



## Article Title

### **Implementing Environmental Management Systems in Small- and Medium-Sized Hotels: Obstacles [Summary]**

## Citation

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## Abstract

Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make up the vast majority of businesses in Hong Kong. However, a review of the literature about environmental management and environmental management systems (EMSs) reveals that very few studies have examined EMS implementation in small- and medium-sized hotels (SMHs). This study aimed to identify the barriers to the adoption and implementation of a formal EMS by SMHs in Hong Kong. Exploratory factor analysis indicated that nine factors can hinder the adoption of such a system by SMHs, five of which are unique to these hotels. In descending order, they are (a) lack of a sense of urgency, (b) ambiguity of EMS standards, (c) lack of qualified verifiers/consultants, (d) conflicting guidance, and (e) inconsistent support. The findings offer some explanation for the limited action taken by these hotels to improve their environmental performance. The policy implications for hotel managers who are committed to implementing an EMS are also discussed.

## Summary:

EMSs are well recognized in the hotel industry worldwide, but for various reasons, many hotels especially SMHs are unwilling to adopt these systems. As there have been few studies of the barriers to EMS implementation in the hotel industry, this study investigated those factors that hinder the adoption and implementation of an EMS in SMHs.

The survey results showed that the level of environmental awareness of SMHs in Hong Kong was low. More than 60% of the SMHs surveyed had minimal understanding of an EMS such as one based on ISO 14001, and most did not plan to

implement an EMS in the near future. This study also identified nine barriers that can hinder the adoption of an EMS by an SMH. In descending order, they are

- (a) implementation and maintenance costs,
- (b) lack of knowledge and skills,
- (c) lack of a sense of urgency,
- (d) ambiguity of EMS standards,
- (e) lack of qualified verifiers/consultants,
- (f) lack of motivation and professional advice,
- (g) conflicting guidance,
- (h) outcome uncertainty, and
- (i) inconsistent support.

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