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SULEIMENOVA N.Zh.,¹

PhD student.

e-mail: suleimenova_nazygul@live.kaznu.kz

ORCID ID: 0009-0008-9271-3206

MOLDAGALIYEVA A.E.,*¹

g.s.c., associate professor.

*e-mail: moldagaliyeva.aitolkyn2016@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6240-2476

DUNETS A.N.,²

d.g.s., professor.

e-mail: dunets@mail.ru

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3804-6800

BAIBOSYNOVA G.J.,³

e.s.c., associate professor.

e-mail: gulzhan.baybosynova@iuth.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4225-3025

¹Al-Farabi Kazakh National University,
Almaty, Kazakhstan

²Altai State University,
Barnaul, Russia

³University of International
Tourism and Hospitality,
Turkistan, Kazakhstan

**ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE HOSPITALITY
INDUSTRY OF KAZAKHSTAN: DRIVERS, CHALLENGES
AND TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES**

Abstract

This research investigates the factors, obstacles, and approaches influencing the adoption of sustainable entrepreneurship within Kazakhstan's hotel industry, utilizing data from Almaty, Astana, and Shymkent. This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys from 158 hotel managers (utilizing SPSS 28.0 and SmartPLS 4) with 18 semi-structured interviews processed with NVivo 14. Multiple regression analysis ($R^2 = 0.413$, $F = 21.67$, $p < 0.001$) reveals operational cost savings ($\beta = 0.38$) and government regulations ($\beta = 0.24$) as the sole significant predictors of sustainability adoption, whereas competitive advantage, customer demand, and personal values are deemed non-significant. Primary obstacles encompass substantial initial capital expenditures, knowledge gaps, and restricted access to green financing. ANOVA analysis indicates significant stratification by hotel star rating, with five-star establishments markedly surpassing three-star hotels in energy efficiency, waste reduction, and local supplier participation. Research reveals that the adoption of sustainability in Kazakhstan is predominantly driven by economic rationality rather than ethical or environmental considerations, with

institutional frameworks both facilitating and hindering advancement. The study introduces a Context-dependent Phased Transformation (CPT) model that conceptualizes sustainability transition as a non-linear, iterative process influenced by institutional readiness, financing conditions, and market maturity, providing both theoretical and practical insights for hotel entrepreneurs and policymakers in emerging economies.

Keywords: sustainable entrepreneurship, hospitality industry, drivers and barriers, green economy, hotel sustainability, phased transformation, mixed-methods research.

Introduction

In the current era of global development, intensifying environmental crises, depletion of natural resources, and climate change have elevated the concept of sustainable development as a strategic priority across all economic sectors. The tourism and hospitality industries are no exception, given their resource-intensive nature and significant anthropogenic environmental impact. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) highlights that tourism serves as “a key driver of sustainable development while also being one of its most vulnerable victims”. Against this backdrop, the trajectory of tourism and its service sector is inextricably linked to the principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

This issue is particularly important for Kazakhstan. The country has officially adopted a strategy for transitioning to a “green economy” and set a national goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. Additionally, tourism is regarded as a crucial tool for economic diversification, regional development, and job creation. Against this backdrop, the hotel industry in international tourist destinations such as Almaty can serve as a key driver in implementing the principles of sustainable development. Transitioning to a “green economy” is not only seen as a way to fulfill environmental obligations but also as a significant opportunity to enhance competitiveness through innovative development, improved resource efficiency, and entry into new market sectors.

The traditional hotel business model has long regarded profit maximization as the primary measure of economic success, while environmental and social costs are often dismissed as external factors. However, in recent decades, this model has begun to undergo a fundamental transformation. The concept of sustainable entrepreneurship seeks to integrate economic success with environmental responsibility and social justice, grounded in the “triple bottom line” [1]. Under this framework, entrepreneurs no longer view environmental and social issues as constraints but as sources of new business opportunities.

The evolution of the concept of sustainable entrepreneurship is clearly reflected in academic literature. Early studies primarily confined the notion of “green entrepreneurship” to the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies [2], whereas later research expanded this concept into a comprehensive framework encompassing sociocultural contexts, innovative business models, and institutional factors. [3] described this shift as a transition from eco-entrepreneurship to sustainable entrepreneurship. [4] and [5] highlighted the close relationship between sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation, noting that it is not limited to operational improvements but aims to transform market structures and value chains.

In the hospitality industry, the principles of sustainable development have evolved into a systematic approach, encompassing all stages of operations in international practice. This is primarily achieved by implementing green building certification systems (e.g., LEED and BREEAM), enhancing energy efficiency through programs like ENERGY STAR, conserving water resources, managing waste, and utilizing local and organic products [6] and [7]. Additionally, involving hotel guests in sustainability initiatives, such as reusing linens or providing energy-saving information, has become not only a marketing tool but also an effective mechanism for fostering eco-friendly behavior [8]. [9] note that sustainable development in the hospitality industry has transitioned from an economic value-added measure to a strategic priority.

The literature categorizes the primary drivers of sustainable transformation into internal and external factors. External drivers include the growing demand for environmentally friendly services from consumers, regulatory pressures both domestically and internationally, the pursuit of competitive advantages, and increasing ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) requirements from investors [10] and [11]. Internal drivers encompass reducing operational costs through energy

and resource conservation, the personal values and missions of entrepreneurs, and the desire for innovation [12] and [13].

Moreover, the implementation of sustainable practices is constrained by various barriers. Research indicates that high initial investment costs, gaps in staffing and education, technological limitations, internal cultural resistance, and the risk of “greenwashing” are the primary obstacles [14–16]. In this regard, suggested strategies from the literature include phased implementation, application of circular economy principles, green marketing, and establishing partnerships [17] and [18].

However, most international literature is based on experiences from Western Europe, North America, or East Asia. Kazakhstan’s situation is particularly distinctive in this regard. The country’s infrastructure conditions, resource accessibility, environmental awareness levels, national support mechanisms, and market development stages all directly influence the implementation logic of sustainable entrepreneurship. While existing local research primarily focuses on general sustainability issues or the environmental aspects of tourism [19] and [20], the management, strategies, and incentive mechanisms for entrepreneurial transformation in the hotel industry remain underexplored. Additionally, relatively low energy prices in Kazakhstan may weaken the motivation for energy conservation, while water scarcity precisely underscores the importance of sustainable management. This situation exacerbates the gap between international chain hotel standards and local business experiences.

Therefore, a significant research gap has emerged between theory and practice. To bridge this gap, the primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the transition process in the hotel industry, particularly in the Almaty region of Kazakhstan, toward a sustainable entrepreneurship model, with the aim of identifying its key drivers, obstacles, and effective transformation strategies. To achieve this goal, the study thoroughly examines the theoretical foundations of sustainable entrepreneurship, international practices, and the institutional characteristics of Kazakhstan.

Materials and methods

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed method to comprehensively analyze the driving factors, obstacles, and strategies for sustainable business transformation in the hotel industry in Kazakhstan. The study adopts an explanatory sequential mixed method design, which involves sequentially collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data [21].

The research is divided into two interrelated stages. In the first stage, quantitative data is used to identify key trends, relationships between variables, and overall characteristics of phenomena. In the second stage, collect and analyze qualitative data to deepen, explain, and interpret quantitative results. This design allows us to transition from the question of ‘What happened?’ to the explanatory level of ‘Why is this happening?’.

Quantitative data collection

Quantitative data is collected through structured online surveys. This survey is based on the Google Forms platform and consists of four main parts. The first part includes the basic demographic and institutional characteristics of the respondents, such as the city where the hotel is located (Almaty, Astana, Shymkent), star rating, ownership form (chain or independent), and service years.

The second part aims to evaluate the implementation level and main driving factors of sustainable development practices in hotels. This section uses a five-point Likert scale to measure practices such as energy conservation, waste management, and cooperation with local suppliers. The third part evaluates the importance of identified financial, technological, information, and institutional barriers based on literature review. The fourth part includes the willingness and strategies of the respondents to expand sustainable development projects in the future.

This survey adopts purposive sampling method. The survey targets managers and owners of officially registered three-star, four-star, and five-star hotels located in the three major tourist centers of Kazakhstan. The contact information of the respondents is collected through official websites, industry directories, and professional associations, and the survey questionnaire is sent directly via

email. The planned sample size includes at least 150 respondents ($N \geq 150$), which is considered sufficient for statistical analysis.

Qualitative data collection

In order to further interpret the results of the quantitative stage, we conducted semi-structured interviews. Interview questions are formulated based on the main trends and issues identified in the survey results.

We have constructed a purposeful sample for the qualitative stage. The sample includes hotel entrepreneurs with high sustainability indicators, managers facing significant challenges in the transformation process, representatives of industry associations, and experts in sustainable business and ecology. We plan to conduct 15 –20 interviews.

Interviews will be conducted face-to-face or online through Zoom and Microsoft Teams platforms, depending on the convenience of the interviewee. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and subsequently transcribed word for word.

Data analysis methods

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS 28.0 and SmartPLS 4. Firstly, we conducted data cleaning and descriptive statistical analysis, calculating mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage. The internal consistency of the questionnaire scale is evaluated using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, with $\alpha \geq 0.7$ being the critical value. Use correlation analysis, factor analysis, and regression analysis to identify the relationships between variables.

Qualitative data is processed using thematic analysis, which is based on the six-stage model proposed by [22]. Use NVivo 14 software for coding and theme organization. During the analysis process, identify key themes and patterns that can answer research questions.

Mixed methods data integration

According to the explanatory sequential mixed method design, data integration is carried out through the logical sequence of quantitative and qualitative stages. The main findings identified in quantitative analysis are used as a guiding framework for qualitative interviews, while qualitative data helps to provide deeper explanations and enrich the background of quantitative trends.

Participant Characteristics

Table 1 – Respondent Profiles (N = 158)

Indicator	Category	n	%
Geographical location	Almaty city	72	45,6
	Astana city	51	32,3
	Shymkent city	35	22,1
Hotel star category	3 stars	57	36,1
	4 stars	55	34,8
	5 stars	46	29,1
Respondent's managerial status	Senior and middle managers	108	68,4
	Hotel owners / senior management	50	31,6
Hotel service period	less than 5 years	31	19,6
	5–10 years	61	38,6
	More than 10 years	66	41,8
Note: Compiled by the authors based on survey data.			

Table 1 shows that a total of 158 respondents (N = 158) participated in the quantitative survey. Geographically speaking, 45.6% of the respondents are from Almaty (n = 72), 32.3% are from Astana (n = 51), and 22.1% are from Shymkent (n = 35). The distribution of hotel star ratings is relatively uniform: three-star hotels account for 36.1%, four-star hotels account for 34.8%, and five-star hotels account for 29.1%.

Among the management levels of the respondents, the majority are middle to senior level managers (68.4%), and 31.6% are hotel owners or senior managers. The operating years of hotels vary: 41.8%

of hotels have been in operation for more than 10 years, 38.6% have been in operation for 5–10 years, and 19.6% have been in operation for less than 5 years.

In the qualitative research phase, we conducted 18 semi-structured interviews. The interviewees include owners of independent hotels and chain hotels ($n = 8$), representatives of industry associations ($n = 3$), experts in sustainable development ($n = 4$), and representatives of regional tourism management departments ($n = 3$). The average interview duration is 45-60 minutes.

Results and discussion

Key driving factors for sustainable entrepreneurship

Table 2 – Drivers and obstacles ranked by importance (sorted by group average)

Rank	Drivers (Average)	Barriers (Average)
1	Operational cost savings (4.62)	High initial investment (4.71)
2	Government regulations (4.15)	Knowledge deficit (4.33)
3	Competitive advantage (3.94)	Limited funding (4.28)
4	Customer demand (3.78)	Bureaucratic procedures (3.95)
5	Personal values (3.45)	Employee resistance (3.42)
Note: Compiled by the authors; survey data, $N = 158$; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$		

The quantitative analysis results clearly demonstrate the hierarchical factors that promote sustainable entrepreneurship (Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.87). Table 2 lists the average ranking of each driving factor.

The highest-ranking driving factor is operational cost savings (mean = 4.62), which reflects the company's desire to achieve direct economic benefits through energy, water, and waste management. The second ranked is government regulations and policies (mean = 4.15), which reflects the need for businesses to adapt to the growing demand for a “green economy”. Ranked third and fourth are respectively competitive advantage and brand image (mean = 3.94) and international consumer demand (mean = 3.78). Although the scores for personal values and sense of responsibility were relatively low (mean = 3.45), there were significant differences in respondents' responses to these factors.

Qualitative interviews have deepened these quantitative analysis results in terms of content. The theme of “economic logic” has repeatedly appeared in many interviews, describing energy efficiency investment as a readily achievable outcome. In addition, the contradictions of the driving factors of “regulatory activism” have also been revealed: on the one hand, the government requires encouraging the introduction of sustainable practices; On the other hand, people are concerned that the implementation of these requirements may be unfair and unequal. In addition, the interview results clearly indicate that people tend to view young and environmentally conscious consumers as a new market segment.

Obstacles to Sustainable Entrepreneurship

The obstacle analysis results indicate that financial factors dominate, as shown in table 3 (Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0.87). The most important obstacle is the need for a high initial investment ($M = 4.71$). Secondly, there is a lack of knowledge and skills ($M = 4.33$) and limited financing channels for sustainable technologies ($M = 4.28$). Administrative and bureaucratic procedures ($M = 3.95$) and employee resistance to change ($M = 3.42$) are considered relatively moderate barriers.

Qualitative data supplemented these findings with specific cases. The topic of “financial paradox” is frequently mentioned in interviews, pointing out that the strict loan conditions of banks offset the expected benefits brought by sustainable technology. In addition, the problem of “information vacuum” – the lack of systematic information about garbage classification, authentication, and support mechanisms - is also seen as a practical obstacle.

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Comparison of Sustainable Practice Implementation by Hotel Category (N = 158)

Practice	Mean	SD	3★ Mean (n=57)	4★ Mean (n=55)	5★ Mean (n=46)	F-value	p-value	α
Energy Efficiency	4.41	0.82	4.12	4.48	4.67	8.742	0.000	
Water Conservation	3.89	1.04	–	–	–	–	–	
Waste Reduction	3.12	1.21	2.65	3.25	3.58	10.112	0.000	
Local Suppliers	3.45	1.15	3.10	3.58	3.73	5.891	0.003	
Employee Training	2.78	1.33	–	–	–	–	–	
Total Scale								0.87
*F-values and p-values shown for ANOVA across hotel star categories (3★, 4★, 5★). – indicates ANOVA not reported for this practice in this analysis. p<0.05 indicates statistical significance. α = Cronbach's Alpha for total scale.								
Note: Compiled by the authors based on SPSS 28.0 analysis of survey data.								

Existing sustainable development practices

Figure 1 illustrates the average implementation scores (1–5 Likert scale, N = 158) for five sustainable development strategies, segmented by the overall sample and by hotel star classification. The chart demonstrates two distinct structural patterns. A significant adoption gradient exists, with energy efficiency (overall M = 4.41) at the upper end and employee training (M = 2.78) at the lower end, illustrating the economic rationality identified in the regression model: hotels prioritize practices yielding immediate cost benefits while postponing those requiring substantial capital or knowledge investment. A similar stratification of star categories is shown across the three ANOVA-tested practices (energy efficiency, waste reduction, and local supplier cooperation), where 5★ hotels consistently surpass 3★ hotels (all $p < 0.001$). The disparity is particularly evident in trash reduction, with 5★ hotels achieving a score of 3.58 compared to 3★ hotels' 2.65 ($\Delta = 0.93$: difference between the mean), highlighting that scale and brand standards serve as effective indicators of adoption capacity. This analysis does not provide star-category breakdowns for water conservation and employee training; however, their overall means (3.89 and 2.78, respectively) place them at opposite ends of the adoption spectrum, thereby reinforcing the domain-specific motivational structures revealed in the correlation analysis.

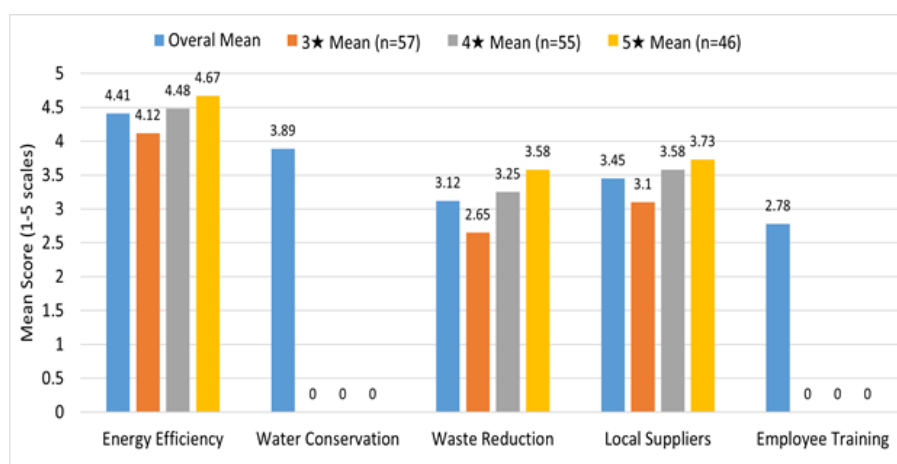


Figure 1 – Sustainable Practice Implementation Levels by Hotel Category and Overall Mean Score

*Mean scores on a 1–5 Likert scale (N = 158). ANOVA comparisons across star categories are statistically significant for energy efficiency ($F = 8.742$, $p < 0.001$), waste reduction ($F = 10.112$, $p < 0.001$), and local supplier cooperation ($F = 5.891$, $p = 0.003$).

Note: Compiled by the authors based on survey data, N=158; ANOVA, SPSS 28.0.

The relationship between driving factors and practice

The results of the Pearson correlation study (Figure 2) demonstrate statistically significant correlations between sustainable practices and their principal driving forces. A moderate positive connection exists between energy efficiency techniques and operating cost reductions ($r = 0.412$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that economic incentives are the primary predictor of energy-related sustainability adoption. In contrast, energy efficiency had a modest, non-significant correlation with the consumer intent driver ($r = 0.187$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that market demand alone does not account for the adoption of this technique. Waste reduction practices exhibited an inverse pattern: a notable moderate correlation with the consumer intent driver ($r = 0.381$, $p < 0.01$) and a lesser, non-significant association with operational savings ($r = 0.235$, $p > 0.05$). This disparity signifies that the motivating framework governing various sustainability activities is not homogeneous but rather domain-specific, with energy efficiency predominantly influenced by internal cost considerations and waste reduction more significantly shaped by external market expectations.

A multiple linear regression analysis was performed using SmartPLS 4 to investigate predictive correlations, with sustainable practice adoption as the dependent variable and five major drivers as independent factors. The model accounted for 41.3% of the variance in total sustainability adoption ($R^2 = 0.413$, $F = 21.67$, $p < 0.001$), with operational cost reductions ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$) and government laws ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$) identified as the sole statistically significant predictors. Personal values ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = 0.21$) and competitive advantage ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.14$) were not statistically significant, underscoring the assertion that economic and regulatory incentives predominate in the adoption trajectory within Kazakhstan's hotel industry. Collectively, these statistical findings suggest that the selection and extent of sustainable development methods are primarily influenced by economic and market incentives, with institutional pressure serving as a secondary nevertheless notable structural accelerator.

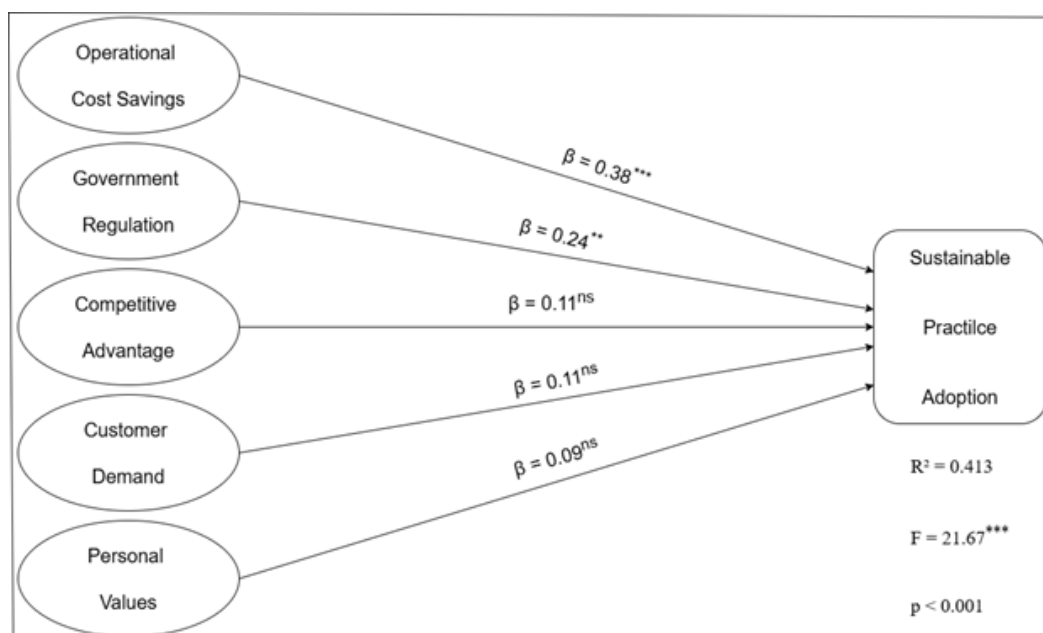


Figure 2 – Regression Path Model: Predictors of Sustainable Practice Adoption in Kazakhstan's Hotel Sector

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; ns: not significant ($p > 0.05$). Standardize β coefficients from SmartPLS 4 Multiple Regression.

Note: Compiled by the authors using IBM SPSS Amos 26.

Table 5 analyzes the link between two distinct operational techniques (Energy Efficiency and Waste Reduction) and two external motivating factors (Operational Savings and Customer Intent) utilizing the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). The data derives from a survey sample of $N = 158$. The correlation analysis indicates a clear divergence in the motivations behind these two sustainability initiatives: energy efficiency practices are chiefly driven by internal cost reductions, exhibiting a

moderate and statistically significant positive correlation with operational savings ($r = 0.412$, $p < 0.01$) but a weak, non-significant association with customer intent ($r = 0.187$). In contrast, waste reduction efforts are primarily influenced by market demand and consumer expectations, showing a statistically significant positive correlation with customer intent ($r = 0.381$, $p < 0.01$) rather than immediate financial incentives ($r = 0.235$, not significant).

Table 5 – Correlation analysis between practice and driving factors (Pearson correlation coefficient, r)

	Operational Savings Driver	Customer Intent Driver
Energy Efficiency Practice	0.412	0.187
Waste Reduction Practice	0.235	0.381
*Correlations marked in bold are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Note: Compiled by the authors based on SPSS 28.0 analysis of survey data, $N = 158$.		

Comprehensive Results of Transformation Strategy

The combination of quantitative and qualitative results has determined the most likely strategy for transitioning towards sustainable entrepreneurship. The results indicate that the phased and prioritized approach, solutions based on “soft” innovation, construction of knowledge sharing networks, and incorporating sustainability as a value marketing element are effective. These strategies help reduce financial risks, adapt to local environments, and enhance competitive advantages.

In conclusion, analysis shows that the hotel industry in Kazakhstan has a strong interest in sustainable entrepreneurship, but this interest is mainly based on the logic of economic rationality and operational efficiency. Research has found that transformation can only succeed through gradual, locally adapted, and low-risk investment strategies.

The empirical findings of this study partially validate the primary conclusions of sustainable entrepreneurship theory, while also revealing significant contextual discrepancies that question the applicability of Western-derived frameworks to emerging economies. The findings collectively indicate a context-specific, economically rationalized model of sustainability adoption that significantly diverges from the normative or values-driven models commonly seen in European and North American literature. The research findings indicate that no uniform model exists for transitioning to sustainable entrepreneurship; the development of the transformation pathway is contingent upon the distinct institutional quality, resource endowment, and market maturity of each nation. Kazakhstan exemplifies an economy undergoing a sustainable transition amidst inadequate institutional enforcement, restricted green funding, and emerging consumer demand, a situation that alters the significance of theoretical drivers and obstacles.

Cost reductions as the primary driving element predominate the research findings, hence reinforcing the sustainable entrepreneurship theoretical framework predicated on economic opportunity identification as suggested by [2]. This conclusion aligns with the study findings of [14] and [12], indicating that sustainable development measures in the hotel business are predominantly associated with economic mobility. The regression analysis ($R^2 = 0.413$) demonstrates that operational cost savings ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$) is not only the highest-ranked factor descriptively but also the most potent independent predictor of actual practice adoption when all factors are included concurrently. This differentiates the Kazakhstani scenario from findings in economies like Scandinavia or Germany, where regulatory compliance and value congruence are similarly predictive [9]. Research indicates that in Kazakhstan, sustainable development is generally viewed as a cost optimization strategy aimed at enhancing resource efficiency and margin performance, rather than as an environmental or ethical position. This perspective has tangible consequences: sustainability investments are sanctioned based on short-term payback assessments, which inherently disadvantage initiatives with extended return periods, such as waste reduction infrastructure or extensive employee training programs, both of which exhibit the lowest implementation scores in the dataset ($M = 3.12$ and $M = 2.78$, respectively).

This study highlights that the role of normative variables is a complicated and contradictory phenomenon. While international literature [11] identifies regulatory pressure as a crucial mechanism for advancing sustainable development, the regression analysis indicates that government regulations, although a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), have a markedly weaker influence on adoption

compared to economic incentives. This partial decoupling between normative pressure and organizational behavior corresponds with institutional theory's differentiation between ceremonial compliance and substantive change. In Kazakhstan, the isomorphic pressures from governmental green economy declarations are tangible yet insufficient: public policies and strategic documents promote the adoption of sustainable practices by businesses, but the instability of policy implementation, bureaucratic complexity, and the risk of unfair competition significantly undermine their transformative impact. This suggests that, according to institutional theory, the efficacy of formal standards relies not only on their existence but fundamentally on the quality and consistency of its enforcement mechanisms.

The research findings regarding consumer behavior in Kazakhstan offer a comparative analysis of the “green consumer” idea as understood in Western nations. While consumer intent was identified as a notable correlate of waste reduction practices ($r = 0.381$, $p < 0.01$), it did not attain significance as a predictor in the regression model ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.14$), suggesting that consumer demand in Kazakhstan presently operates more as a sector-level indicator than a firm-level necessity. This aligns with the market segmentation observed in the qualitative data: international visitors and younger domestic consumers exhibit pronounced environmental preferences, whilst the mainstream domestic market mostly remains indifferent to sustainability credentials. The implication is that consumer pressure in emerging nations is structurally uneven, primarily stemming from a limited, internationally-focused section, indicating that sustainable entrepreneurship in this setting is externally anchored rather than domestically rooted. This discovery significantly enhances the discourse on “green consumers” by illustrating that its predictive capacity depends on the maturity of the consumer market – a variable that international literature, predominantly based in developed economies, has inadequately theorized.

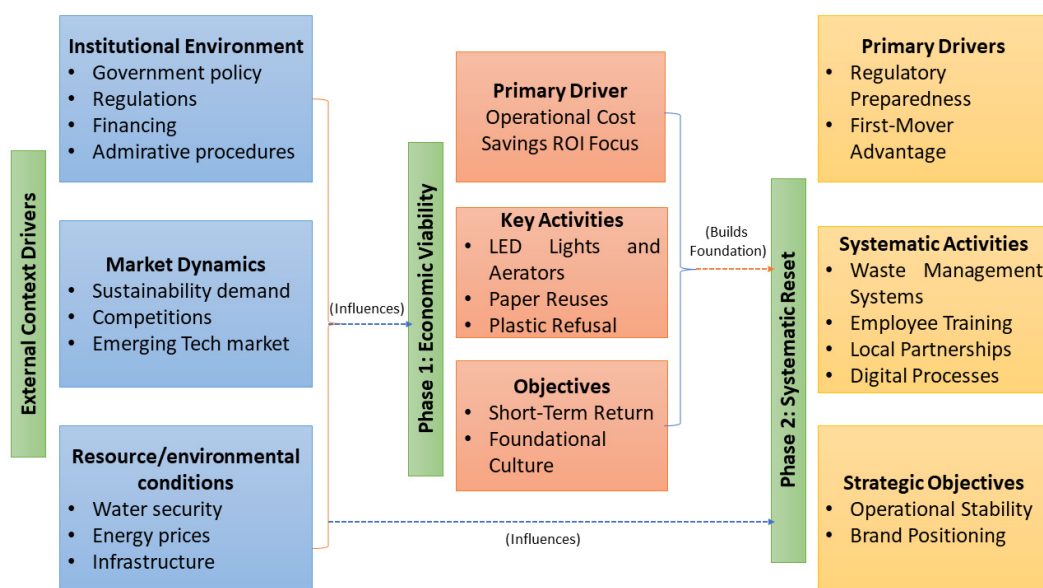


Figure 3 – Context-dependent Phased Transformation (CPT) model of transition to sustainable entrepreneurship in the Kazakhstani hotel sector

Note: Compiled by the authors based on [2, 4, 5, 21].

The research findings on barriers underscore the limitations in investment, education, and finance, validating the relevance of resource dependence theory [14, 15]. The prevalence of financial obstacles – substantial initial investment ($M = 4.71$), restricted financing avenues ($M = 4.28$), and knowledge deficiencies ($M = 4.33$) – suggests that Kazakhstani hotel entrepreneurs encounter a quintessential sustainability dilemma: the practices most effective in diminishing long-term expenses (e.g., renewable energy installations, waste management systems) necessitate upfront capital that is unattainable under existing financing circumstances. The structural mismatch is exacerbated by the lack of specialized green financial instruments and the intricacy of administrative processes ($M = 3.95$),

which elevate transaction costs and disproportionately deter smaller, independent hotels. The ANOVA results (table 3) provide statistical evidence for this disparity: five-star hotels exceed three-star hotels in all assessed sustainability dimensions ($p < 0.001$), indicating that scale and brand affiliation serve as effective proxies for resource availability. In transitional economies like Kazakhstan, the stratification of sustainability capacity based on size represents a systemic structural barrier that regulatory policy must explicitly confront, for example, via tiered subsidy schemes, favorable loan conditions for SME hotels, or knowledge-sharing platforms that mitigate information asymmetry costs.

This study presents a Context-dependent Phased Transformation (CPT) model for the hotel business in Kazakhstan by synthesizing empirical and theoretical data (Figure 3). This model perceives the shift to sustainable entrepreneurship as a non-linear, iterative, and context-dependent process based on three interconnected elements: external environment, internal transformation trajectory, and transformation results. In contrast to linear stage models suggested in previous literature [4], the CPT model recognizes that enterprises may fluctuate between stages due to variations in institutional conditions, financing availability, and market signals – an assertion directly corroborated by qualitative interview evidence of non-monotonic transformation trajectories among participating hotels.

The external environment is composed of institutional factors (government policies, regulations, financing mechanisms), market factors (consumer expectations, competitors, green technology markets), and resource ecological factors (water scarcity, energy prices, infrastructure). These factors continue to affect every stage of the transformation process.

The internal transformation path is divided into three stages. The first stage focuses on measures that are easily accessible, aiming to save operating costs and lay the initial foundation for a culture of sustainable development. The second stage focuses on systematic transformation and knowledge development, strengthening regulatory readiness and competitive advantage. The third stage is based on strategic innovation and differentiation, aiming to transform the enterprise into a promoter of sustainable development in the industry.

This model evaluates results from three levels: overview level (financial savings, brand image), structural level (sustainable operating model, innovative culture), and global level (contribution to national sustainable development goals).

In theory, this study supplements the theory of sustainable entrepreneurship with a contextualized approach that considers the institutional quality and economic development level of a country. From a practical perspective, research results indicate that phased, low-risk, and locally appropriate strategies are effective for hotel entrepreneurs; For policy makers, it is crucial to adopt differentiated support measures for enterprises with different levels of preparedness. Overall, the study suggests that Kazakhstan's hotel industry has the potential to transition towards a sustainable entrepreneurial model, but its successful implementation directly depends on economic feasibility, the quality of institutional support, and the development of educational infrastructure.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the factors, obstacles, and transformative techniques influencing the adoption of sustainable entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan's hotel industry. Utilizing survey data from 158 hotel managers in Almaty, Astana, and Shymkent, together with 18 qualitative interviews and evaluated via regression modeling, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation, the results possess both theoretical and practical implications.

The primary conclusion is that the adoption of sustainability in Kazakhstan is driven by economic rationale rather than ethical or environmental principles. Operational cost savings serve as the most significant predictor of adoption ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.413$), indicating that hotel entrepreneurs prioritize sustainability investments particularly when a clear financial return can be realized within a brief payback period. This economic framework establishes a systemic bias favoring low-cost, accessible activities such as energy efficiency ($M = 4.41$) and water conservation ($M = 3.89$), while detracting from higher-impact but capital-intensive initiatives like waste reduction ($M = 3.12$) and employee training ($M = 2.78$).

The institutional context exerts a notable yet limited influence. Government regulations serve as the second significant predictor ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), although their impact is markedly less robust than that of economic incentives, highlighting the disparity between Kazakhstan's aspirations for a green economy and the practical challenges posed by bureaucratic intricacies, policy volatility, and insufficient green financing. In this environment, consumer demand and competitive advantage, which are significant in Western literature, do not operate as firm-level drivers, suggesting that consumer market maturity is essential for these processes to be effective.

ANOVA results indicate a marked differentiation by hotel category: five-star establishments considerably exceed three-star hotels in all sustainability metrics ($p < 0.001$), with scale and brand affiliation acting as indicators of resource availability. Smaller, independent hotels encounter cumulative obstacles, including elevated relative costs, diminished institutional support, and restricted access to information, necessitating specifically tailored policy interventions, such as tiered SME green credit lines and knowledge-sharing platforms. Correlation analysis indicates domain-specific motivational frameworks: energy efficiency is predominantly influenced by cost considerations ($r = 0.412$), whereas waste reduction is more attuned to consumer feedback ($r = 0.381$), implying the necessity for tailored policy instruments and marketing strategies across various practice domains.

Two systemic deficiencies arise: a lack of knowledge regarding certification, waste classification, and financing alternatives, and a financial paradox in which stringent traditional lending criteria diminish the attractiveness of green investments. Both underscore the essential function of intermediary organizations – industry associations, knowledge hubs, and green financing guarantors – in facilitating the transition.

This paper introduces the Context-dependent Phased Transformation (CPT) model, which conceptualizes sustainability transition as a non-linear, iterative process influenced by institutional, market, and resource-ecological contexts. The methodology advances through three amendable phases: economically justified immediate gains; systematic reorganization centered on knowledge and regulatory preparedness; and strategic innovation for industry dominance. In contrast to linear stage models, the CPT framework allows for oscillation between stages in response to changing funding conditions, regulatory signals, and market dynamics.

The study theoretically illustrates that the primary drivers of sustainable entrepreneurship function with varying magnitudes and mechanisms in developing economies compared to established literature, and introduces consumer market maturity as an insufficiently conceptualized moderating element. The findings necessitate differentiated, implementation-level support for policymakers: tiered green credit mechanisms, compulsory sustainability literacy initiatives, and rigorously enforced regulatory norms. The CPT model provides practitioners with a practical, stage-based framework that synchronizes investment timing with institutional preparedness. Ultimately, recognizing Kazakhstan's sustainability potential necessitates the concurrent enhancement of economic incentives, institutional quality, and knowledge infrastructure – a conclusion pertinent to transitional economies beyond Kazakhstan.

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СҮЛЕЙМЕНОВА Н.Ж.,¹

докторант.

e-mail: suleimenova_nazygul@live.kaznu.kz

ORCID ID: 0009-0008-9271-3206

МОЛДАГАЛИЕВА А.Е.,^{*1}

г.ғ.к., қауымдастырылған профессор.

*e-mail: moldagaliyeva.aitolkyn2016@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6240-2476

ДУНЕЦ А.Н.,²

г.ғ.д., профессор.

e-mail: dunets@mail.ru

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3804-6800

БАЙБОСЫНОВА Г.Ж.,³

э.ғ.к., қауымдастырылған профессор.

e-mail: gulzhan.baybosynova@iuth.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4225-3025

¹әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ

ұлттық университеті,

Алматы қ., Қазақстан

²Алтай мемлекеттік университеті,

Барнаул қ., Ресей

³Халықаралық туризм және

меймандостық университеті,

Түркістан қ., Қазақстан

ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ ҚОНАҚЖАЙЛЫЛЫҚ ИНДУСТРИЯСЫНДАҒЫ ТҰРАҚТЫ КӘСІПКЕРЛІКТІҢ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ: ҚОЗҒАУШЫ ФАКТОРЛАР, СЫН-ҚАТЕРЛЕР ЖӘНЕ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯЛЫҚ СТРАТЕГИЯЛАР

Андатпа

Бұл зерттеу Алматы, Астана және Шымкент сияқты ірі туристік хабтарға баса назар аударып, Қазақстанның қонақжайлылық секторында тұрақты кәсіпкерлікті енгізумен байланысты қозғаушы күштерді, қиындықтарды және трансформациялық стратегияларды зерттейді. Түсіндірмелі тізбекті аралас әдістерді қолдана отырып, зерттеу 158 қонақ үй менеджерінің сандық сауалнама деректерін 18 жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттан алынған сапалық түсініктермен біріктіреді. Зерттеу нәтижелері тұрақтылықты енгізудің негізгі қозғаушы күші операциялық шығындарды үнемдеуге ұмтылу, одан кейін үкіметтік ережелер және бәсекелестік артықшылық екенін көрсетеді. Маңызды кедергілерге жоғары бастапқы инвестициялық шығындар, қаржыландыруға шектеулі қолжетімділік және техникалық білімнің жетіспеушілігі жатады. Іске асыру деңгейлері тәжірибе бойынша әртүрлі: энергия тиімділігі мен суды үнемдеу кеңінен қолданылады, ал қалдықтарды азайту және қызметкерлерді оқыту әлі де дамымаған. Зерттеу Қазақстандағы тұрақтылыққа бағытталған күш-жігер негізінен этикалық немесе экологиялық тұрғыдан емес, экономикалық тұрғыдан негізделгенін көрсетеді және институционалдық құрылымдардың қос рөлін – трансформацияны қамтамасыз ететін және шектейтінін көрсетеді. Осы түсініктерге сүйене отырып, зерттеу жергілікті нарық жағдайларына және институционалдық дайындыққа бейімделген инкрементальды, контекстке сезімтал стратегияларды жақтайтын контекстке тәуелді кезеңді трансформация (СРТ) моделін ұсынады. Нәтижелер дамушы экономикалардағы тұрақты кәсіпкерлік теориясына да, практикалық саясатты қалыптастыруға да үлес қосады.

Тірек сөздер: тұрақты кәсіпкерлік, қонақжайлылық индустриясы, қозғаушы күштер мен кедергілер, жасыл экономика, қонақ үйлердің тұрақтылығы, кезең-кезеңмен трансформация, аралас әдістерді зерттеу.

СҮЛЕЙМЕНОВА Н.Ж.,¹

докторант.

e-mail: suleimenova_nazygul@live.kaznu.kz

ORCID ID: 0009-0008-9271-3206

МОЛДАГАЛИЕВА А.Е.,*¹

г.н.к., доцент.

*e-mail: moldagaliyeva.aitolkyn2016@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6240-2476

ДУНЕЦ А.Н.,²

д.г.н., профессор.

e-mail: dunets@mail.ru

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3804-6800

БАЙБОСЫНОВА Г.Ж.,³

э.н.к., доцент.

e-mail: gulzhan.baybosynova@iuth.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4225-3025

¹Казахский национальный

университет им. Аль-Фараби,

г. Алматы, Казахстан

²Алтайский государственный университет,

г. Барнаул, Россия

³Университет международного

туризма и гостеприимства,

г. Туркестан, Казахстан

АСПЕКТЫ УСТОЙЧИВОГО ПРЕДПРИНИМАТЕЛЬСТВА В ИНДУСТРИИ ГОСТЕПРИИМСТВА КАЗАХСТАНА: ДВИЖУЩИЕ ФАКТОРЫ, ВЫЗОВЫ И ТРАНСФОРМАЦИОННЫЕ СТРАТЕГИИ

Аннотация

В данном исследовании изучаются движущие силы, проблемы и стратегии трансформации, связанные с внедрением устойчивого предпринимательства в гостиничном секторе Казахстана, с акцентом на крупные туристические центры, такие как гг. Алматы, Астана и Шымкент. Используя объяснительный последовательный смешанный метод исследования, работа сочетает количественные данные опроса 158 менеджеров отелей с качественными выводами, полученными в ходе 18 полуструктурированных интервью. Результаты показывают, что основной движущей силой внедрения устойчивого развития является стремление к экономии операционных затрат, за которым следуют государственное регулирование и конкурентные преимущества. К существенным барьерам относятся высокие первоначальные инвестиционные затраты, ограниченный доступ к финансированию и недостаток технических знаний. Уровни внедрения различаются в зависимости от практики: энергоэффективность и водосбережение широко распространены, в то время как сокращение отходов и обучение персонала остаются недостаточно развитыми. Исследование показывает, что усилия по обеспечению устойчивого развития в Казахстане в основном мотивированы экономическими, а не этическими или экологическими соображениями, и подчеркивает двойную роль институциональных рамок – как способствующих, так и сдерживающих трансформацию. На основе полученных данных в исследовании предлагается модель поэтапной трансформации, зависящей от контекста (СРТ), которая предполагает поэтапные, учитывающие контекст стратегии, адаптированные к местным рыночным условиям и институциональной готовности. Результаты вносят вклад как в теорию устойчивого предпринимательства, так и в практическую политику в развивающихся странах.

Ключевые слова: устойчивое предпринимательство, индустрия гостеприимства, движущие силы и барьеры, зеленая экономика, устойчивость гостиничного бизнеса, поэтапная трансформация, использование смешанных методов.

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