solidifies a hotel's position as a leader in sustainable hospitality (Sheikh et al., 2024).

According to Ertuna et al. (2022) one notable example is the Marriott International chain, which has developed a comprehensive recycling program across its properties. This program includes structured waste audits, staff training sessions, and partnerships with local recycling facilities to ensure that materials are effectively processed. According to El-Said et al. (2024) the goals of the program focus on reducing waste by at least 30% within the first year of implementation, a target that many hotels have successfully achieved. The measurable outcomes of Marriott's program are inspiring; According to Wong et al. (2015), properties that have adopted these practices report substantial reductions in landfill contributions and increased diversion rates of recyclable materials. These success stories illustrate the tangible benefits of recycling initiatives in hotels, not only in terms of environmental impact but also in enhancing the brand's commitment to sustainability, which resonates with a growing demographic of eco-conscious travelers.

3. Methodology

The Western Balkans, as both a political and geographical entity, encompass the economies of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. This region, regarded as the core of Europe, boasts a rich and multi-faceted cultural heritage, characterized by a vibrant history that is frequently marked by significant challenges (Knežević et al., 2024).

Number of 91 hotel managers and owners from well-known mountains in the Western Balkans region participated in the research. Hotels on the Korab mountain (Albania and North Macedonia), Radomire village and Tomor mountain (Albania), hotels on the mountains Zlatibor, Tara, Kopaonik and Stara Planina (Serbia), Brezovica (Kosovo and Metohija), Durmitor (Montenegro) and Jahorina (BiH). The managers were contacted electronically, via e-mail, where they were sent a set of variables to which it was necessary to give answers, ranking them on a five-digit Likert scale. The hotels were chosen for their recognition and general popularity among tourists. These are the most visited hotels in the observed region, so the answers are considered representative, and the response among hotel managers and owners was impressive.

After the collected data, a Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed. Factor analysis is regarded as one of the most widely utilized multivariate techniques, facilitating the identification and comprehension of fundamental concepts, specifically the shared characteristics among multiple variables. Additionally, this method allows for the reduction of variables in an analysis when an excessive number exists, particularly when certain variables exhibit overlap due to their analogous meanings and behaviors.

The questions asked were related to the decisive attitudes regarding the key indicators of sustainability in the hotel business. How do employees relate to sustainability and how much does such a path in business mean to them. Are there specific education programs among employees and what is their attitude towards the creation of a unique culture of sustainability. The authors wanted to investigate the attitudes of hotel managers and owners about organizing workshops that educate employees about the importance of recycling and other educational programs that support sustainability. Also, we wanted to find out what the attitude is about the introduction of various applications and other smart programs via the Internet and applications. Then, respondents were asked a set of questions related to the use and use of energy-efficient devices and their attitude towards them. It was especially important to examine the attitude towards the implementation of different value systems that encourage responsible behavior. First with employees, and then with tourists. Authors wanted to see how the respondents felt

about loyalty programs that could include different benefits for those who participate in proposed actions that support sustainability.

After factor analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed. Structural equation modeling is, precisely, a technique for constructing models of the manners in which measured variables are understood to reflect latent variables believed to causally influence one another's createdness. The relationships between and amongst the two factors, Green training and Green rewards were tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) input in the Study. All of the hypotheses of the study were confirmed. It extended and supported earlier work in the area. Moreover, enlightening and meaningful implications discovered in the linkage between green training, green rewards, and customer loyalty were a contribution to the academic and practitioner field. To managers this may come handy as good insight, and a better understanding of things happening with their hotels.

4. Result and discussion

Total number of 91 managers and owners of hotels in mountain tourist centers of the Western Balkans region participated in the research. Regardless of where they came from, that is, where their hotel is located, they gave uniform answers that singled out 2 key factors for achieving sustainable business in the hotel business: green training and green rewards.

Table 1. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.766	62.769	62.769	2.544	42.397	42.397	2.186	36.436	36.436
2	1.029	17.147	79.916	1.805	30.080	72.476	2.162	36.040	72.476
3	.548	9.133	89.049						
4	.331	5.522	94.572						
5	.210	3.501	98.072						
6	.116	1.928	100.000						

Source: Prepared by the author's

Table 2. Factor Matrix

	Factor	
	Green training	Green training
v0	.610	.237
v1	.999	-.023
v0	.528	.658
v2	.783	.341
v3	.486	.862
v4	.213	.675

Source: Prepared by the author's

The Factor analysis (see Table 1) yielded a model that categorizes the variables into two distinct factors, collectively accounting for 80% of the variance.

The first factor "Green training" shows the grouping of variables around several key attitudes: v1 Proper labeling and signage in waste disposal areas enhance recycling efforts by providing clear instructions on what can and

cannot be recycled; v2 Energy-efficient appliances result in reduced maintenance and replacement costs.

Green training in hotels serves as the cornerstone for implementing effective sustainability initiatives. Defined as the educational programs designed to instill knowledge about environmental practices among hotel staff, green training is vital for fostering a workplace culture that prioritizes sustainability. Various types of training programs are offered, ranging from introductory sessions on the importance of eco-friendly practices to advanced workshops focused on specific sustainable technologies. For instance, many hotels partner with external organizations to provide workshops that educate employees on waste reduction strategies, energy-efficient operations, and sustainable sourcing of materials. Additionally, training might include hands-on demonstrations of recycling techniques or the use of energy-efficient appliances. By equipping staff with the

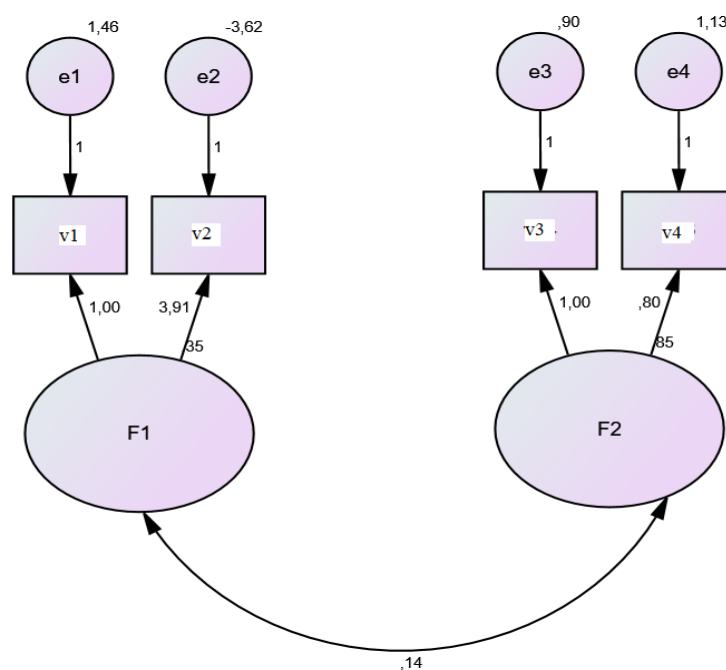
right tools and understanding, hotels can ensure that every employee, from housekeeping to management, plays a crucial role in achieving environmental objectives. The importance of green training is further underscored by studies indicating that well-trained staff are more engaged and committed to sustainability efforts, leading to enhanced operational efficiency and guest satisfaction.

The second factor "Green rewards" shows the grouping of variables around several key attitudes: v3 Loyalty programs might include benefits for guests who choose to participate in sustainability efforts during their stay, such as opting out of daily housekeeping or utilizing public transportation; v4 Contemporary travelers often prioritize sustainability, and hotels that demonstrate commitment to eco-friendly practices are likely to attract and retain environmentally conscious customers.

Complementing green training are green rewards programs that recognize and incentivize sustainable practices within hotels. These programs typically offer a

variety of rewards, such as discounts on services, loyalty points, or recognition awards for employees who actively participate in eco-friendly initiatives. For example, hotels may implement a system where employees earn points for reducing energy consumption or successfully recycling materials, which can later be redeemed for prizes or bonuses. These incentives not only motivate staff to adopt sustainable practices but also create a competitive spirit that encourages innovation and collaboration among teams. Furthermore, hotels that promote green rewards often report improved employee morale and retention, as staff feel valued for their contributions to environmental stewardship. Such programs can also extend to guests, where loyalty programs might include benefits for guests who choose to participate in sustainability efforts during their stay, such as opting out of daily housekeeping or utilizing public transportation. This dual approach reinforces a culture of sustainability that permeates both staff and guests, ultimately enhancing the hotel's reputation as a responsible and eco-conscious establishment.

Figure 1. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)



Source: Prepared by the author's

According to Figure 1. the implementation of green training in the hotel industry serves as a crucial catalyst for fostering environmental responsibility and enhancing employee engagement. By providing employees with education and development programs centered around environmentally sustainable practices, hotels cultivate a culture of sustainability that permeates all levels of the organization. This culture not only empowers employees but also encourages them to actively participate in sustainability initiatives, leading to increased engagement and commitment to eco-friendly practices (Vučićević et al., 2024). Furthermore, green training has shown to improve operational efficiency, reduce resource consumption, and minimize waste generation, translating into tangible environmental benefits for hotel

organizations. As employees become more knowledgeable about sustainability, they are better equipped to advocate for and implement sustainable practices throughout the supply chain, thereby enhancing the overall performance of the organization. This strategic investment in green training not only strengthens environmental responsibility but also contributes to improved brand reputation and customer loyalty, providing a competitive advantage in a market that increasingly values sustainability. Ultimately, the positive impact of green training extends beyond individual hotels, influencing the broader industry and promoting a sustainable ethos that benefits both the environment and the business.

Green Reward Programs have emerged as a pivotal strategy in enhancing customer loyalty and promoting sustainable practices within the hotel industry. These programs not only incentivize guests to engage in eco-friendly behaviors, but they also align with consumers' values regarding sustainability, creating a deeper connection between hotels and eco-conscious travelers. As customers become increasingly aware of their environmental impact, they show a marked preference for hotels that actively participate in green initiatives, significantly influencing their decision-making processes when selecting accommodations. Furthermore, hotels that implement these sustainable practices can enhance their brand image, attracting a clientele that values environmental responsibility and is willing to pay premium prices for green certifications. The success of these programs not only fosters a competitive advantage within the hospitality sector but also encourages continuous engagement, allowing hotels to forge stronger relationships with their guests. Additionally, studies have shown that increased trust in hotels demonstrating commitment to sustainability leads to greater customer satisfaction and advocacy, further solidifying the importance of Green Loyalty Programs in reshaping the industry and paving the way for a greener future. By fostering increased customer engagement and promoting sustainable practices, these programs create a rewarding experience that benefits both the industry and its guests, highlighting the interdependence between customer loyalty and environmental stewardship.

Table 3. Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
v1	←	F1	.441
v2	←	F1	1.758
v3	←	F2	.697
v4	←	F2	.571
GFI			0.980
CFI			0.977
TLI			0.964
RMSEA			0.01

Source: Prepared by the author's

The first part of the data in Table 3 shows that all variables have positive effects on the obtained factors. In fact, this means that the "green training" factor positively depends on the actions that the hotel management carries out in order to raise awareness of the importance of sustainability for business. Orientation towards sustainable development implies, first of all, that everyone individually takes part in the implementation of each individual action, and that if you believe in what you are doing, the goals can be feasible, and the tasks to reach the goal, realistic. The most important goal of any business is the transition from classic to sustainable business. In order to achieve that, it is necessary to carry out actions and organize workshops. The task is supported through another separate factor "green rewards". Table 3 shows that different loyalty programs have a great impact on sustainable business. Hotel managers are also aware of this. It is clear that such actions will have a response in the future as well, because the awareness of the importance of sustainability is summed up in every pore of modern life.

The indices that were used to check the suitability of the model are: Goodness-of-fit index ($GFI > 0.95$); comparative fit index ($CFI > 0.95$); Tucker-Lewis index ($TLI > 0.95$) and root mean squared error of approximation ($RMSEA < 0.05$). Table 3 shows the values of the mentioned indices that are considered desirable and satisfactory, in the case of a "good" model fit.

5. Conclusion

The interplay between tourism and environmental stewardship in the Western Balkans is critical for ensuring sustainable development that not only attracts visitors but also preserves the region's natural and cultural resources. Sustainable tourism practices can significantly enhance the appeal of the Western Balkans as a travel destination, as more travelers are now prioritizing destinations that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. According to Ristić et al. (2019) this shift is particularly relevant in areas like Kopaonik, where the pressures of winter tourism have already led to environmental disturbances such as vegetation destruction and forest fragmentation. To mitigate these impacts, the adoption of sustainable tourism practices is essential, as it helps reduce the overall environmental footprint while promoting responsible economic growth (Bojović et al., 2024). Moreover, preserving the unique cultural heritage of the region is an important facet of these sustainable practices, ensuring that local traditions and histories are not lost amid rapid development. As Kopaonik aims to accommodate tourism infrastructure development, it faces the formidable challenge of balancing economic interests with the preservation of its unique flora, fauna, and ecological stability. Therefore, effective environmental management and the implementation of sustainable practices are not just beneficial but vital for the longevity of the region's natural resources and overall tourism viability. In navigating this delicate interplay, the Western Balkans can set a precedent for the successful integration of tourism and environmental stewardship, paving the way for a sustainable future.

As awareness of environmental issues grows, travelers increasingly seek accommodations that align with their values, driving bookings towards eco-friendly hotels. This rising consumer demand presents a golden opportunity for hotels to differentiate themselves in an intensely competitive market. By promoting sustainability initiatives, such as organic food offerings, renewable energy use, and water conservation efforts, hotels can create a niche that appeals to eco-conscious guests, thus enhancing their market share. Moreover, the positive reviews and word-of-mouth generated by satisfied guests can significantly boost a hotel's reputation. Customers who appreciate their environmentally friendly experiences are more likely to share their stories on social media and travel platforms, leading to greater visibility and attracting new clientele. In an era where travelers are not merely looking for a place to stay, but for a holistic experience that respects and preserves the environment, hotels that prioritize green practices are not just meeting a

demand but also contributing to the broader movement towards sustainable tourism.

The integration of green training and green rewards programs within hotels is paramount for achieving meaningful environmental performance. Through comprehensive training, staff are empowered to adopt sustainable practices that enhance operational efficiency and guest satisfaction. Meanwhile, green rewards programs serve to motivate and recognize those efforts, fostering a culture of sustainability that resonates with both employees and guests. By measuring environmental performance through key indicators, hotels can continuously refine their strategies and demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. The convergence of these elements not only positions hotels as responsible stewards of the environment but also aligns their operations with the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly practices, paving the way for a more sustainable future in the hospitality industry.

As the Western Balkans continue to navigate the interplay between tourism and environmental stewardship, the commitment to sustainability will be crucial for the region's future. The challenges to sustainable development in the hotel industry within the Western Balkan region are multifaceted, encompassing financial, operational, and managerial aspects. One of the primary financial obstacles is the limited access to financing sources, which significantly raises the cost of borrowed capital for hotel businesses due to a bank-centric financial system. This financial strain is compounded by the seasonal nature of tourist demand, which affects liquidity and the ability of hotels to maintain stable operations year-round. Operationally, the integration of energy efficiency measures, while crucial for sustainability, often demands substantial investment that can negatively impact a hotel's business success due to the high initial costs and lengthy payback periods. Furthermore, the managerial challenges are evident in the lack of qualified hotel and tourism managers, which hinders the development and implementation of effective sustainable practices. Addressing these challenges requires targeted strategies tailored to the specific conditions and needs of each country within the region, alongside fostering awareness and commitment among hotel managers to maximize the effectiveness of sustainable practices. It is imperative that stakeholders and policymakers collaborate to create supportive frameworks that encourage investment in sustainability and enhance the resilience of the tourism industry in the Western Balkans, ensuring a positive impact on both the environment and local communities.

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