

Application of Circular Economy and Cleaner Production Principles for Environmental Sustainability: Evidence from the Qatari Hospitality Sector

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Abstract

This study investigates the application of Circular Economy (CE) and Cleaner Production (CP) principles within the Qatari hospitality sector, with a focus on contrasting practices between Green Key-certified and non-certified hotels. The research addresses a gap in the literature regarding the integration of these sustainability practices in the Middle East, particularly in Qatar, where rapid tourism growth and the approaching Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030) deadline necessitate a strong framework for sustainability. The methodology employed a mixed-methods approach, combining a qualitative thematic analysis of nine semi-structured interviews with a quantitative structural equation model (SEM) based on a sample of 36 hotels. Qualitative findings revealed that Green Key certified hotels generally employ more formalized, corporate-driven, and technologically advanced CE and CP systems, such as AI monitoring for food waste and integrated submeters, often driven by audit requirements. In contrast, non-certified hotels implement these practices primarily for cost efficiency and on a more operational or grassroots level. The quantitative analysis supported all hypotheses, demonstrating strong positive associations among all study constructs. Critically, the results confirmed that Dynamic Capabilities (DC) significantly mediate the relationship between CE/CP adoption and performance outcomes (Environmental, Financial, and Long-term Strategic Outcomes). The study concludes that DC is an essential driver for hotels to successfully internalize sustainability practices, overcome implementation barriers, and improve overall long-term performance.