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The Role of Hotels in the Global Tourism Industry

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Annotasion: The tourism industry has emerged as a vital component of the global economy, contributing $9.5 trillion to GDP in 2023 and employing over 330 million people worldwide. Hotels play a crucial role by providing essential services, supporting local economies, and enhancing the tourist experience through innovative practices and sustainable strategies. Moreover, the integration of digital technologies and ESG initiatives in the hospitality sector is driving growth and promoting responsible tourism.

Key words: GDP, World Tourism Organization, hospitality and tourism sector, ESG strategy, energy conservation, smart hospitality, tour operators.

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The tourism industry in the 21st century has become one of the fastest-growing and most significant sectors of the global economy. Within this system, hotel enterprises play a key role, forming not only the accommodation base but also ensuring economic, social, and cultural interaction at the global level. In 2023, the total contribution of the tourism sector to global GDP amounted to $9.5 trillion, which is equivalent to 9.1% of the total volume.

According to the World Tourism Organization, more than 1.3 billion people make international tourist trips annually, and about 67% of them choose official hotels as the main form of accommodation. Hotels provide the basic elements of a tourism product: comfortable accommodation, security, access to infrastructure, logistical support.

They also stimulate the development of related industries - restaurant business, transport, trade, entertainment services - which creates a multiplier economic effect, especially in developing countries.

According to WTTC calculations, in 2023, the hospitality and tourism sector provided employment for more than 330 million people worldwide. Of these, a significant portion is directly connected to hotels - including reception staff, housekeeping services, technical support, cooks, managers, and security personnel. In countries with well-developed tourism, the share of hotels in regional GDP can reach 15-20%.

Beyond direct revenue, hotels generate indirect economic benefits through support for small businesses, employment in related industries, and tax contributions. For example, as part of Marriott's ESG strategy, $100 million was invested in sustainable construction, energy conservation, and social responsibility programs.

The hotel often becomes a decisive factor in choosing a destination. In particular, a high hotel rating and positive reviews directly influence the booking decision. Moreover, the hotel itself can serve as a tourist attraction - for example, the ice hotel in Sweden or underwater hotels in the Maldives.

A UNWTO study shows that over 40% of tourists in the "premium" segment view the hotel as part of a unique experience, rather than just a place to stay overnight.

Hotels serve as spaces for intercultural dialogue. This is especially evident in international chains that practice the "glocality" strategy - global quality with local adaptation. For example, the Fairmont chain adapts its menu, design, and staff behavior according to the country of location.

Elements of the intercultural role:

- multilingual service;
- tolerance for religious and cultural differences;
- organization of cultural events and culinary programs;
- training staff in intercultural competence.

Hotels are actively implementing digital technologies. According to Statista (2023), the "smart hospitality" market reached $13.4 billion in 2023 and is projected to grow to $49.5 billion by 2030. More than 70% of international hotel chains use PMS, CRM, and RMS to automate processes, analyze data, and manage customer experience.

Such technologies allow:

- implementation of dynamic pricing;
- introduction of contactless check-in/check-out;
- creation of personalized AI-based offers.

According to the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance (2023), a hotel's average carbon footprint is 6.9 kg of CO2e per night. The implementation of Green Globe and LEED standard certifications allows for its reduction to 4.2 kg of CO2e, demonstrating the effectiveness of sustainable solutions.

Marriott's programs have enabled a 33% reduction in water consumption and a transition to a zero-waste food concept in 85% of its properties.

Many countries implement strategies for developing hotel infrastructure as part of their national tourism policy. For instance, Uzbekistan is developing a tourism development strategy until 2040, which aims to "increase the number of foreign tourists to 20 million and domestic tourists to 30 million. It also plans to increase the share of tourism in the country's GDP to 7%. To achieve these goals, comprehensive measures are envisaged: analysis of tourist flows, launch of a global marketing strategy with audience segmentation, and development of new promising tourist routes and destinations.

Special attention will be paid to creating investment packages for infrastructure development in key tourist zones. An important step will be the opening of a Reformatics representative office in Tashkent, where company experts will collaborate with tourism industry representatives, entrepreneurs, tour operators, investors, and government agencies."

Modern international hotels are not just accommodation facilities, but multifunctional platforms that influence the development of the economy, culture, technology, and sustainability. Their role in the tourism system is multifaceted: from supporting global mobility to shaping countries' international image. Understanding these processes is important for both future specialists and strategists in tourism and hotel management.

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