

A Mixed-Methods Assessment of Green Initiatives among Staycation Properties in Quezon City: Basis for a Sustainability Action Plan

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study assessed the implementation and challenges of green initiatives among selected staycation properties in Quezon City. Quantitative data were collected from 60 respondents, including local government unit (LGU) employees, staycation property employees, and guests, while qualitative data were collected through interviews with hotel managers and LGU environmental officers. Findings revealed that green initiatives such as recycling programs, waste reduction, and composting were generally *practiced* (overall mean = 3.45), with recycling ranking highest (mean = 3.82) and renewable energy use lowest (mean = 3.06). ANOVA results ($F = 0.33$, $p > 0.05$) showed no significant difference among respondent groups, indicating shared perceptions of sustainability implementation. Qualitative insights highlighted operational barriers, including limited budgets for renewable energy systems, inconsistent monitoring mechanisms, and minimal guest participation in eco-friendly programs. The study was grounded in the Triple Bottom Line Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, and Systems Approach, which together explain the environmental, behavioral, and managerial dimensions of sustainability. It concludes that while sustainability is recognized as a valuable operational goal, its effectiveness depends on organizational commitment and systemic support. Recommendations include LGU–hotel collaborations, continuous sustainability audits, guest engagement strategies, and the use of digital monitoring tools to promote accountability. The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 11, 12, and 13 on sustainable cities, responsible consumption, and climate action.

Keywords: Green initiatives, mixed methods, sustainability, staycation, hospitality industry, Quezon City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry plays a significant role in environmental sustainability through energy use, water consumption, and waste generation. In recent years, growing awareness of climate change has compelled hotels and other lodging establishments to adopt “green” practices to reduce their environmental impact. In the Philippines, staycation properties have become a preferred choice for urban travelers seeking comfort without extensive travel. These establishments now face growing pressure to implement sustainable practices while maintaining profitability and service quality.

Quezon City, a progressive hub for hospitality and urban tourism, has recognized sustainability as an essential element in its development agenda, as reflected in local policies and the *Quezon City Green Awards (2024)*. Yet, despite this progress, many small- and medium-sized staycation properties struggle to implement consistent and comprehensive environmental initiatives due to resource constraints, limited training, and inconsistent guest participation.

This study assesses the extent of green initiative implementation in selected staycation properties in Quezon City and the problems encountered by stakeholders. It uses a mixed-methods approach to integrate survey-based assessments with qualitative insights from key informants. The goal is to provide evidence-based recommendations for policy alignment, hotel operations, and guest engagement that will promote

environmental sustainability and align the local hospitality sector with global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Theoretical Framework

This study integrates three complementary theoretical perspectives to explain the adoption and sustainability of green initiatives in the hospitality industry:

1. Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1998) — posits that organizational success must be measured not only in economic terms but also through social and environmental outcomes. In the hospitality context, this means balancing profitability with ecological stewardship and community engagement.
2. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) — explains that individuals' pro-environmental behaviors are shaped by their attitudes, perceived norms, and sense of control. This theory is critical for understanding how employees and guests decide to participate in green programs such as towel reuse and waste segregation.
3. Systems Approach (Bertalanffy, 1968) — views staycation properties as part of an interconnected socio-environmental system involving LGUs, hotel management, employees, and guests. Effective sustainability arises when all components interact harmoniously.

The utilization of these three theories collectively underpins the study's focus on behavioral motivation, managerial strategy, and systemic coordination, framing sustainability not as an isolated activity but as a continuous, collaborative process.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a convergent mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of green initiatives.

- Quantitative data measured the level of practice of various green initiatives using a survey questionnaire.
- Qualitative data were derived from semi-structured interviews with hotel managers and LGU environmental officers to explore the context, motivations, and constraints in implementing these initiatives.

Respondents and Sampling

A total of 60 respondents participated in the quantitative phase:

- 10 LGU employees,
- 20 staycation property employees, and
- 30 guests.

Purposive sampling was used, ensuring that participants had direct experience or involvement with sustainability practices. The qualitative phase included five hotel managers and two LGU officers from Quezon City's Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department.

Data Gathering and Analysis

The quantitative survey used a 5-point Likert scale and statistical tools, including Weighted Mean and One-Way ANOVA, to determine differences among respondent groups. The qualitative interviews were audio-

recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed, following Braun and Clarke’s (2019) six-phase approach. Triangulation was used to validate findings between quantitative and qualitative results.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The confidentiality of responses was maintained, and participation was voluntary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Assessment of Green Initiatives in Selected Staycation Properties in Quezon City

Indicators	LGU Employees (WM)	VI	Staycation Employees (WM)	VI	Guests (WM)	VI	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Promote recycling initiatives (reuse, upcycling)	3.60	P	4.35	HP	3.50	P	3.82	P	1
Reduce single-use plastic waste	3.90	P	4.10	P	3.40	P	3.80	P	2
Implement composting systems	3.40	P	3.95	P	3.37	MP	3.57	P	3
Adopt energy-efficient appliances	3.70	P	3.55	P	3.37	MP	3.54	P	4
Implement towel reuse program	3.70	P	3.45	P	3.37	MP	3.51	P	5
Optimize energy consumption	3.10	MP	3.60	P	3.20	MP	3.30	MP	6
Provide refillable water stations	3.60	P	3.10	MP	3.13	MP	3.28	MP	7
Engage in local environmental programs	3.40	P	3.30	MP	2.90	MP	3.20	MP	8
Utilize renewable energy sources	2.80	MP	3.30	MP	3.07	MP	3.06	MP	9

Overall Weighted Mean: 3.45 (Practiced)

Legend: HP = Highly Practiced, P = Practiced, MP = Moderately Practiced

Interpretation:

Most respondents agreed that recycling and waste reduction are the most practiced sustainability efforts. Renewable energy adoption remains limited, largely due to cost constraints and the absence of institutional incentives.

Qualitative Insights (5 Interview Excerpts)

1. Hotel Manager A – on policy integration:

“We have energy-saving systems, but the biggest challenge is continuity. Sustainability programs often depend on management priorities, not long-term policy.”

2. Hotel Manager B – on financial barriers:

“Solar technology is a dream for us, but the cost is prohibitive. Without subsidies or incentives, smaller properties cannot keep up with eco-certification standards.”

3. LGU Environmental Officer – on regulation:

“We encourage hotels to adopt green measures, but enforcement remains voluntary. Regular sustainability audits should be institutionalized through local ordinances.”

4. Hotel Manager C – on behavioral challenges:

“Guests like the idea of green practices but rarely follow them. We put towel reuse signs, yet less than half actually participate.”

5. Guest Participant – on perception:

“I choose staycations that promote sustainability. It feels good, but I also expect transparency—like visible recycling bins or certification badges.”

Table 2. ANOVA Result – Comparative Assessment of Respondent Groups

Source of Variation	SS	MS	df	F-value	Critical Value	Interpretation
Between Groups	0.071	0.035	2	0.33	3.40	Not Significant
Within Groups	2.599	0.108	24			

Interpretation:

Since $F (0.33) < 3.40$ at 0.05 level of significance, there is no significant difference among the assessments of LGU employees, staycation staff, and guests. This implies a shared understanding and comparable experiences of sustainability practices.

Table 3. Problems Encountered in Implementing Green Initiatives

Indicators	LGU Employees (WM)	VI	Staycation Employees (WM)	VI	Guests (WM)	VI	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Solar energy is not always available	3.80	E	3.10	ME	2.53	LE	3.14	ME	1
LED and inverter appliances malfunction	2.90	ME	3.30	ME	2.73	ME	2.98	ME	2
Dissatisfaction with eco-alternatives (e.g., paper)	2.90	ME	3.35	ME	2.67	ME	2.97	ME	3

straws)									
Environmental programs are not held regularly	3.20	ME	3.35	ME	2.33	LE	2.96	ME	4
Limited participation in recycling programs	3.50	E	2.70	ME	2.63	ME	2.94	ME	5
Limited trash bins/upcycling	3.70	E	2.65	ME	2.23	LE	2.86	ME	6
Lack of towel reuse reminders	3.10	ME	2.90	ME	2.47	LE	2.82	ME	7
Low engagement despite hotel efforts	2.80	ME	3.15	ME	2.47	LE	2.81	ME	8
Limited refillable water stations	3.00	ME	2.85	ME	2.33	LE	2.73	ME	9

Overall Weighted Mean: 2.83 (Moderately Encountered)

Legend: HE = Highly Encountered, E = Encountered, ME = Moderately Encountered, LE = Least Encountered

Interpretation:

Respondents consistently identified the availability of solar energy, malfunctioning of eco-appliances, and irregular environmental activities as moderately encountered problems. Guest-related barriers (e.g., low participation) also hinder effective implementation.

Integrated Discussion

The results demonstrate that while green initiatives are being implemented, they remain inconsistent across properties. Quantitative results align with qualitative insights, indicating financial limitations, behavioral inconsistency, and weak policy enforcement.

Consistent with the Triple Bottom Line, sustainability efforts prioritize economic feasibility over social inclusion and environmental innovation. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains guests’ limited participation as stemming from weak behavioral intention and a lack of feedback mechanisms.

The Systems Approach emphasizes that coordinated action among LGUs, management, and guests is essential for achieving sustainability outcomes.

Quantitative and qualitative findings converge to show that sustainability awareness is increasing among staycation operators, yet operational sustainability remains at the mid-level of maturity.

- **Quantitative data** reveal “Practiced” implementation of green efforts with visible emphasis on recycling and reduced plastic use.
- **Qualitative interviews** highlight resource and behavior-based constraints:

“We practice towel reuse and waste segregation, but maintaining consistency requires guest cooperation,” said one property manager.

LGU officers cited the need for policy enforcement mechanisms rather than voluntary compliance.

Both data sets confirm that progress exists but is limited by cost, manpower, and motivation — consistent with Ajzen's *Theory of Planned Behavior* and Elkington's *Triple Bottom Line* sustainability framework.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings reveal that green initiatives among selected staycation properties in Quezon City are generally practiced (overall mean = 3.45), with waste-related initiatives such as recycling (mean = 3.82) and reducing single-use plastics (mean = 3.80) receiving the highest levels of implementation. In contrast, the utilization of renewable energy sources ranked lowest (mean = 3.06), indicating a significant gap in the adoption of more capital-intensive sustainability technologies. This pattern reflects a common trajectory in the hospitality sector, where low-cost, operationally simple initiatives are prioritized over high-investment environmental innovations.

A deeper analysis of this disparity highlights the critical role of financial constraints in shaping sustainability decisions. Qualitative findings indicate that the high upfront cost of renewable energy systems, particularly solar photovoltaic (PV) installations, remains a major barrier for small- and medium-sized staycation properties. A cost-benefit analysis conducted as part of this study suggests that while initial investments for solar systems may range from approximately ₱310,000 to over ₱1,000,000 depending on system size and storage capacity, these systems can generate substantial long-term savings through reduced electricity costs, estimated at ₱60,000 to ₱240,000 annually. Over a 20- to 25-year lifespan, the cumulative financial benefits, coupled with increased property value and reduced carbon emissions, indicate a favorable return on investment. However, despite this long-term viability, the immediate financial burden and limited access to capital discourage adoption, thereby reinforcing the finding that renewable energy implementation remains only moderately practiced.

From the perspective of the Triple Bottom Line Theory, these results demonstrate an imbalance among economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainability. While environmental awareness is evident, economic considerations continue to dominate operational decision-making. Staycation operators tend to favor initiatives that offer immediate cost savings rather than long-term ecological investments. This reinforces the notion that sustainability adoption in the hospitality sector is often contingent upon perceived economic feasibility rather than environmental urgency.

To address this imbalance, the study proposes integrating alternative financing mechanisms, such as power purchase agreements (PPAs), green financing schemes, and local government unit (LGU)-supported subsidies or tax incentives. These approaches can effectively reduce the financial risks associated with renewable energy investments by shifting the cost structure from capital-intensive to operational expenditure. Within a Systems Approach framework, such strategies emphasize the need for coordinated action among stakeholders—including LGUs, financial institutions, and hospitality operators—to create an enabling environment for sustainable innovation.

Beyond financial constraints, the study also identifies a persistent gap between guests' positive attitudes toward sustainability and their actual participation in green initiatives. Although guests expressed support for eco-friendly practices, their engagement in activities such as towel reuse and waste segregation remained inconsistent. This disconnect is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that favorable attitudes alone are insufficient to drive behavior unless supported by strong perceived control and motivational triggers. In this context, the lack of tangible incentives, limited feedback mechanisms, and weak behavioral cues contribute to low participation rates.

To bridge this attitude-behavior gap, the study introduces an incentive-based engagement framework grounded in behavioral economics. Financial incentives, such as small discounts or reward points for eco-friendly actions, can directly motivate guest participation by providing immediate, tangible benefits. Complementary to this, social and psychological incentives—such as sustainability recognition badges, public eco-scores, and gamified participation systems—can enhance intrinsic motivation and reinforce pro-environmental identity.

Experience-based strategies, including eco-tours and sustainability-themed stay packages, further deepen engagement by transforming environmental responsibility into a meaningful and memorable aspect of the guest experience.

In addition, the use of nudging techniques, such as default green options (e.g., automatic towel reuse unless opted out), real-time displays of resource consumption, and strategically placed behavioral prompts, can significantly improve compliance without requiring a substantial financial investment. These low-cost interventions align with both the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Systems Approach by strengthening behavioral intention and embedding sustainability within the operational environment.

The integration of financial and behavioral strategies highlights that effective sustainability implementation in staycation properties requires a dual approach: reducing structural barriers while simultaneously enhancing stakeholder engagement. Quantitative and qualitative findings converge to demonstrate that sustainability efforts are not limited by awareness but by the interplay among economic constraints, behavioral dynamics, and institutional support systems.

Overall, the results suggest that transitioning from moderate to advanced levels of sustainability in the hospitality sector requires shifting from isolated green practices toward a more holistic, incentivized sustainability ecosystem. By aligning financial feasibility with behavioral engagement, staycation properties can achieve not only improved environmental performance but also enhanced competitiveness and long-term operational resilience.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while green initiatives among staycation properties in Quezon City are generally practiced, their implementation remains uneven and largely limited to low-cost, operational measures such as recycling and waste reduction. More advanced sustainability practices, particularly the adoption of renewable energy technologies, remain underutilized due to significant financial constraints, limited access to capital, and perceived investment risks. Although a cost-benefit perspective indicates that renewable energy systems—such as solar photovoltaic installations—offer substantial long-term economic and environmental returns, the high upfront costs continue to hinder widespread adoption among small- and medium-sized properties.

Furthermore, the study reveals a persistent gap between guests' positive attitudes toward sustainability and their actual participation in eco-friendly practices. Despite general awareness and a willingness to support environmental initiatives, guest engagement remains inconsistent due to the lack of strong motivational mechanisms, feedback systems, and behavioral triggers. This confirms that sustainability in the hospitality sector is not solely a function of awareness but is significantly influenced by behavioral dynamics and perceived incentives.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings affirm the relevance of the Triple Bottom Line, Theory of Planned Behavior, and Systems Approach in explaining sustainability adoption. The dominance of economic considerations over environmental investments highlights an imbalance within the Triple Bottom Line framework. Meanwhile, the Theory of Planned Behavior explains the limited translation of environmental attitudes into actual guest behavior, emphasizing the need for enhanced perceived control and motivation. The Systems Approach further underscores that sustainability outcomes depend on coordinated actions among stakeholders, including local government units, hotel operators, employees, and guests.

Overall, the study demonstrates that achieving higher levels of sustainability in staycation properties requires a shift from fragmented, voluntary practices to an integrated, system-driven approach. Addressing financial barriers through innovative financing mechanisms, strengthening institutional and policy support, and implementing incentive-based engagement strategies are essential to advancing sustainability efforts. By aligning economic viability with behavioral engagement and environmental responsibility, the hospitality sector can move toward an operational model that is more resilient, competitive, and sustainable, and that contributes meaningfully to broader climate and development goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Staycation property owners are encouraged to adopt renewable energy systems, particularly solar photovoltaic (PV) technology, as a long-term, cost-saving, environmentally sustainable investment. While initial capital requirements remain a primary constraint, the cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that such systems yield significant returns through reduced electricity expenses and enhanced property value over time. To address this barrier, property operators should explore alternative financing mechanisms, such as power purchase agreements (PPAs), green financing programs, and installment-based acquisition schemes. These approaches can minimize upfront costs and align payments with realized savings, thereby improving financial feasibility.
2. Local Government Units (LGUs) should play a more proactive role in accelerating sustainability adoption by institutionalizing incentive-based policies. These may include tax discounts, grants, or partial subsidies for properties investing in renewable energy and certified green technologies. Additionally, integrating sustainability performance indicators into business permit renewals and establishing mandatory sustainability audits can enhance compliance and accountability. Such policy mechanisms will operationalize sustainability goals within a structured governance framework and align local practices with national and global environmental targets.
3. To bridge the gap between guests' positive environmental attitudes and their actual behavior, staycation properties should adopt structured incentive-based engagement systems. Financial incentives such as discounts, loyalty points, or service upgrades can directly encourage participation in eco-friendly practices (e.g., towel reuse, energy conservation). Complementarily, social recognition mechanisms—such as “Green Guest” badges, sustainability scorecards, or gamified participation systems—can enhance intrinsic motivation. These strategies are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, as they strengthen behavioral intention by increasing perceived benefits and reinforcing social norms.
4. Low-cost behavioral interventions or “nudges” should be incorporated into hotel operations to subtly guide guest behavior toward sustainability. Examples include default green options (e.g., automatic towel reuse unless declined), real-time feedback displays on water and energy consumption, and strategically placed eco-reminders within guest rooms. These interventions require minimal financial investment but can significantly improve participation rates by enhancing awareness and perceived behavioral control.
5. Staycation properties should invest in digital tools that enable real-time monitoring of energy, water, and waste management systems. Smart meters, dashboard analytics, and automated reporting systems can improve operational efficiency, support data-driven decision-making, and ensure transparency in sustainability performance. Furthermore, these tools can be integrated into guest-facing platforms to provide feedback on environmental impact, thereby reinforcing engagement and accountability.
6. A systems-based approach should be adopted by fostering collaboration among key stakeholders, including LGUs, hotel operators, environmental organizations, and financial institutions. Joint initiatives such as shared renewable energy systems, cluster-based sustainability programs, and public-private partnerships can reduce individual costs and enhance resource efficiency. Collaboration with environmental NGOs for awareness campaigns and community-based activities (e.g., tree planting, clean-up drives) can further strengthen the social dimension of sustainability.
7. Continuous capacity-building programs should be implemented to equip employees with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective sustainability management. Training in energy efficiency, waste segregation, and guest engagement strategies will ensure consistent implementation of green practices. Moreover, embedding sustainability into organizational policies and performance evaluation systems can promote long-term commitment and operational continuity.
8. Staycation properties should strategically communicate their sustainability efforts through marketing platforms, certifications, and eco-labels. Transparent reporting of environmental performance and visible implementation of green initiatives can enhance customer trust and attract environmentally conscious travelers.

This approach not only supports environmental objectives but also provides a competitive advantage in the evolving hospitality market.

9. All sustainability efforts should be aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 11 (Sustainable Cities), 12 (Responsible Consumption), and 13 (Climate Action). Establishing measurable sustainability targets and long-term action plans will ensure that initiatives are implemented in a coordinated manner and contribute to broader environmental and socio-economic development goals.

10. Future studies may further explore the financial viability of renewable energy adoption using longitudinal data and comparative analysis across different hospitality segments. Additionally, experimental research on incentive-based interventions and behavioral nudging can provide deeper insights into optimizing guest participation in sustainability programs. Expanding the scope to include other urban and rural tourism settings may also enhance the generalizability of findings.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Alignment

SDG	Goal Focus	Study Contribution and Alignment
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Make cities inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.	The study supports Quezon City’s green urban initiatives by promoting sustainable staycation practices. Collaboration between LGUs and hotels contributes to creating eco-resilient tourism zones and responsible hospitality infrastructure.
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.	Green initiatives such as waste segregation, towel reuse, and single-use plastic reduction directly support SDG 12. The study’s findings highlight the role of consumer behavior in promoting responsible tourism and hospitality.
SDG 13: Climate Action	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.	Energy-efficient appliances, renewable energy use, and awareness programs help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The study aligns with local climate adaptation strategies by integrating green technologies and behavioral interventions.

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