

In Spain, eco-friendly hotels are more profitable

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Hotels in Spain that have sustainability certification are more profitable than those in that country that don't, according to a new study from Cornell University's Center for Hospitality Research (CHR).

The study found that of the more than 2,000 Spanish hotels surveyed, those that had earned the international environmental standard ISO 14001 recorded stronger sales and [earnings](#) than those that had not. Moreover, certified hotels in city and beach locations had considerably stronger performance. The work has important implications, given that Spain is the world's second most popular tourist destination after France, the authors said.

"Our findings challenge the often-heard contention that adopting [sustainability](#) programs will diminish hotels' performance. Instead, these data show the reverse to the case," said co-author Rohit Verma, professor at Cornell's School of [Hotel Administration](#) and CHR's executive director.

The study was co-authored by María-del-Val Segarra-Oña and Ángel Peiró-Signes, CHR visiting researchers from Polytechnic University of Valencia in Spain.

Tourism is a resource-intensive industry that leaves a big footprint on the environment, the researchers noted. However the hotel industry is still seeking consensus on how sustainability can be measured and managed.

One standard that provides both measurement and policies for sustainability management is ISO 14001, which is being adopted by a growing number of hotels, although it is less common in the United States than in Europe, the researchers said.

For the study, the authors surveyed 2,082 hotels in Spain that had earned three stars or higher. They analyzed the hotels' ISO certification status, performance indicators such as net sales, and potential moderating factors such as company size and the market segment in which the hotel operates.

One implication of the research is that implementing ISO 14001 is worthwhile for hotels -- something that most hoteliers had previously sensed in an informal way, the authors said. "These data explain why the number of certified hotels is increasing and also why some of the most important hotels are adopting ISO 14001 certification in all their establishments, especially in Europe," Verma said.

The report is available at no charge [online](#).

Provided by Cornell University

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