

The Study of Listed Companies of Hotel Business in Taiwan: Implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

This study offers insights on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) initiatives of 7 hotel groups in Taiwan. The objective is to show how hoteliers around the world engage in sustainable actions. The paper draws on case studies and the data is derived from a number of case studies which are analyzed in an exploratory and descriptive way. The findings show that the hotel sectors are committed to the SDGs, but there are variations in the ways of hotels addressing the SDGs. Based on the findings, it seems that the hotels studied and have covered most of the SDGs, as they have been seen contributing in the three main spheres of sustainability, namely, the economy, the society and the environment. The 7 hotel groups profiled take responsibility of engaging in sustainable actions which reduce the ecological impact. These actions have a positive influence on guests, staff and hoteliers. The findings may serve as a guidance to hotels which have not yet committed to implementing the SDG goals.

Keywords: Sustainable development goals, listed companies in Taiwan, hotel business

1. Introduction

With the advancement of science and technology, people have noticed the environmental damage and resource depletion coming along with the economic benefits in which hospitality industry has played a part. This implies that the hospitality industry is playing a major role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Jones & Comfort, 2019). Therefore, tourism is widely recognized as the key to accomplishing the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the 169 associated targets. It is emphasized that the joint participation, cooperation of countries around the world as well as making sustainability metrics available around the world are pivotal.

In Taiwan, the geographical and environmental issues, including narrow land area and dense population, have been major problems to solve. The lack of natural resources, being vulnerable to natural disasters, a special political status internationally, and facing systemic risks such as rapid aging, declining industrial competitiveness, increasing inequality gap, and high climate vulnerability are also significant issues to be tackled. Therefore, it is urgent to meet up with the sustainable development goals. However, it is clear that sustainable development has been the center of growing trends and awareness of the global links among the issues of environmental, economic, and social responsibility. Hence, making Taiwanese hotel groups

effectively enhance their competitiveness under the UN Sustainable Development Goals is essential. As a result, based on a study of relevant sustainable development literatures, this article contributes to the literatures on sustainable development by filling the following gap, and it provides the reference for the government and enterprises to formulate industrial strategies.

SDGs have become the consensus of governments and enterprises around the world. Enterprises of all countries spare no effort in SDGs efforts. However, there is no domestic literature discussing the current situation of hotel business SDGs planning and implementation in Taiwan. Jones, Hillier and Comfort (2017) pinpoint the hospitality and tourism industry is considered to be the leading trend industry, and that will make a practical contribution to the goals of the SDGs (Khairat & Maher, 2012; Gowreesunkar et al., 2015). Nevertheless, there may be many contradictions between the business development of the tourism and catering industry and the development of SDGs indicators. Therefore, this study selects listed companies of hotel business in Taiwan to analyze and compare, which outlines the characteristics of the 7 hotel groups and the method of enquiry in Taiwan. The information used for analyzation and comparison is drawn from a search on the hotel's corporate websites. Followed by the findings of this search, different ways on how the selected hotels addressing the SDGs are reviewed. Moreover, the study

offers a reflective discussion, which raises issues interpretation and terminology, business priorities, metrics and measurement, business reporting and communication, and the relationships and tensions between business imperatives and sustainability.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations released the "2030 Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs) on September 25, 2015. The SDGs include 17 core goals from a global perspective. It also covers 169 detailed objectives and 230 indicators. Emphasizing the joint participation and cooperation of all countries in the world, through the input of global citizens, the sustainable development indicators can be implemented all over

the world. SDG is continuing to develop an agenda after the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ended in 2015. MDGs consist of 8 Goals and 21 Targets. While SDG was expanded to 17 Goals and 169 Targets which continue the goals to achieve the 2030 agenda instability in three dimensions of sustainable development, namely social, economic and environmental dimensions. Sustainability is now a very important topic in relation to tourism planning and development (Hall et al., 2015). Hotel business is widely recognized as the key to accomplishing the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the 169 associated targets (Abdou et al., 2020). Therefore, the introduction of SDGs in hotels is a pivotal business indicator.



Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Goals – Agenda 2030 [Online image]. (2015). UN News Centre. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/12/sustainable-development-goals-kick-off-with-start-of-new-year/>

2.2 Hotel Business in the Sustainable Development

During COVID-19 pandemic, the topic of sustainability is going to be even more essential in tourism (Gossling et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Jamal & Budke, 2020; Yang et al., 2020). The potential environmental effects of such expansion, as well as concerns like global climate change, have become particularly heated subjects in the travel and tourist industry today (Millar & Baloglu, 2015). However, SDGs have been associated as part of the solutions in order to protect the environment and products made within an environmentally and ecologically friendly way (Amran et al., 2017; Singjai et al., 2018). In the hotel business, which uses and generates a variety of resources such as water,

electricity, and trash in the course of its everyday operations. Beyond that, the hotel business for sustainability establishes the business benefits to sustainable development and green hotel management techniques will, in the long term, save operating costs and increase income.

3. Frame of Reference and Method of Enquiry

In an attempt to undertake an exploratory review of listed companies of hotel business in Taiwan, as ranked by revenue, were selected for study. In this study, the 7 listed companies are analyzed and compared based on the tourism stocks in Taiwan's listed companies, excluding companies that do not have restaurant business bases in Taiwan. Their consolidated revenue and operating bases in 2021 are shown in Table 1. As the largest players within the

hotel industry, the selected companies might be expected to reflect innovative thinking in their

approaches to the SDGs.

Table 1: Listed Companies of Hotel Business in Taiwan (Source: Various Trade Sources)

	Hotel Group	Total Revenue in 2021	Number of Hotel
1	Silks Hotel Group	4,930,000,000	15
2	My Humble House Group	2,334,000,000	5
3	The Ambassador Hotel	1,518,343,000	5
4	LDC Hotels & Resorts	1,450,000,000	11
5	Lefoo Tourism Group	1,256,000,000	3
6	Holiday Garden Group	821,146,000	1
7	Château Hotels & Resorts	587,918,000	3

The hotel groups listed in Table 1 mainly operate in Taiwan, but some hotels have overseas operating bases. Based on the analysis of operating sites in Taiwan, Silks Hotel Group has the most operating sites with 15, followed by LDC Hotels & Resorts with 11, My Humble House Group and Château Hotels & Resorts with 5 hotels each.

Silks Hotel Group was established in 1990. The group owns Regent Taipei, Regent Galleria, Silks Place, Wellspring by Silks and Just Sleep, as well as Silks Palace and a restaurant located in the National Palace Museum in Taiwan. My Humble House Group currently has five hotels in Taiwan, of which Sheraton Grand Taipei Hotel and Le Méridien Taipei are operated in cooperation with Marriott International. The Ambassador Hotel originally had 6 hotels in Taiwan. The Ambassador Hotel Taipei applied for a renovation plan to rebuild the hotel and serviced apartments building in 2022, and The Ambassador Hotel Kaohsiung will also be renovated in 2023, besides, it will be reduced by one Operating base. LDC Hotels & Resorts has 11 operating locations with six hotel brands in Taiwan and 5 operating locations in Italy. Lefoo Tourism Group has also joined with Marriott International to operate Courtyard by Marriott Taipei. In addition to hotels, Lefoo Tourism Group is also the only hotel group with a wildlife park. Holiday Garden Group originally had 2 hotels in Taiwan, and will sell out 1 hotel in 2022, while it has invested and operated 5 hotels in the United States. Château Hotels & Resorts' main operating base is in southern Taiwan. There are currently three hotel brands, one of which is located in the Kent-

ing Forest Recreation Area, which has an excellent location.

Hotel groups have employed a range of methods to report on their sustainability commitments and achievements, and this study conducted an Internet search for information, by using the phrase ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ and the names of each of the selected hotel groups in November 2022. The specific examples and selected corporate sustainability report from the corporate websites are used for illustrative purposes, with the principal aim to review the ways of how which the selected hotel groups addressing the SDGs.

4. Findings

The selected hotel groups addressed the SDGs in a variety of ways. Table 2 provides a summary of number of SDGs publicly addressed by each hotel group and reveals. In addition to Holiday Garden Group, the other six hotel groups have published corporate sustainability reports on their official websites. At the individual level, SDG 8 namely Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG16 namely Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, was the most commonly addressed of the SDGs. SDG 7 namely Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG 14 namely Life Below Water are not mentioned by any hotel group

The Holiday Garden Group (2022) claimed that the SDGs had been used along with other criteria, the focus is on the “SDGs in which Holiday Garden Group has a direct and indirect impact” but the company’s Annual Report offers no explicit treatment of its achievements against the SDGs (Holiday Garden Group, 2018), neither made any reference to the SDGs.

Table 2: SDGs Addressed by Each Hotel

	Silks Hotel Group	My Humble House Group	The Ambassador Hotel	LDC Hotels & Resorts	Lefoo Tourism Group	Holiday Garden Group	Château Hotels & Resorts
SDG 1			V		V		
SDG 2			V	V	V		
SDG 3	V	V	V	V	V		
SDG 4	V	V	V				V
SDG 5	V	V	V				V
SDG 6	V	V	V				V

	Silks Hotel Group	My Humble House Group	The Ambassador Hotel	LDC Hotels & Resorts	Leofoo Tourism Group	Holiday Garden Group	Château Hotels & Resorts
SDG 7							
SDG 8	V	V	V	V	V		V
SDG 9				V			
SDG 10		V		V	V		
SDG 11		V		V			
SDG 12	V	V	V		V		V
SDG 13	V	V	V	V	V		
SDG 14							
SDG 15				V	V		
SDG 16	V	V	V	V	V		V
SDG 17	V	V		V	V		V
Number of SDGs	8	11	10	10	10	No specific details	7
Percentage of Total	47%	64%	58%	58%	58%	No specific details	41%

As shown in Table 2, My Humble House Group has introduced 11 SDGs targets into operation, but there are still 6 targets that have not yet been implemented, which are SDG1, SDG2, SDG7, SDG9, SDG14, SDG15. Compared with other hotel groups, My Humble House Group mentioned SDG10 in its Corporate Sustainability Report. The Group has set up a labor-management conference so that workers can have equal communication channels with management, and provide various employee benefits and workplace safety, so that employees can have a more equal working environment.

A more special one is Leofoo Tourism Group. In addition to the general hotel business, it also operates the Leofoo Resort Guanshi ecological resort hotel to achieve the goal of SDG15. In the Leofoo Resort Guanshi ecological resort hotel, rhino conservation projects are carried out and research on rhino breeding is promoted. In addition, resources have been injected to conserve the Collared scops owl and eagle habitats in the shallow mountains adjacent to Hsinchu.

LDC Hotels & Resorts also mentioned SDG10, but in the Corporate Sustainability Report, only electricity saving plans and reducing food waste are mentioned, which may be a slightly different from the goals mentioned in SDG10. LDC Hotels & Resorts claims to have solved SDG9, by donating unreproducible ingredients in restaurants to local churches, while reducing food waste in staff restaurants, so that food can be fully eaten.

The Ambassador Hotel is aiming at the goal of SDG1. In addition to providing financial or material donations to the poor, it also donates Chinese New Year dishes to medical staff for their efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Ambassador Hotel Hsinchu even donates the mattresses that are about to be re-

placed by the hotel to disadvantaged families in order to achieve the SDG1 goal.

In the Corporate Sustainability Report of Silks Hotel Group and Château Hotels & Resorts, the indicators in the SDGs are not mentioned, and the solution goals are determined by this study according to the problems solved in the report. Therefore, the two hotel groups, Silks Hotel Group and Château Hotels & Resorts, are addressing less goals than other hotel groups.

5. Conclusions

The findings reveal marked variation in how the selected leading hotel groups have begun to address the SDGs. Over the years and working through different experiences, we can see that companies are trying to be more sustainable and finding solutions that are more responsible for reducing the ecological impact. Although some of the goals have nothing to do with the hospitality industry, they can still contribute to other public welfare activities, such as SDG14, which can further promote public welfare activities such as beach cleaning for employees. SDG1 can provide one-time spare parts unused by tourists to homeless people, planning for various projects, re-examining various resources in hotels and restaurants, and continuously improving the existing situation to achieve 17 goals of the SDGs. Among other indicators, they are involved in training and education (SDG 4: Education), poverty alleviation, food security programs (SDG 1: No Poverty), food security programs (SDG 2: Zero Hunger), health and clinic projects (SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being), women and youth empowerment (SDG 5: Gender Equality), solar energy use (SDG 7: Affordable and Clean energy), job creation for locals (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth), community projects (SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities), buying vegetables from locals (SDG 12:

Responsible Consumption), environmental actions (SDG 13: Climate Actions), marine conservation and beach cleaning (SDG 14: Life below Water), reduced use of plastic (SDG 15: Life on Land) and best employees awards (SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institution). According to past research and data collation display, all these actions are received positively by guests and staff, yet there is much more to do in the years ahead.

The subjects of this study are seven companies, which run hotels as their main business, chosen from listed companies of hotels businesses in Taiwan. This study is to clarify and explore how do these companies implement SDGs indicators in order to offer insight for hotels in Taiwan that wish to apply SDGs initiatives into their operations. Nevertheless, the selected subjects in this study are domestic hotel business in Taiwan. International hotel groups are not the subjects of this study. As a result, it is not advisable to assume that all domestic hotel groups could implement SDGs initiatives. Furthermore, it is recommended that future researchers could engage in comparisons among International hotel brands operated in Taiwan to further analyse the methods and progress of different hotel groups which implement SDGs initiatives, pointing out the direction from a more comprehensive perspective.

There are less than 8 years left before the planning of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Many listed companies in Taiwan have also begun to compile sustainability reports. They also started to release the "Taiwan Sustainable Value Index" in 2021, promoting information about corporate influence. Jones, Hillier & Comfort (2017) believe that the tourism and hospitality industry is an industry leading the trend, which can make practical contributions to the goals of SDGs, and can refer to the policies implemented by the industry to conduct an internal inventory of the enterprises. However, about 90% of the catering industry in Taiwan are small and medium-sized enterprises, and it is quite difficult to introduce SDGs to them. Therefore, the introduction of SDGs into the catering industry requires the assistance of government units, from the internalization of the company to the overall promotion, combined with social and government resources to reach the goal of 2030.

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