

## **Assessing Travel Agencies' Social Responsibility Performance in Luxor**

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### **Abstract**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the travel agencies reflects a complex and multifaceted concept. CSR relates to travel agencies' commitment to achieve sustainable development not just in the environment dimension but also in social and economic terms. The World Business Council for SD believes that human rights, employee rights, environmental protection, community engagement, supplier relationships, and stakeholder rights are the driving force behind CSR. The purpose of this paper is assessing travel agencies' social responsibility performance in Luxor and exploring the challenges which face the application of their social responsibility in Luxor by travel agencies. To achieve the aims of the study a quantitative approach based on a questionnaire was developed and directed to a sample of executives and employees of travel agencies in Luxor city. The questionnaire was handled to 142 Travel agencies in Luxor, Where was distributed one questionnaire within each company. Out of this number 120 forms were available for analysis (representing 84.5% response rate). The results showed the most obstacles that influence of adopting CSR are a lack of financial resources in the company and lack of awareness among some managers of travel agencies and their employees regarding the concept of social responsibility.

**Key words:** Social responsibility, Travel Agency, Luxor

## **Introduction**

Over the years and across the globe, there has been an increasing discussion on Corporate Social Responsibility policies in the business sector. Since after Bowen in the fifties in his book "Corporate Responsibility of the Businessman" promoted the idea that companies should take social obligations in the community where they are working. Regardless of those different views on the matter, quite an increasing number of companies have been engaging and promoting the idea of being socially responsible (Hlaing, 2016).

Corporate social responsibility is now commonly accepted and endorsed by corporations, governments, non-governmental organizations, and consumers. CSR has been stated as "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis".

The allure of CSR is that it intends to fulfill a firm's commitment to its consumers, employees, community, and environment (Baniya et al. 2019).

Today, travel agencies became responsible for the destinations where they operate and for the local communities; a responsibility that extends beyond the economic and legal obligations and that is based on creating benefits for both the local community (Yehia, 2016).

The wider aim of social responsibility is to create higher standards of living while preserving the profitability of the corporation. Some examples of CSR activities are donating or charity to the community, emergency response programs, and supporting local businesses, training for staff, taking care of the staff's health and well-being, employing staff with disability, rewarding staff and supporting the employee in community activities (Hlaing, 2016).

## **Research Problem**

There are little and insufficient researches conducted to evaluate the social responsibility performance for travel agencies and the challenges that face them when applying social responsibility.

## **Research objectives**

1. Identifying the effects of travel agency activities on the environment and local community.
2. Highlighting the importance of adopting social responsibility practices by travel agencies in Luxor.

## **Research Questions**

1. To what extent travel agencies in Luxor adopt Corporate Social

Responsibility within the companies?

2. To what extent travel agencies in Luxor adopt Corporate Social Responsibility outside the companies?

3. What are the challenges that face travel agencies in implementing CSR in Luxor?

## **Literature Review**

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

The first definition of Corporate Social Responsibility dates back to the fifties in the publication by Howard R. Bowen of his book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*. "It refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies to follow those lines of action or, to make those decisions which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (Bowen, 1953). Social responsibility can be defined as the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable development, working with employees, their families and the local communities (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007).

CSR is known as the activities making companies good citizens who contribute to society's welfare beyond their own self-interests. It is also considered as a philosophy and policy which benefits the economy, society and environment based on the idea that companies should be responsible for more than simply making a profit and be aware of social values and take part in improving the social environment on top of its economic functions" (Kamal et al., 2016, p72).

### **Corporate Social Responsibility and Tourism Sustainable Development**

Corporate social responsibility arises from several issues: such as the businesses' need to gain and retain consumer trust and the awareness that companies should take their responsibility for the impacts their activities cause on the environment and society (Manente et al., 2014).

The impacts that many travel agencies have on the environment and the society are similar to the impacts that corporations have within other industry sectors. The difference between the tourism industry and other sectors are that tourism consumption occurs within the host community and the other sectors products are constructed in one place and are consumed somewhere else (Garriga and Mele, 2004).

Nevertheless, it can be argued that the concepts underlying sustainable development and CSR are practices that can be related to each other. This is evident when looking at CSR principles within an ethical framework in which the focus of a corporation revolves around the ethical relationship that exists between society and business (Garriga and Mele, 2004).

Corporate social responsibility and sustainability are considered synonyms, by some. While CSR is mostly linked to social issues, Sustainability is often related to environmental issues Business environments cannot operate in isolation from the rest of society. However, the definition of CSR does not focus only on social matters but also on economic and environmental ones (Ning, 2016).

### **Travel agencies and Sustainability**

Travel agencies play a significant role in the sustainability of the tourism sector, acting as information brokers between tourists and tourist destinations, and their perceptions, and attitudes about environment and destinations play important role in shaping their daily practices (Erdogan, 2012).

Tourism and the environment are in an interdependent relationship due to the sustainability of tourism, the environment should be protected by all stakeholders of the tourism industry. Therefore, sustainable tourism, especially the ecotourism concept, has become famous in recent decades. As actors in the tourism industry, travel agencies who have the power to shape touristic demand should not only conserve the natural, social, cultural and historical environment. But also should guide tourists and employees toward sustainable and responsible tourism (Atay et al, 2016).

Travel agencies are the key to achieving more sustainability. Travel agencies start to recognize their responsibility for the negative impacts of tourism caused by tourists, and take a more proactive attitude and start to develop environmental policies and plans. Travel agencies' commitment to sustainable tourism concept is one of their business practices by working together through common activities to promote and disseminate methods and practices compatible with sustainable development (Noor and Wibisono, 2016).

### **Obstacles of Corporate Social Responsibility**

- The lack of financial means is considered the first obstacle, which has been identified in terms of a lack of sufficient financial resources for CSR implementation, where is the corporate social responsibility is too expensive in overall (Arevalo and Aravind, 2011).
- Lack of awareness of development opportunities involves the lack of awareness of business benefits and the fact that travel agencies consider implementing CSR a low priority due to the low return on investment rate (Arevalo and Aravind, 2011).
- Lack of time, where that CSR implementation is too time-consuming, and that there are conflicting time pressures due to daily operational demands

that result in a lack of integration of CSR implementation (Macgregor and Fontrodona, 2008).

### **Luxor Governorate**

Luxor is in Upper Egypt and the capital of Luxor Governorate with an area of approximately 2959.6 square kilometers. Luxor area constitutes a primary center of Ancient Egyptian Culture where the culture of ancient Egypt has been imprinted along the Nile Valley by mean of the famous pharaonic monuments standing in a good (Ahmed et al, 2014).

### **Methodology**

The main purpose of the field study is to Assessing Travel Agencies' Social Responsibility Performance in Luxor Governorate. Furthermore, the study tried to explore obstacles and challenges may face the implementation of social responsibility in travel agencies in Luxor Governorate. To achieve the aims of the study quantitative approach was adopted. This approach based on designing questionnaire form directed to a sample of responsables for travel agencies in Luxor Governorate. The field study was applied in the Luxor Governorate. Where this site is one of the important tourist destinations because is one of Egypt's most historic cities also it contains much historical attraction that makes it one of the large cultural famous centers in the world.

The questionnaire was designed after determining the required data according to the literature.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts were used as a data collection tool; the first part aimed at primary data, the second part aimed to assess applied elements that represent the main social responsibility which is (customers - employees - Community - environment). In the Third part, participants were asked to identify Barriers to adopting corporate social responsibility, and in the fourth - part about the company's plan towards social responsibility.

### **The sample of the research and collecting data**

The questionnaire was handled to 142 Travel agencies in Luxor city. Out of this number 122 forms were available for analysis (representing 85.9 % response rate). Where was distributed one questionnaire within each company and it relied on the answer of the respondent (Executive's or Employees) is the correct answer. These questionnaire forms were distributed during November and December 2019.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher was turned to the task of analyzing the data after collected them. Data analysis involves a variety of closely related operations, such as

defining categories, applying such categories to raw data by coding, tabulating, and then drawing statistical inferences.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Data Validity and Reliability**

#### **Validity**

The research validity refers to the accuracy of the way that the research methodology applied, will be able to measure exactly what is supposed to be measured in the research. The researcher tried to improve the degree of validity of the research by avoiding data collection and handling distortions through a questionnaire with clear and precise questions so that the respondents would not give irrelevant answers as a result of having unclear questions.

The validity tool used in the study was tested by presenting it to a group of arbitrators with expertise in the subject of the study, and the appropriate adjustments were made in the light of the observations they made.

#### **Reliability**

In order to examine the reliability of all scales in this study, the researcher used SPSS Statistics 22 software to do the reliability test. Cronbach's Alpha is the most commonly used statistic to measure the internal consistency reliability of a scale. The value is between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating no internal consistency and 1 perfect internal consistency reliability. While the value above 0.7 means acceptable, while the value above 0.8 means preferable (Pallant, 2016).

The reliability of the tool was measured by extracting the alpha coefficient Cronbach's coefficient where the value of all study variables was (92.3%), which means the reliability and validity of the study sample.

The Cronbach's Alpha of all scales in Table (1) ranged from (0.717) to (0.805), and for the total of the four questionnaire clauses was (0.853), this indicate an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha value for each field, where Cronbach's Alpha value was more than (0.7).

**Table (1): Cronbach's Alpha Value**

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Validity Coefficient *
1- Customer	8	0.717	0.846
2- Employees	8	0.703	0.838
3- Community	9	0.775	0.880
4- Environment	9	0.805	0.897
<b>Total</b>	34	0.853	0.923

\* Validity coefficient =  $\sqrt{\text{Reliability coefficient}}$

### Analyzing the Result of the Questionnaire

The following part explains the results concerning assessing the travel agencies' performance of their social responsibility in Luxor, after analyzing the questionnaire conducted with responsible of travel agencies in the Luxor Governorate.

#### 1- Sample Characteristics

The sample of the survey covered executives and employees of travel agencies.

#### 2. Descriptive analysis of assessing the travel agencies' performance of their social responsibility in Luxor.

In this section, the researcher relied mainly on the descriptive analysis to get the means and the standard deviations for the study constructs along with their items. The items were measured using a Likert-scale as follows.

### First Part: Socio-demographic data of Respondents

The first part of the questionnaire focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, the questions included (Qualification, Career level, Experience).

The first part of the questionnaire focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, the questions included (Qualification, Career level, Experience). As indicated in Table 3, most of the respondents (82%) have taken bachelor's degrees, while about (14%) of the respondents have taken Master's/Phd degrees. There are nearly (4%) of them have only a high school degrees. Almost (39%) of respondents were employees, closely followed by (34%) were the managers and less percentage (27%) were supervisors.

With regard to work experience in the travel agencies, most of the respondents (41.0%) have less than 10 years of experience, while (38%) of

employees have experience between 10 and 20 years and less percentage of the sample (20%) have more than 20 years of experience.

**Table (2) Descriptive Socio-demographic of Respondents**

Descriptive Features		Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Qualification</b>			
	High school	5	4.1
	Bachelor degree	100	82.0
	Master degree	17	13.9
<b>Career level</b>			
	Manager	42	34.5
	Supervisor	33	27.0
	employee	47	38.5
<b>Experience</b>			
	Less than 10 years	50	41.0
	From 10: 20 years	46	37.7
	more than 20	26	21.3

\* The total number is 122

**Second part: Data related to the questionnaire elements represent the hubs of social responsibility this part is divided into four sections: (customers, employees, community, and environment).**

With regard to customers: the mean score for the dimension of social responsibility for customers ranged from 4.77 to 4.15 (Table 3). The results showed that the highest mean score was the item "Respecting tourists during a visit the tourist site till leaving Luxor" with a mean of= 4.77. Followed by the item that indicates "providing facilities and organizing cooperation with security departments, services and protecting tourists" with a mean of=4.66. While the item of "the company gives offers to the company's permanent customers" were less common from items with a mean of= 4.15. The total mean was 4.46 to social responsibility for customers, which indicates a very high level of satisfaction from the employees' point of view compared to social responsibility toward employees, community, and environmental. This indicates the extent of customer interest.



**Table (3) Corporate Social Responsibility of the Travel Agency for Customers**

Variables	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
<b>1. Customers</b>								
The company carries out honest advertising for the company's services	4.1	4.1	9.8	27.0	54.9	4.25	1.063	6
The company responds to customer complaints as soon as possible	1.6	0	3.3	25.4	69.7	4.61	.709	3
The company uses a variety of communication channels that facilitate the process of disseminating information (websites, advertisements, publications).	1.6	0	9.0	30.3	59.0	4.45	.794	4

**Continued Table (3) Social responsibility for Customers**

Variables	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
<b>1. Customers</b>								
The company gives offers to the company's permanent customers	4.9	.8	13.1	36.9	44.3	4.15	1.018	7
The company provides its customers with after sales services by recognizing the	1.6	0	8.2	40.2	50.	4.37	.774	5
Providing facilities and organizing cooperation with security departments, services and protecting tourists	1.6	0	3.3	21.3	73.8	4.66	.701	2
Respecting tourists during a visit the tourist site till leaving Luxor	1.6	0	.8	14.8	82.8	4.77	.627	1
<b>Total mean</b>						<b>4.46</b>		

With regard to employees: Table 4 examination the responses of the study sample of the social responsibility for employees. Where the scores ranged between 3.96- 2.80.

The results indicated the highest mean of = 3.96 on the item "The company provides training programs for workers to develop their skills and raise their efficiency".

These results are consistent with Kamal and El Sherbeny (2015) study on the Egyptian airline company as the declared that the companies provide enough training programs for employees to develop their skills. Followed by item "company establishes good health care systems for its employees" with a mean 3.87.

Whereas the last rank was "The Company offers free trips to employees and their families" with a mean of=2.80 compared with the total mean. These results are consistent with Kamal and El Sherbeny (2015) study on the Egyptian airline company where an item came "The Company offers free trips to employees and their families" in the last rank. The total mean of social responsibility for employees was 3.63 that are considered good compared with the community and environment.

**Table (4) Corporate Social Responsibility of the Travel Agency for Employees**

Variables	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
<b>2. Employees</b>								
The company provides training programs for workers to develop their skills and raise their	5.7	5.7	16.4	31.1	41.0	3.96	1.153	1
The wages are provided by the company to the employees to commensurate with the living conditions	3.3	5.7	33.6	34.4	23.0	3.68	0.998	5
Establishing systems for incentives and rewards on all	5.7	8.2	19.7	34.4	32.0	3.7	1.152	3
The company establishes good health care systems for its	0	8.2	23.8	41.0	27.0	3.8	0.909	2
The company provides the necessary facilities for its employees who wish to complete	2.5	19.7	14.8	31.1	32.0	3.70	1.183	4
The company offers free trips to employees and their families	14.8	26.2	35.2	11.5	12.3	2.80	1.197	7
The company makes financial compensation in the event of work accidents	8.2	11.5	18.0	32.0	30.3	3.65	1.253	6
<b>Total mean</b>						<b>3.63</b>		

With regard to the community: Table 5 displays the results of the question "Corporate Social Responsibility for community" Findings revealed that the item "It respects customs, traditions and observes ethical aspects during work" in the first rank with a mean of=4.43. Followed by the item "The company encourages local handicrafts to support and generate additional income for the local population" with a mean of=3.46.

While the item of "the company contributes to developed slums", that came in the last rank with a mean= 2.57. The total mean of social responsibility for the community was 3.20, this rate is considered acceptable.

**Table (5) Corporate Social Responsibility of the Travel Agency for Community**

Variables	SD%	D%	N%	A%	SA%	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
<b>3. Community</b>								
The company allocates part of its annual profits to support the local community	15.6	22.1	23.0	34.4	4.9	2.91	1.178	6
The company provides opportunities to train students of colleges, tourism institutes and hotels in the	7.4	19.7	27.9	27.9	17.2	3.28	1.180	3
The company contributes to	18.0	32.8	27.9	17.2	4.1	2.57	1.098	8
The company contributes for charitable projects and	17.2	18.0	20.5	29.5	14.8	3.07	1.328	4
The company participates in employment forums in cooperation with colleges and	13.9	24.6	26.2	27.0	8.2	2.91	1.185	7
The company offers a special program for people with special needs	15.66	24.6	22.1	18.9	18.9	3.01	1.351	5

**Continued Table (5) Social responsibility for Community**

The company encourages local handicrafts to support and generate additional income for	9.0	18.9	14.8	32.0	25.4	3.46	1.299	2
It respects customs , traditions and observes ethical aspects during work	3.3	3.3	4.9	24.6	63.9	4.43	0.970	1
<b>Total mean</b>						<b>3.20</b>		

With regard to the environment: when the respondents were asked about their corporate social responsibility for the environment, the results indicated in Table (6) more than half of the sample they are educating the tourists not to encroach on the archeological sites with a mean 4.39. While the item of "The company shall abide by the specific capacity of the tourist attraction" came in the second rank with a mean of= 4.27.

As shown in Table (6), "introductory seminars to increase the environmental awareness of tourists" were the least common activities percentage 27.1%, with a mean 2.77.

The total mean of corporate social responsibility for the environment was 3.50; this average is considered good compared with the general average for the community.

**Table (6) Corporate Social Responsibility of the Travel Agency for Environment**

Variables	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA%	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
<b>4. Environment</b>								
The company provides introductory seminars to increase environmental	13.1	32.0	27.9	18.9	8.2	2.77	1.148	8
The company contributes to improve the cultural appearance , cleaning the	8.2	22.1	9.0	38.5	22.1	3.44	1.280	4
The company contributes to the solution of	13.9	32.0	20.5	22.1	11.5	2.85	1.244	7
Defining the specific role for the preservation of	7.4	24.6	23.0	28.7	16.4	3.22	1.203	6
Maintenance and development of resources	6.6	15.6	29.5	31.1	17.2	3.37	1.137	5
Preserving biological diversity inside the	4.1	9.8	23.0	32.8	30.3	3.75	1.116	3
Educate the tourists not to encroach on the archeological sites	4.9	4.1	1.6	25.9	63.9	4.39	1.057	1
The company shall abide by the specific capacity of the tourist attraction	4.9	4.9	4.9	28.7	56.6	4.27	1.091	2
<b>Total mean</b>						<b>3.50</b>		

**Third part: Barriers to adopting corporate social responsibility**

In this third section, respondents were asked to identify factors that act as barriers to furthering their firm's CSR activities. From analyzed Table 7, it becomes clear that the lack of financial resources (61.5%) is the main barrier to the implementation of CSR in travel agencies, and followed lack of awareness (54.1%) holds the second position, like a barrier that most affect CSR engagement. The lack of time was the least influential barrier their engagement in CSR. These results came in agreement with Kamal et al., (2016), which stated that, the two most fundamental obstacles that most of the SMEs face a lack of support and lack of awareness.

**Table (7) Barriers to Adopting CSR**

Variable	Frequency			
	yes	%	No	%
Lack of awareness among some managers of tourism companies and their employees regarding the concept of social responsibility	66	54.1	56	45.9
Lack of sufficient financial resources in the company to implement social responsibility programs	75	61.5	47	38.5
Lack of sufficient time to implement social responsibility programs	59	48.4	63	51.6

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

After discussing the findings of the research and answering the questions, the conclusion was extracted and several recommendations were suggested.

Travel agencies play a critical role in guiding the responsible behaviors of tourists. Thus, their beliefs and attitudes regarding CSR can lead to significant impacts on both the destination and the tourist. The findings from this study revealed that travel agents hold mostly positive attitudes toward social responsibility.

1. There is a major deal of interest from travel agencies to customers during visits, and offer facilities that necessary for them until their departure.
2. Travel agencies adopting customer wishes, cooperate with security services to protect them, and resolve their problems.
3. Travel agencies are responding to customer complaints as soon as possible.
4. There is a statistically significant impact on employees where companies providing training programs for employees to develop their skills and raise their efficiency.

5. Travel agencies are concerned with the social and ethical aspects of the host community, where they respect the customs and traditions of the community and encourage handicrafts of generating income for the community.

6. The survey findings suggest that customers-related CSR practices were the most common practice and adopting.

### **Recommendations**

A questionnaire directed to a sample of travel agencies was adopting and aims to assess travel agencies' social responsibility performance and obstacles which they are faced with. Ideas to develop their performance were also presented through the answers. According to the results obtained from the theoretical framework of the study as well as the results achieved that obtained from the statistical analysis of the data. Finally, the following recommendations were made:-

#### **1. Recommendations for travel agencies**

1. Improving relationship with customers and differentiate permanent customers to maintain their loyalty.
2. Offering products high-quality for a customer and honest promotion of corporate services.
3. Providing enough safety and security requirements for employees during work.
4. Taking care of the community in which they operate by providing employment opportunities, and increasing attention to the disabled through the provision of appropriate services, material support, and voluntary contributions.
5. Providing training opportunities for students of colleges, tourism institutes, hotels, and graduates to help them to find employment opportunities in the future.

#### **2. Recommendations Directed to the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism**

1. To corporate social responsibility becomes a dominant practice, it must be developed a clear and common plan where in several stakeholders such as the government, (local) tourism companies, and local communities work together and combine all elements of the institutionalization web.
2. Providing training programs for executives and employees of travel agencies under the Ministry of Tourism auspices.
3. Determining appropriate salaries for travel agencies employees under the

required law.

4. Establishing a labor union for the employees of tour operators companies and travel agencies.

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## الملخص باللغة العربية

يهدف هذا البحث الي تقييم أداء وكالات السفر لمسؤوليتها الاجتماعية في الاقصر ومعرفة التحديات والمعوقات التي تواجه تطبيق المسؤولية الاجتماعية داخل وكالات السفر. ولتحقيق ذلك استخدم الباحث المنهج الكمي، بأستخدام أداة الاستبيان. وتوصل الباحث الي العديد من النتائج اهمها ان قلة الموارد المالية وقلة الوعي لدي بعض المسؤولين في وكالات السفر هي اكثر المعوقات التي تؤثر علي تبني المسؤولية الاجتماعية، واخيرا اوصي الباحث قيام وزارة السياحة باعداد دورات تدريبية بأهمية تبني المسؤولية الاجتماعية.