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## Barriers of Malaysian Green Hotels and Resorts

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### Abstract

Recently there has been a tremendous effort in greening the tourism industry due to its negative environmental impacts. The efforts of greening the lodging industry in Malaysia is growing slowly due to several barriers. The aim of this study is to determine the barriers of green hotels and resorts in Malaysia. This study employed qualitative method using in depth interview of the case studies. Five case studies were chosen. The findings identified 12 barriers. The barriers are categorized under significant, less significant and non-significant barriers.

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**Keywords :** Green practice; barriers; level of significant ; green operators

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### 1. Introduction

Currently environmental issues become interest of all countries due to the deterioration of the natural physical environment. Environmental pressures affect all the industries system including process, inputs and operation (Elkington 1992). Therefore, sustainable management practices become vital approach in managing the industries (Claver-Cortes 2007). Many studies have shown that integration of environmental management system can reduce the negative impacts of the operation on the environment (Bonilla Priego & Aviles Palacios, 2008; Ngai Weng, 2009) . Tourism and natural environment have very strong relationship. According to Mathieson (1982) natural environment is a core feature of tourism products. Basically, tourism industry are causing degradation of the natural environment due to several reasons such as the excessive use of natural resources, high numbers of tourist arrivals and over

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development of tourism facilities (Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010). Adhering to the negative impacts, the lodging industry taking further steps to become green industry. Lodging industry especially hotelier are seriously taking part in greening the industry because of few driving factors. The driving factors are financial benefits studied by (Molina-Azorin et al 2009), ecological responsibility, competitiveness, legitimation studied by (Bansal 2000) and the emergence of green consumers mentioned by (Vikneswaran Nair & Anantharajah, 2012). Studies had confirmed that financial benefits and legitimation is the main driving factors that causing hotelier to become green operators (Rahman et al, 2012). The lodging industry in Malaysia is taking slow progress even though the reaping benefits are well acknowledged. According to T.Knowles (1999) “after two decades of such effort, however this ‘greening’ does not seem to be successful as originally hoped”. This occurs due to the few barriers that hotelier has to face in order to become green operators (Hart 1995). There are several studies conducted regarding operation and green operation barriers. The example of operation barriers studies are conducted by (Jauhari & Rishi 2012: Jayawardena et al 2013) and the example of green operation barriers studies are conducted by (Chan 2008: Vikneswaran Nair et al, 2012: Kamalulariffin et al, 2013). However studies regarding green operation in Malaysia are rarely address and limited (Kamalulariffin et al., 2013). According to Klassen (2000) also there are lacking of understanding regarding the operation barriers within the hotels industry. Therefore, this study is conducted to determine the green operation barriers of green hotels and resorts in Malaysia. This study offers a contribution to the field of knowledge regarding green operation barriers in the hotel industry especially in Malaysia. The findings of this research can also give some ideas to Malaysian Association Hotels (MAH), and green hoteliers to find the solution for the barriers.

## 2. Literature review

Environmental movement started in 1970, but it was recognized in 1992 during the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. During the conference, 172 nation work together to produce environmentally sound framework in order to minimize the impacts of industries on the environment (Imran Rahman 2012). The concept of sustainability was introduced during the conference. Sustainability are well defined by the Brundtland report which is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations in order to meet their own needs” (Brundtland 1987). Later the concept of sustainability was integrated in the hospitality industry. Hospitality industry is the world largest industry and consume a considerable amount of natural resources and produce a vast amount of waste and pollution (Bohdanowicz 2003). Riding the wave of sustainability, green lodging industry was emerged (Imran Rahman 2012). Component of green lodging industry is green hotels, resorts and chalets. According to Association (2013) green hotels are define as “Environmentally friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programs that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste-while saving money-to help protect our one and only earth!”. Initially green practices of operators are in the area of energy, waste and water. Later the green operators expand their green initiatives in other area such as indoor environmental quality, green materials and resources, sustainable site planning and management, community involvement, biodiversity conservation, human resources development, green transportation, noise control and toxic waste management. The variety areas of the green initiatives are emerged due to different green certification such as GBI, LEEDS, BREEAM, GREEN MARK, GREEN STAR. Each country has it own green certification system that help hotel operators to be recognized as green operators. For instance Green Building Index (GBI), EarthCheck and Green ASEAN Hotel Standard (GAHS) has certify some of the green hotels and resorts in Malaysia.

### 2.1. Tourism in Malaysia

Booming of the tourism industry in Malaysia started in 1990 when Malaysia first organized its ‘Visit Malaysia Year’. International tourist arrivals to Malaysia steadily increased year by year due to the wide

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