

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY – SENSITIVE APPROACH IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: ECOLOGDGES

Bariş Erdem¹

Nuray Tetik²

Abstract

Today tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the world. Statistics revealed that in spite of occasional shocks, international tourist arrivals have shown virtually uninterrupted growth: from 25 million in 1950, to 277 million in 1980; to 435 million in 1990, to 675 million in 2000. Worldwide, international tourist arrivals reached 940 million in 2010, up 6.6% over the previous year. It can be said that the growth in demand for nature tourism within this international tourist demand has been significant in recent years. Moreover, it is expected to grow steadily by taking into consideration of tourists 'changing needs and expectations. It is due to the increase in environmental awareness and environmental – sensitive choices of tourists. Today tourists are becoming more aware of the importance of environment and, this forces the hotel industry to pay more attention on environmentally – sensitive approach. As a consequence of these changes and progresses, an accommodation concept called as “eco-hotels” or “ecolodge” or “green hotel” has been occurred. Today, ecolodges are one of the first choices for hotel investments in many destinations. In the study, the samples presented are quite interesting and it is anticipated that with its such aspect, it will be quite beneficial to hotel investors and hotel managers.

KEYWORDS: tourism, hotel industry, environmentally – sensitive approach, ecolodges.

JEL Classification: M13, Q59

1. Introduction

A rapidly changing business environment, changing customer demands, and increasing competition has been a challenge for many of today's hospitality companies (Cho et al., 2006). In order to achieve their goals, tourism establishments are continuously going changes in their social and technical systems forming their structure. With such changes, tourism establishments either affect their environments or try to catch the changes in their environments (Kozak and Güçlü, 2003). The

¹ Balıkesir University, The School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Çağış Campus, Balıkesir, Turkey, e-mail: berdem20@yahoo.com

² Balıkesir University, The School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Çağış Campus, Balıkesir, Turkey, e-mail: ntetik80@yahoo.com

gradual rising in the importance of tourism for countries' economies have led to an increase in the number of tourism establishment nowadays, and strengthened the competition environment. As for all the establishments, one of the main reasons for the hotels is obviously to stay competitive as well. The way for that is to make the hotel more attractive than the competitors (Didin and Koroğlu, 2008). The diversifications in tourists' demands and expectations make the tourism investors to begin new quests, and thus new service concepts are seen to be developed. In that context, ecolodges are accepted as one of the new trends in the hotel industry in recent years. An important part of the today's travellers are living in the industrialized metropolitans. Problems in big cities such as noise, environmental pollution, traffic and overpopulation are increasing the people's longing for the nature. Ecolodges offer their environmentally sensitive customers a holiday alone with nature, and thus gain an important competitive advantage. Moreover, ecolodges adopt an environmental friendly approach and considerably serve for the sustainable tourism efforts.

Within the hotel sector, increasing numbers of customers prefer to choose a green lodging facility that follows environmentally friendly practices, showing concern about the seriousness of ecological degradation. In recognition of this eco-friendly consumption need, nowadays many hotel firms seek to incorporate customers' emerging concerns about the environment in their management/ marketing decision-making. Altering their hotel operations to be green (i.e. significantly reducing environmental impacts) is becoming a necessity to attain noticeable improvement in their competitiveness in the market (Kim and Han, 2010: 997).

The tendency for environmental friendly practices is not only a particular concern to tourism, but also to all industries in the world. Particularly, the establishments in all the industries which play a role in environmental problems such as climate changing and global warming are seeking solutions about reducing such negative effects. The problems such as pollution of the seas, melting glaciers and ozone depletion are tried to be minimized by the studies of international environmental friendly organizations, non governmental organizations and scientists. In this context, the "environmental sensitive" concept gradually began to gain importance by the effects of individuals and organizations that behave in a sensitive way for the environment (Gül, 2011: 46). Today, we can abundantly observe that in the hotel industry as well. Rada (1996 adapted from Bohdanowicz et al., 2005: 1643) states that due to high level of resource utilization (energy, water, consumables) in hotel facilities, the environmental footprint of hotels is typically larger than those of other types of buildings of similar size. In this context, Holjevac (2003) suggests that the hotel of the future will be a "green hotel" or an "eco-hotel". Everything, from the choice of the location, construction, equipment, hotel products and hotel services, will be subordinated to the preservation of nature and the environment, to man – the worker, and man – the guest. Nature hotels or "eco-oasis" will be a common phenomenon.

Likewise, Leonidas (2004) asserts that the sustainable and environmentalist design in hotels are the criteria which are increasingly demanded by the customers, and states that eco-resorts are new hotel concepts. Hotels have numerous motivations for going green including: a feeling of social responsibility, governmental regulations, and economic benefits (Cometa, 2012: 1 adapted from Bohdanowicz, 2006).

It is possible to give many examples of environmental friendly practises at hotel establishments. Today, with various slogans, many hotels invite their customers to help environment. For example Holiday Inn writes “would you help us to help environment” on the recycling papers which are left by them in the rooms, and as an explanation they state the following sentences: “imagine the tons of quilt covers which are unnecessarily washed in all the hotels of the world and the damage to our waters caused by the chemicals used to wash them. Now, you also take action and help us to stop this pollution. In case you leave this card on your bed, your bed will be made with the same sheet. For a healthier environment...” (Gül, 2011: 49). Such practises were also reflected to washing of the towels in customer rooms. Therefore, hotels lead to environmental friendly practises in a considerable extent.

In this study, the importance of ecolodges which are recently one of the newest trends in hotel industry, is being discussed. The study consists of two parts. In the first part, the ecolodge concept and its basic features are explained. The second part includes the samples related to ecolodges in the world. And in the last part of the study, there are some suggestions for the investors who want to make investments in the hotel management field.

2. Changing and Customer Expectations in the Tourism and Hotel Industry

The most important feature of our age is that there is a continuous and rapid change experienced almost in every field. The business environment is one of the most important fields where such changes occur. These changes take place in fields such as technology, management techniques, product/service innovations, customer choices etc. Today's organizations have to adapt such changes in order to continue their existence, improve themselves and remain competitive (Özdaşlı, 2006: 1). Whatever the type and field of activity of the establishment is, organizations involve in a rapid and ever-changing environment. This situation leads the organizations to face with a great variety of hazards. The survival of the organizations depend on their reactions against such hazards (Öztürk and Türkmen, 2005: 168).

The globalization process will continue, because tourism is a global business, a world industry without boundaries, open to all changes and improvements (Holjevac, 2003: 131). In other words, the change is deeply affecting the tourism and hotel industry which became one of the most important industries of the world (Grzinic, 2008: 122). The race for taking more share from the gains created by the tourism sector is increasing the competition in this industry day by day. Particularly, as the

expectations of the tourists varies more and more, the hotel managers and investors are seeking for new solutions. The changes occurred in consumers' likes and choices cause the consumers to get further away from products/services, and instead of that, to tend to products/services which will meet the diversified needs (Kayalı and Aktaş, 2003). Likewise, Gemlik et al. (2009) asserts that the organizational success is hidden in creating difference among the competitors. In this context, it may be said that the hotels which offer products/services suitable for customers' expectations shall remain more competitive.

As is known, the basic goal of the hotel managements is to offer their customers a clean room, delicious food prepared in hygienic environments and well planned entertainment services. However today, all such services can be easily performed by almost every hotel management. In other words, nowadays the hotel managements do not usually use the classic themes such as "our establishment is very clean" or "our cuisine is very rich" when they determine their competition strategies (İldiri, 1998: 44). Here, the important thing for the hotels are to be able to feature and reveal their characteristics which make themselves different from other hotels. Thus, in many researches for the related literature, it is mentioned that meeting customers' demand is an important success criterion and this case plays a vital role for the hotels to remain competitive (Powers, 1995; Pizam and Ellis, 1999; Acuner, 2000; Yurtseven and Sönmez, 2003; Su, 2004; Winata and Mia, 2005). As a result, it can be said that customers both desire and more often demand innovative alternatives (Victorino et al., 2005: 555).

One of the trends that has changed newly in tourism is the increase in environmental protection and concordantly environmental sensitive choices which have started to gain importance in recent years. For example, in a research conducted in 2010 by an international travel agency called Carlson Wagonlit Travel, "more environmental policies determined for travel and tourism industries" and "increase in awareness of the tourists on environmental protection" were detected as two important environmental tendencies. As a result of this tendency, it is strongly emphasized that the hotel managements shall be in more integral and sustainable approaches about the subjects and financial requirements related with the environmental protection (Brown, 1996; Koetting and Widener, 2008 adapted from Güneş, 2011: 46).

As people are becoming more aware of the damage caused on the environment by regular business activities, it has become increasingly obvious that the hotel industry does more than its share in harming and wasting environmental resources. As a result, more and more guests are looking for hotels following practices to protect environment (Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007: 365). According to the regional experts, consumers want value for their money, and they want to stay in local, more traditional accommodations if there are no easily identifiable facilities that offer a good alternative. In many cases, these travelers would likely embrace ecological alternative if it offered good value and excellent guides, and was located

near highly viewable wildlife resources or destinations with excellent scenic qualities (International Finance Corporation, 2004: 7).

Chafe (2007: 170 – 174) mentioned the importance of accommodations in terms of tourists by giving examples from studies. A 2002 survey of 7872 adult Germans found that the interviewees placed special importance on environmental quality: 65% of those surveyed think that it is particularly important to find environmentally friendly accommodation. The survey, which was carried out on behalf of Responsibletravel.com in 2004, revealed that an overwhelming 89% of the 1000 British adults agreed that their vacations would be more enjoyable if their hotel had adequate waste and sewage treatment facilities. Another study which was conducted by TIA and NGT in 2003 revealed that Nearly half (49%) of the Americans questioned in 2003 prefer trips with small-scale accommodation run by local people.

Sustainability in the hospitality industry has increased in awareness and to the point sustainable operations from corporate travellers, meeting planners and leisure guests may now be expected. Almost all hotel franchise groups, hotel management companies and individual hotel operators have taken steps in their journey to reduce their environmental impact. While the green movement is growing, many hotel owners and investors still remain sceptical of vendors, consultants and technologies that are pushing green and environmentally friendly products and services (Parisi, 2012). According Holjevac (2003), tourism is a clean industry, which will coincide with the “green trend” of the future that aims to preserve and conserve nature for future generation. This will be the great return to nature – the “green wave”. In this context Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) stated, the number of customers seeking green hotel properties has grown. Marketing its environmentally friendly practices can be an effective strategy for a hotel looking to change its position and achieve competitiveness in the lodging industry.

3. A New Phenomenon in Tourism: Ecolodges

The popularity of ecolodges is increasing because they offer an opportunity for rejuvenation rather than just recreation. It is a far deeper feeling of satisfaction than plain recreation. It is embalming to the soul than just the mind. It is about coming out of one’s comfort zone and experiencing something that is simple, maybe slightly physically stressful and yet soothing. Little do people realize than even watching TV can be stressful, not to mention the hours spent in front of a computer screen in an average person’s working day (Eco-Lodges for Green Minded Travelers, 2011: 39). The term of ecolodge is “a tourism industry label used to identify a nature-dependent tourist facility that meets the principles of ecotourism”. An ecolodge is recognized by distinct design features that are intended primarily to blend in with the natural environment (Assessment Criteria for Eco-lodge Proposals, 2010).

The term of ecolodge was formally launched in the marketplace at the First International Ecolodge Forum and Field Seminar held in 1994 at Maho Bay Camps in the U.S. Virgin Islands (Wood, 2002: 27; Mehta, 2007: 418; Dizdarević, 2010: 26) and Maho Bay Camps was determined as the first ecolodge (Mehta, 2007: 418). As a follow-up of the 1994 forum, TIES published the first book for ecolodge industry named “The Ecolodge Sourcebook for Planners and Developers” (Mehta, 2007: 417) which contains information on site selection, finance, planning, design, alternative energy applications, conservation education, guidelines and an impressive set of resources including a variety of architectural plans for ecolodges (Eagles, 2001: 615). Later, “The First International Ecolodge Guidelines” was published in 2002 after the Second International Conference held in 1995 in Costa Rica, which offered a definitive international definition of an ecolodge (Wood, 2002: 27; Mehta, 2007: 418). According to the definition, ecolodge is “an industry label used to identify a nature-dependent tourist lodge that meets the philosophy and principles of ecotourism” (Weaver, 2001: 147; Fennell, 2003: 169; Mehta, 2007: 418; Ceballos-Lascurain, 2008: 197; Kwan et al., 2008: 698; Raju, 2009: 47). Mehta et al. (2002) enriched the definition by utilizing existing one and the following definition was proposed (Mehta, 2007: 418):

“An ecolodge is a five – to 75 – room, low-impact, nature-based, financially sustainable accommodation facility that helps protect sensitive neighbouring areas; involves and benefits local communities; offers tourists an interpretive and interactive participatory experience; provides a spiritual communion with nature and culture; and is planned, designed, constructed and operated in an environmentally and socially sensitive manner”.

Ecolodges are usually small with less than 10 rooms. This ensures that there are no crowds and makes it an exclusive place to enjoy a holiday at a relaxed pace. There is no night-life and therefore guest go to bed early and rise early in the morning to the song of birds. It has a very positive impact on health of stressed urban souls leading a sedentary lifestyle (Eco-Lodges for Green Minded Travelers, 2011: 39).

Ecolodge structures can range from contemporary to ancient, permanent to temporary, centralized to dispersed, (Weaver, 2001: 150) and rustic to luxurious (Weaver, 2001: 150; Wood, 2002: 28; Demir and Çevirgen, 2006: 89; Dizdarević, 2010: 27) as can be seen at Table 1 (Weaver, 2001: 150):

Table 1. Ecotourism Building Types

Verneclular building types	<i>Indigenous structures:</i> Grass huts, mud structures, caves, elevated halls, house boats, reed platforms and buildings, yurts (Mongolian circular tent), tree platforms, ice houses, teepees, cliff dwellings, stick houses
Historical building types	<i>Developed verneclular:</i> Colonial architecture, residentially derived styles, commercially developed styles, military architecture, ecclesiastical architecture, monuments, industrial buildings, palaces and great homes

Contemporary structures	<i>Prefabricated structures:</i> Masonry, glass-fibre, reinforced concrete, rigid tents, inflatable structures <i>Traditional tourism:</i> Cottage colonies, inns, guesthouses, homes
Portable and low impact structures	Rigid tents, collapsible tents, elevated huts, inflatable structures, vehicles, jungle hammocks

Source: Weaver, D. B. (2001). *Ecotourism. (1st Edition), John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd, Australia, p.150.*

As can be seen at the table, accommodations in general for the ecotourism industry are usually mid-range in price, though the range of accommodation types is enormous from luxury tent-camps, to backpacker tents, rustic lean-tos and homestays, ranches and haciendas, tea houses as much as live-abroad boats, high-end small cruise ships (Wood, 2002: 28; Demir and Çevirgen, 2006: 89; Dizdareviç, 2010: 27).

Ecolodges are usually small-scale, individually and locally owned businesses (Moscardo et al., 1996: 32; Wood, 2002: 36; Kwan et al., 2010: 4), rather than being part of a chain. However, there are also a number of outbound tour operators, which have ecolodge chains. For example Abercrombie & Kent Hotels and Resorts, a transnational hotel chain, is corporating with The Nature Conservancy to develop an ecolodge chain in Belize, Brazil and Peru (Honey, 1999: 67; Weaver, 2001: 150). For example, Russell et al. (1995) undertook an international ecolodges survey of 28 operators in nine regions around the world (Belize, Costa Rica, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador, the state of Alaska, Australia, New Zealand and Africa). This study discovered that many of the lodges were found in or adjacent to protected areas, with outstanding natural beauty acting as a key to success of the operation. Most of the ecolodges sampled were small, accommodating about 24 guests, with some successful operations in Amazonia catering up to 100 guests. Although most of the ownership had been typically small scale and independent, corporate ownership was becoming more common. The authors cited the P&O line in Australia and the Hilton in Kenya as two examples of this recent phenomenon (Fennell, 2003: 173; Raju, 2009: 52).

They are usually located in or near national parks and protected areas with facilities designed with a local or exotic quality (Kwan et al., 2008: 698) and provide educational programmes (Wood, 2002: 36; Kwan et al., 2010: 4). They can generate a variety of positive economic development impacts in highly rural, biodiverse areas, where other types of development underway or under consideration are frequently damaging to the environment. Therefore, ecolodges are of particular interest to the sustainable development community (International Finance Corporation, 2004: 4).

As Wood (2002: 28) stated many lodges offer their own guides and interpretation walks, as their visitors are frequently independent travelers that are not traveling with a tour guide. Often local farmers or indigenous people with in-

depth knowledge of the local flora and fauna are hired to guide for ecolodges. Other recreation opportunities offered by lodges vary tremendously depending on the site: game drives, bird watching, canoeing, horseback riding, bicycling, beach trips and educational visits to local museums, zoos, butterfly farms, agricultural and livestock farms, craft production areas and other natural history and cultural sights.

According to The International Ecodge Guidelines, an ecolodge should meet the following criteria, which are the key principles of ecolodges (Bien, 2002: 140; Wood, 2002: 28; International Finance Corporation, 2004: 28; Mehta, 2007: 419; Dizdarević, 2010: 27):

- Conserve the surrounding environment, both natural and cultural.
- Have minimal impact on the natural surroundings during construction.
- Fit into its specific physical and cultural contexts through careful attention to form, landscaping and color, as well as the use of localized architecture.
- Use alternative, sustainable means of water acquisition and reduces water consumption.
- Provide careful handling and disposal of solid waste and sewage.
- Meet its energy needs through passive design and combines these with their modern counterparts for greater sustainability.
- to work together with the local community.
- interpretative programs to educate both its employees and tourists about the surroundings natural and cultural environments.
- Contribute to sustainable local development through research programs.

If lodges do not follow the principles and sound practices of ecotourism, they can have negative impacts on biodiversity in the surrounding areas. Community benefits may also be minimal if lodges do not promote stakeholder participation, including the employment and training of local people, local ownership, purchase of food, crafts and other supplies from local vendors, or the opportunity for local people to use or learn about their facilities and natural resources. In some cases, the failure to include local people may lead to conflict or confrontation within communities. Poor employment and management practices can also damage relations between the business and communities (International Finance Corporation, 2004: 29). As a result, the ecolodge loses its selling point and community support- and may ultimately fail (Mehta, 2007: 420). On the other hand, not all ecolodges will meet all the principles, as individual circumstances or location may make different principles irrelevant. For an accommodation facility to be called an ecolodge, it had to satisfy five of the above-mentioned criteria, three of which embodied the three main principles of ecotourism, namely protection of nature, benefits to local people and offering interpretive programmes. With these criteria system, there was flexibility depending on the individual circumstances of the ecolodge (Mehta, 2007: 419).

Mehta (2007: 421) stressed that some of the main environmental management systems principles that need to be considered for ecolodges in order to develop sustainable tourism. These include water conservation and harvesting, energy conservation and use of alternative energy, wastewater and sewage treatment and solid waste management. This also helps save energy, lower waste discharge, cost saving, improve service, enhance image, contribute to the promotion of the business, attract tourist and make them feel secure (WWF, 2000: 3). In the case of water conservation and harvesting, rain and snow harvesting as well as water conservation technologies, such as low-flow showerheads and grey-water irrigation can be used. Alternative energy sources and energy conservation technologies can be applied, such as solar, wind and geothermal power and the use of low-wattage light fittings and energy saving kitchen equipment. In the case of waste management, which is a crucial principle especially for Eco lodges because of their remote locations, strategies such as sorting of solid waste (plastics, glass, paper, etc.), composing of kitchen waste, use of dry decomposing toilets and constructed wetlands to treat sewage are some of the techniques utilized by designers (Mehta, 2007: 421). Table 2 shows guidelines for managing environmental issue in hotels (WWF, 2000: 3):

Table 2. Guidelines for Managing Environmental Issue in Hotels

1. Location/architecture

Hotels should be located in a place which ensure the sanitation, unpolluted, easy for access and supply hotels should meet the following requirement for architecture:

- Suitable with the surrounding environment (height, style, color)
- Utilize the natural energy (light, solar power, wind) in order to save energy, lower cost, waste discharge, protect the environment
- Utilize local construction material and labor force
- Logically setup services and facilities within the Hotels, ensure smooth operation, sanitation, avoid overlap which affect the productivity and effectiveness of work
- Improve green environment and tree
- Reduce negative impacts of the business to surrounding environment (waste, exhaust, noise)

2. Facilities

Hotels should invest in eco-friendly facilities and green foodstuff with environment management purpose, detail as follow:

- Facilities utilize natural energy or save energy
- Facilities, materials, foodstuff that lower waste discharge, control pollution, noise
- Green foodstuff (nontoxic, clear source), don't use wildlife and endangered animals

- Use nontoxic chemical, natural vegetables
- Have green contract with supplier

3. Energy, material

- Implement measures to save resources, reduce waste, avoid pollution, protect the environment (use electric meter, water meter to control the amount use monthly)
- Use less energy, make less noise, use natural resources (solar power, wind power) or recycle power (solar battery, bios gas)

4. Water management and sanitation

- Ensure the sanitation, quality of water supply.
- Control the water supply: use water meter, take note the amount of water use monthly, implement management measures to save water.
- Identify the source of water discharge, kind and amount of water discharge from each unit in the hotel.
- Control (the use and metering) the use of chemical substances (cleaning, shampoo, soap ...) to reduce environmental impact.
- Have measures to treat water discharge before discharge into the environment.
- Use treated water discharge for cleaning and watering
- Recycle to make usable water in order to decrease discharge, avoid pollution.

5. Waste management and sanitation

- Manage, collect from all units and areas within the hotel (need to be)
- Encourage staff to classify waste into different types:
- Recyclable: (paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, cans, metal)
- Disposable: (organic waste: food, vegetable): treat by composting
- Toxic waste: (neon lamp, bulb, battery)
- Non-disposable

6. Exhaust management

- Define the source of exhaust
- Analyze the impact to the environment
- Apply measures to control and manage exhaust

7. Noise management

- Define the source of noise and level of impact to guests and staff
- Apply measures to reduce and eliminate noise both in and outside of the hotel

8. Environment management

- Have plan and objective and policy on environment. Control and evaluate environment management periodically
- Assign a staff to be in charge of the environment management and related issues in the hotel. This person will go to meeting, workshop, training course...

- Organize training course, meeting to disseminate information, raise staff's awareness of the environment management
- Inform guests about environment management activities of the hotel and encourage them to participate in those activities
- Have agreement with supplier on “green” product with neighboring communities on the environment management of the hotel

Source: Edited from WWF, 2000: 3; Gardner, 2001: 529; International Finance Corporation, 2004: 28; Ceballos-Lascurain, 2008: 198.

Since mainly nature tourists use ecolodges, who are concerned with conservation, ecolodges should provide practical examples of harmonious interaction with nature. They should not only strive to minimize negative impacts but also provide alternative, more sustainable ways of living (Mehta, 2007: 421).

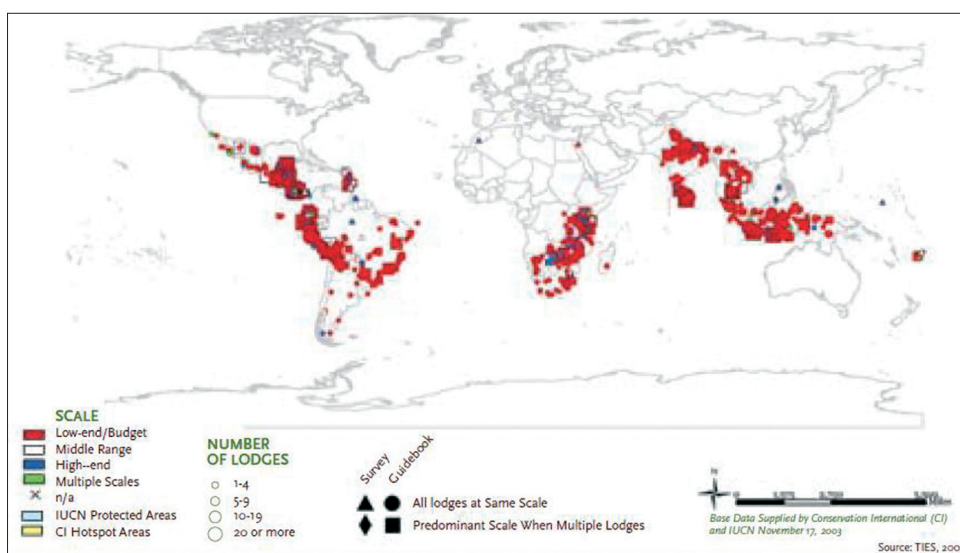


Fig. 1. Ecolodges worldwide

Eco lodges are predominantly located in natural surroundings of offering an experience close to nature. It is a concept where guests enjoy a place for what it inherently has to offer, rather than something that is replicated from elsewhere. The guests therefore, get to interact with to local people and observe their lifestyles, appreciate a culture and environment, different from their own (Eco-Lodges for Green Minded Travellers, 2011: 38). Bricker et al. (2004) did a study for determining the location of Eco lodges and nature-based lodges in countries. The 60 countries were chosen based on their high concentration of nature-based lodges, their developing (or mature) ecotourism industry, and their location in an area of high biodiversity and/or significant natural attractions. Of the total 5,459 lodges mapped (another 1,059 lodges could not be plotted because no location was available), Indonesia has

the largest concentration of lodges (758), followed by Costa Rica (590), Thailand (468), Peru (356), Ecuador (345), Guatemala (322), Mexico (304), Sri Lanka (277) and Tanzania (259). Of the lodges mapped in all 60 countries, 84 percent are located in biodiversity hotspot areas, as defined by Conservation International. The highest concentration is in Mesoamerica (1,157 lodges), followed by Indo-Burma (543 lodges). Of those Eco lodges that completed the in-depth surveys, 60 percent are located within or on the periphery of an established protected area, and 39 percent are located within a private reserve (International Finance Corporation, 2004: 9). Authors marked these ecolodges on the map as seen in Fig. 1.

Against all the global warming and environmental pollution which are highly discussed in all fields, hotels are also seen to make efforts for starting to take necessary precautions. The environmental friendly hotels, numbers of which increase day by day, apply various practices to minimize the damage given to the environment. While some of them do not include any electronic appliance within them, some other changes the towels and sheets only if the customer wishes to. And some hotels care about to offer organic food products. Today's travellers mind out that the hotel is environmental friendly as well as with comfort, luxury and design. In this sense, ecolodge models are seen in the tourism industry number of which is growing day by day. Features of some of such hotels may be summarized as in the following (Buckley, 2003; <http://gezz.org/index.php/seyahat/85-seyahat-onerileri/148-dunyanin-en-iyi-eko-sik-otelleri>):

Tauana Hotel: This hotel, which is located in northwest of Brazil, consists of nine bungalows which are utmost compatible with tropical nature. The hotel was built from sustainable wood which are used in construction of Indian houses. In the hotel where noise pollution is minimized, no television music system is included in any way. In the hotel which is illuminated by minimal lighting system, there is no pool as well due to corrosive characteristic of chlorine. The guests are offered to ride bicycles around the exotic vicinity as eco-activity. All the meals in hotel's menu are prepared from organic fruits and vegetables that are grown in hotel's garden.

Ngala Lodge and Game Reserve (South Africa): Glass and cans are recycled in nearby Nelspruit. Catering scraps are used in neighbouring communities for raising pigs. Candle ends are provided for a local village business, which recasts them and sells them back to the Lodge. Sewage is treated in multi-chambered septic-tank systems. Paper and plastic packaging are burnt in an on-site incinerator. The lodge also buys a locally made artisanal paper, manufactured from elephant dung and recycled office paper, for use in the guest rooms.

Whitepod Hotel: This hotel, which is located in Switzerland, offers an environmental accommodation facility to winter sports lovers. The hotel consists of nine tents in three different types which are remarkable by their round domes. Recycled materials were used for building the tents, and in order to be ergonomically, white colour was preferred in summer and green in winter. The platforms on which

the tents were placed has been designed from sustainable Swiss wood. Therefore the tents are able to be carried to any place easily without damaging the environment. The tents, in which the electricity consumption is minimized, are heated with stoves and illuminated with gasoline lamps. Water consumption is under control by a massive bath located in the main building. All the guests are using the bath in common; sheets and towels are replaced only when the guests want to.

Canvaschic Hotel: This hotel, which operates in the south of France, offers its guests a camp holiday far from urban life and in touch with nature. The tents, which are covered with cream colour natural clothes, are placed on wooden platforms and have all the comfort demanded in a classical hotel room. The pathways in the tents and hotel are illuminated with solar energy and candlelight. The baths which have heated rainwater are offered for common use.

Strattons Hotel: This facility, which is one of the leading environmental friendly hotels in England, has many awards in eco-hotel fields. In the hotel organization structure, a special “green management team” has been established. All hotel employees are trained in parallel to environmental sensitivity. In the hotel, electricity and water consumption is daily measured and thus energy loss is minimized. In times when electronic appliances such as television, coffee machine etc. are not used, care is taken for them to be closed. Accessories used in bath such as shampoo, hair cream, shower gel are offered in refillable pumping bottles instead of miniature plastic bottles. In the hotel, where development of local economy is contributed, only local products are used.

Jean-Michel Fiji Islands Resort: In this hotel located in Vanua Levu Island of South Pacific Ocean, no television and telephone is included in any way. The rooms and villas, which are heated with recycled materials, are ventilated in natural method. The food in the hotel menu hosting to modern Fijian cuisine are made of local vegetables and fruits which are grown in the hotel’s organic garden. Yoga, visit to local markets, walking in the tropical forest, underwater diving, Fijian language training lesson are some of the eco-activities offered by the hotel.

Daintree Ecolodge (Australia): Sewage is treated in a multi-chamber biocycle system located between the villas and the restaurant. Power is supplied from a mains line along the nearby road to Daintree Village. Used kitchen oils are collected and returned for reprocessing.

Lapa Rios Eco lodge: During the construction of this hotel located in the rainforests of Costa Rica; local, natural and recycling materials were used completely. The hotel, which is shown as a sample for several eco-tourism projects, is using only local products in order to contribute to local economy. The water in the hotel is heated with solar energy, plastic and glass are used as recyclable. Bicycle tour in the tropical forest, riding horses, watching the birds and yoga are among the eco-activities presented by the hotel.

Tiamo Resort: This hotel, which is one of the smallest tropical resorts in the world, has a system that produces the biggest solar system in Caribbean and Latin America. In the hotel, there are 11 hand made bungalows as well as classic hotel rooms. All of the bungalows are made of palm trees which are acquired by sustainable forests and had antitoxine process. Plastic materials which are forgotten by the guests in rooms are processed again by taking their permissions, turned into plastic jugs and sold as souvenir. In the hotel, definitely no brochure is used in order to make paper saving.

Nowadays, other than those examples, there are many ecolodges in various countries. In accordance with the aim of the study, we had to content with those ecolodges examples mentioned above.

4. Conclusions

One of the most important factors affecting the success of hotel managements in today's global competitive environment is to be able to create difference. Zerenler et al. (2007) asserts that in order to stay competitive, the organizations should redefine their basic strategies, rediscover the sector they are in and have the ability to create difference in their products and services. And Aksu (2000) states that in order to be able to sell products or goods in a market full of competitors, one should have the capacity to meet demands and expectations of the customers. Today, it became an important obligation to realize the differentiation occurred in customers' demand before the competitors. Accordingly, organizations which can offer the products and services having new and different characteristics in the fastest way are able to survive. In terms of hotel establishments, although predicting how the future developments shall progress and contribute to the establishment is very important, this case requires a hard effort due to sector's structural characteristic. In such an environment, the working of hotel establishments with increasing performance and customer satisfaction level depends on their strategical thinking and to be able to apply them (Seymen, 2001).

Ecolodges are accepted as one of the new trends of the tourism in recent years. In an environment where environmental problems are increasing day by day, ecolodges both provide their customers to live a different holiday experience and serve the sustainable tourism efforts at an important level. Within the frame of this study, suggestions for the entrepreneurs who wish to make investments in hotel management field may be as follows:

- The entrepreneurs who wish to make investments in hotel management field should at first well analyse where the hotel trends are heading towards, who their customers are and in what kind of environment they want to spend their holidays.
- Investors should develop a detailed construction plan including where and when each of the steps to be taken.

- The investors should create common projects with expert architectures, designers and marketing experts in hotel management field, particularly at planning and application levels.
- They should evaluate infrastructure of the location whether it is ecologically appropriate for the construction and they should consider the impact of construction on the area's biodiversity and its surroundings.
- They should analyze social and cultural factors that are influenced by construction such as the acceptance by local community and compliance with legal regulations.
- They should promote the use of green architectural design and low impact construction in order to minimize their impact on the surrounding environment.
- They should take technical assistance especially in applying new technologies for energy, waste, sewage and water.
- Investors, advisors, donors, policy makers, Eco lodge operators and other stakeholders should play an active role in order to sustain financial, environmental, and social benefits.
- As environmental issues have become central to competitive success for the tourism sector, investors should take into consideration of implementation of environmental management and establish Environmental Impact Assessment.
- They should use environmentally-friendly, energy-efficient and non-hazardous products by taking into consideration of customers' choices in order to reduce environmental impact of the industry and to create customer satisfaction.
- They also should give financial, employment and training, opportunities for local communities in order to increase local development of the area.
- Lodge owners may be involved in long-term agreements and create strategic alliances about environmental protection.
- Lodge owners may actively contribute to environmental programs such as volunteer programs, or research projects, or the monitoring of visitor use.

References:

- Acuner, T. (2000), Organizational Continuity in Changing Process, *Dokuz Eylül University Journal of Social Sciences*, 2 (2)
- Aksu, A.A. (2000), External Environmental Factors That Effect The Success of Hotel Establishments, *Balikesir University Journal of Social Sciences*, 3 (4), pp. 269 – 281
- Assessment Criteria for Eco-Lodge Proposals (2010), Retrieved March 04, 2013, from http://www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/misc/FCA/files_072010/Final_Report/Appendix%20A.pdf

- Bien, A. (2002), Environmental Certification for Tourism in Central America: CST And Other Programs, in Honey, M. (Ed.), *Ecotourism Certification & Setting Standards in Practice*, Island Press, Washington, pp.133 – 159
- Bohdanowicz, P. (2006), Environmental Awareness and Initiatives in The Swedish and Polish Hotel Industries – Survey Results, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 25 (4), pp. 662 – 682
- Bohdanowicz, P., Simanic, B., & Martinac, I. (2005), *Sustainable Hotels – Environmental Reporting According to Green Globe 21, Green Globes Canada / Gem UK, IHEI Benchmark Hotel and Hilton Environmental Reporting*, the 2005 World Sustainable Building Conference, 27 – 29 September, Tokyo, Japan, pp. 1642 – 1649
- Brown, M. (1996), Environmental Policy in The Hotel Sector: “Green” Strategy or Stratagem?, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 8 (3), pp. 18 – 23
- Buckley, R. (2003), *Case Studies in Ecotourism*, CABI Publishing, USA
- Ceballos-Lascurain, H. (2008), Ecotourism and Eco Lodge Development in The 21st Century, in Stronza, A. (Ed.), *Ecotourism and Conservation in the Americas: Ecotourism Series*, Number 7. CABI Publishing, GBR, pp. 193 – 203
- Chafe, Z. (2007), Consumer Demand for Quality in Ecotourism, in Black, R. (Ed.), *Ecotourism Series*, Number 5: *Quality Assurance and Certification in Ecotourism*, GBR: CABI Publishing, pp. 164 – 195
- Cho, S., Wood, R. H., Jang, S., & Erdem, M. (2006). Measuring The Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Hospitality Firm’s Performances, *Hospitality Management*, (25), pp. 262 – 277
- Cometa, L. (2012), *Consumer Beliefs about Green Hotels*, Thesis Master of Science, Kent State University College and Graduate School of Education, United Kingdom
- Demir, C., & Çevirgen, A. (2006), *Ecotourism Management*, (1st Edition), Nobel Publication, Ankara
- Didin, S., & Koroğlu, Ç. (2008), The Competitiveness of Accommodation Firms with Regard to Sales-Costs and Their Future Expectations, *Zonguldak Karaelmas University Journal of Social Sciences*, 4 (7), pp. 111 – 120
- Dizdareviç, S. (2010), *The Analyze of Ecotourism Supply Potential in Northern Part of Montenegro*, Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University Social Sciences Institute, İzmir, Turkey
- Eagles, P. J. F. (2001), Information sources for planning and management, in Weaver, D. B. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of ecotourism*, CABI Publishing, USA, pp. 611 – 626
- Eco-lodges for green minded travelers* (2011), Retrieved March 04, 2013, from <http://ebookbrowse.com/green-travelers-head-for-eco-lodges-pdf-d192277767>
- Gardner, J. (2001), *Accommodations*, in Weaver, D. B. (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism*. CABI Publishing, 525 – 534
- Fennell, D. A. (2003), *Ecotourism*, (2nd Edition), Routledge, USA and Canada

- Gemlik, N., Şişman, F. A., & Şişman, N. (2009), *The Role and Importance of Strategy in Innovation Management*, International Davraz Congress, 24 – 27 September 2009, Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey
- Grzinic, J. (2008), Trends in Croatian Hotel Industry, *Management & Marketing, (1)*, 122 – 128. Retrieved January 12, 2013, from <http://www.mnmk.ro/en/documents/2008-15.pdf>
- Gül, G. (2011), The Importance of Eco-Friendly Accommodation Sector Management, *KMÜ Journal of Social and Economic Research*, 13 (20), pp. 45 – 51
- Holjevac, I. A. (2003), A Vision of Tourism and Hotel Industry in The 21st Century, *Hospitality Management, (22)*, pp. 129 – 134
- Honey, M. (1999), *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise*, Island Press, Washington
- <http://gezz.org/index.php/seyahat/85-seyahat-onerileri/148-dunyanin-en-iyi-eko-sik-otelleri>, Retrieved January 16, 2013
- İldiri, H. (1998). Competition in Holiday Villages Turned from Hygiene and Well-Qualified Food Beverage to Entertainment, *Hotel Journal*, Publication of Turkish Hotels Association, September, Number: 9, September
- International Finance Corporation (2004), *Eco Lodges: Exploring Opportunities for Sustainable Business*, International Finance Corporation Publication, Washington
- Kayalı, C. A., & Aktaş, H. (2003), Management Crisis and Total Quality Management in Turkey's Small and Medium-Sized Companies, *Celal Bayar University Journal of Management and Economy*, 10 (2), pp. 31 – 48
- Kim, Y., & Han, H. (2010), Intention to Pay Conventional-Hotel Prices at a Green Hotel – A Modification of The Theory of Planned Behaviour, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18 (8), pp. 997 – 1014
- Koetting, M., & Widener, F. (2008), Ten Business Travel Trends for 2010, *CWT vision*, January, (3), pp. 42 – 43
- Kozak, M. A., & Güçlü, H. (2003), A Literature Review on Changing Management in Tourism Establishments, Is-Guc, *The Journal of Industrial Relation & Human Resources*, 5 (1)
- Kwan, P., Eagles, P. F. J., & Gebhardt, A. (2008), A Comparison of Ecolodge Patrons' Characteristics and Motivations Based on Price Levels: A Case Study of Belize, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16 (6), pp. 698 – 718
- Kwan, P., Eagles, P. F. J., Gebhardt, A. (2010), Eco Lodge Patrons' Characteristics and Motivations: A Study of Belize, *Journal of Ecotourism*, 9 (1), pp. 1 – 20
- Leonidas, N. (2004), Creative Hotel Design, *Newsletter of Perspective*, Autumn, Retrieved January 14, 2013, from http://www.sonnbichler.com/downloads/pspnewsletter_final_07_10_04.pdf

- Manaktola, K., & Jauhari, V. (2007), Exploring Consumer Attitude and Behaviour Towards Green Practices in The Lodging Industry in India, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 19 (5), pp. 364 – 377
- Mehta, H. (2007), Towards an Internationally Recognized Eco Lodge Certification, in Black, R. and Crabtree, A. (Eds.), *Ecotourism series*, number 5: *Quality Assurance and Certification in Ecotourism*, CABI Publishing, London, pp. 415 – 434
- Moscardo, G., Morrison, A. M., & Pearce, P. L. (1996), Specialist Accommodation and Ecologically-Sustainable Tourism, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 4 (1), pp. 29 – 52
- Özdaşlı, K. (2006), The Relationship between Total Quality Management and Innovation: A Case Study, *Academic Sight International Refereed Online Journal of Social Sciences*, September, (10), pp. 1 – 16
- Öztürk, Y., & Türkmen, F. (2005), A Study of What Level Tourism Establishments Are Affected from Crises, *Balıkesir University Journal of Social Sciences*, 8 (14), pp. 167 – 198
- Parisi, S. (2012), *Hotel Energy Reduction Strategies*, Eco Green Hotel Supporting Hospitality Sustainability, Retrieved January 13, 2013, from <http://www.ecogreenhotel.com/blog/tag/hotel-energy-saving-ideas>
- Pizam, A., & Ellis, T. (1999), Customer Satisfaction and Its Measurement in Hospitality Enterprises, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11 (7), pp. 326 – 339
- Powers, T. (1995), *Introduction to Management in The Hospitality Industry*, Fifth Edition, Toronto, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Rada, J. (1996), Designing and Building Eco-Efficient Hotels, *Green Hotelier Magazine*, (4), pp. 10 – 11
- Raju, G. P. (2009), *Ecotourism Guidance for Tour Operator* (1st Edition), Manglam Publications, Delhi
- Seymen, O. A. (2001), *Strategic Human Resource Planning in Lodging Firms in The Years of 2000's and a Model Proposal*, Human Resource Management in Tourism Establishments, Weekend Seminar VII, Nevşehir, Turkey, pp. 1 – 19
- Su, A. Y. (2004), Customer Satisfaction Measurement Practice in Taiwan Hotels, *Hospitality Management*, (23), pp. 397 – 408
- Victorino, L., Verma, R., Plaschka, G., & Dev, C. (2005), Service Innovation and Customer Choices in The Hospitality Industry, *Managing Service Quality*, 15 (6), pp. 555 – 576
- Weaver, D. B. (2001), *Ecotourism* (1st Edition), John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd., Australia
- Winata, L., & Mia, L. (2005), Information Technology and The Performance Effect of Manager's Participation in Budgeting: Evidence from The Hotel Industry, *Hospitality Management*, (24), pp. 21 – 39

- Wood, M. E. (2002), *Ecotourism: Principles, Practises & Policies for Sustainability*, United Nations Publication, France
- World Wildlife Fund (2000), *Tourism Certification: An Analysis of Green Globe 21 and Other Tourism Certification Programmes*, WWF International Publication
- Yurtseven H. R., & Sönmez, D. (2003), Customer Satisfaction as a Criteria of Organizational Efficiency: A Comparative Pilot Research with The Dimensions Business and Customer, *Anatolia: Journal of Tourism Research*, 14 (2), pp. 132 – 140
- Zerenler, M., Türker, N., & Şahin, E. (2007), The Relationship between Global Technology, Research and Development and Innovation, *Selçuk University Journal of Social Sciences*, (17), pp. 653 – 667