

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HOTEL SAFETY WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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The article reveals the theoretical grounds for the concept of “safety” with regard to the hotel industry. Based on the analysis of existing definitions we determined the theoretical content of the concept and offered our generalized interpretation of the “hotel safety” category. We provide original interpretation of the security concept in the context of hotel environment, both external and internal dimensions being encompassed. The focal points include buildings, property, people, and resources. Primary categories comprise physical security, personnel safety (both employees and guests), as well as system security. Besides, we’ve analyzed the levelness of safety system in the accommodation industry as well as systematized types of safety according to the three main blocks, such as physical safety, safety of people, and system security. We’ve determined that security serves, firstly, the basis for ensuring the sustainable development of hotel establishments, due to its fundamental underpinning; and, secondly, a fundamental indicator of investment feasibility.

Keywords: hotel safety, hotel safety blocks (physical safety, safety of people, system security), sustainable development

Introduction

The concept of safety implies ensuring the protection of vital areas of the company’s activity. If we are talking about a hotel, then the owner is responsible not only for the interests of the company, but first and foremost – for the guests of this establishment. Recently Ukraine has faced a number of challenges that provoke appearance of new forms and dimensions of safety. In addition to traditional and most common fire and property safety requirements in hotels, sanitary safety (in the context of environmental safety due to the spread of COVID-19), as well as safety from military actions (in the last year) have evolved. For each type of hotel, safety should have an effective tool that will ensure its compliance in each format. Moreover, to go beyond, it should also ensure sustainable development. Systematic compliance with all forms of hotel safety is one of the most important factors that ensures its competitiveness. The issue of safety has become particularly acute in Ukraine over the past year. The aspects of sustainable development in the hospitality sector are equally important, but so far, in-depth research has been conducted on security and sustainable development in a scattered manner.

Many Ukrainian researchers have been focusing on individual manifestations of hotel safety and security for a long time. However, they have situational approach limited only to a specific format. Some scientists characterize electrical, fire, and occupational types of safety (Buzhanska, 2013), others deal with economic security (Vasylchak et al., 2017), as well as analyze international principles and approaches to assessing the compliance of hotels with quality and safety criteria (Khimicheva et al., 2017). At the same time, theoretical foundations of the essence, levels and types of hotel safety have not been yet investigated comprehensively.

Some definite articles are focused on separate facets of hotel safety, such as food (Khan, Daraz and Bojnec, 2023), energy (Zhang, Yang, Ding and Miao, 2023) or social (Kutsenko and Udovichenko, 2010) modes in the context of ensuring sustainable development.

A few researchers focused on implementing the sustainable development concept within the realm of hotel management. Thus (Khovrak, 2020) examines the aspects of managing sustainable development in hotel establishments through the lens of statistical and econometric analysis. The sustainable economic development of hotels is analyzed (Yudina, 2022),

a comprehensive approach to sustainable development in the hospitality industry is explored (Autin, 2020).

But there are no complex investigations touching upon the interconnection of hotel safety and sustainable economic development at the moment.

The purpose of this study is a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical grounds for hotel safety, determining its purpose, directions of implementation, levels, types, and the determination of the role of security within the framework of sustainable development.

Material and methods

The core of the sustainable development concept is to ensure meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means the development that would not deplete natural resources and lead to environmental degradation. Sustainable development and hotel safety are interconnected, so the sustainable development of the hotel contributes to its security, as well as hotel security is a necessary condition for its sustainable development.

Sustainable development of the hotel contributes to its safety, especially in its three main dimensions – environmental, social, and economic.

Sustainable hotel practices, such as reducing energy and water consumption, and reducing environmental pollution, contribute to the environmental safety of the hotel; fair working conditions and improving the quality of life of the personnel contribute to the social security of the hotel; the economic security of the hotel is ensured by increasing the efficiency of the resource use and reducing costs. It all results in minimizing the risk of natural disasters such as floods, fires, etc.; the risk of social disorders and conflicts; the risk of financial troubles which can lead to bankruptcy and hotel closure.

The methodological basis of the study is laid by the general scientific and special cognitive methods: comparison, generalization and systematization – for characterizing the “hotel safety” concept; induction and deduction – for determining levels and types of hotel safety; tabular and graphical methods – for visual representation of research results. The information base of the study is comprised of scientific works by domestic and foreign scholars, dedicated to the issues of hotel business development; Internet resources, etc.

Results and discussion

Communications Specialist Ltd. conducted an independent global research with senior executives at luxury high-end hotel chains across Asia, Africa, Europe, the US, and South America with total annual revenues of \$4 billion. The overwhelming message from this research is that increased investment in service and security technology to ensure even higher levels of efficiency and customer service is vital.

Six out of ten (60%) executives predict expenditures for security to increase by over 30% between now and 2026.

Furthermore, any investments, including those aimed at ensuring sustainable development aspects, require security guarantees in all their forms.

The “hotel safety” concept is multifaceted. Despite its seemingly obvious meaning at first glance, this category is still much broader and deeper than it is generally accepted.

This statement is confirmed by analyzing different sources of scientific research which tackle upon the interpretation of the category mentioned. Its main results are summarized in Table 1.

The analysis presented in the table above allows us to draw the conclusion that hotel safety is a comprehensive concept. This view is shared by (Koliesnyk and Pohasii, 2016) who regard the safety that ensures operating and sustainable development, as well as define a certain protocol of actions in emergency situations. A popular interpretation of safety is made from the perspective of preventing risks and protecting against the influence of possible threats (Perrow, 2008; Singh, 2014). Defining the “hotel safety” concept (Ramaraj, 2013) focuses on its individual blocks, such as building safety, territory safety, or guest safety.

We share the interpretation of the “hotel safety” concept presented by the authors mentioned, and within the framework of this study, we suggest understanding hotel safety as a comprehensive approach to preventing risks, ensuring stable operating, and resisting danger in all areas existing in a hotel.

Figure 1 represents a generalized scheme for understanding the essence of the “hotel safety” concept, its levels, objects, and types.

As we can see in the scheme presented in Figure 1, the main purpose of ensuring hotel safety is ensuring stable operating of an establishment as well as guest and personnel safety. We distinguish two levels: external and internal, the latter refers to everything related to the internal environment

Table 1 Theoretical approaches to interpreting the essence of the “hotel safety” concept

Author	Definition
Perrow (2008)	in the hotel context, hotel safety means “protecting employees and customers within the hotel from the risk of possible injury or death”, and at the same time the process of ensuring hotel safety goes beyond protecting personnel and guests but also includes preserving guest property as well as hotel property
Singh (2014)	the development of safety measures to ensure the safety of the hotel complex; their implementation mechanism is carried out taking into account the threats that the object as a whole may face
Paltner (2020)	hotel safety is the management of safety in hotels, accommodations, entertainment venues, as well as in travel industry
Ramaraj (2013)	hotel safety involves the overall safety of the building and the hotel site, as well as its guests, staff, and visitors
Malyuk, Varipaev and Varipaeva (2015)	the “hotel safety” concept presupposes not only protection from criminal attacks but also taking measures to ensure protection from fire, explosion, and other emergencies
Koliesnyk and Pohasii (2016)	a comprehensive approach to ensuring hotel safety at its core considers the functional purpose of the operated object, as well as the development of an algorithm for possible emergencies and measures to prevent them. Thus, effectiveness of the developed security system depends on the choice of modern technical means and their maintenance
Ribun (2013)	the safety of hotels ensures their operating stability, permanent development and the ability to face threats and obstacles in achieving business goals, as well as the efficiency of economic activity and personal safety of staff and customers

Source: compiled by the author using the specified sources

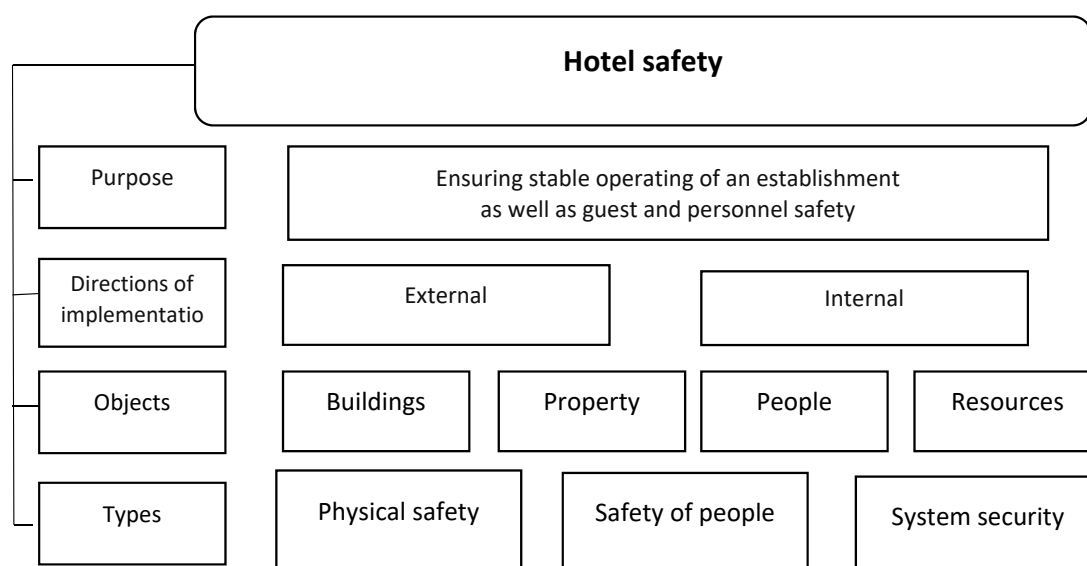


Figure 1 A generalized scheme for understanding the essence of the “hotel safety” concept

Source: compiled by the author herself

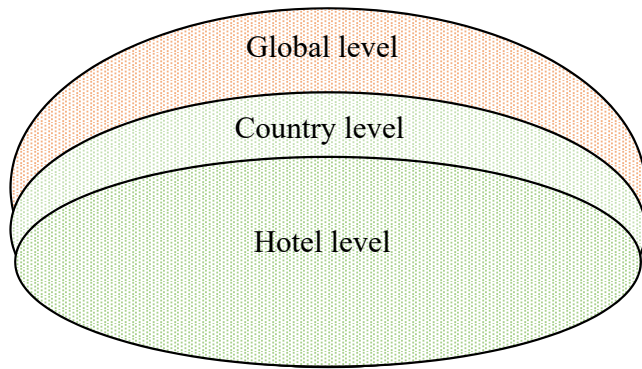


Figure 2 Level structure of system security in the accommodation industry

Source: compiled by the author based on (Ramzina, 2019)

and territorial boundaries of a hotel, and the former refers to the external environment and stakeholders that have an impact on operating of a hotel enterprise and may pose or form risks.

Interpreting the “hotel safety” concept, we consider the main objects such as buildings, property, people (guests and personnel), as well as other resources (financial, information, material, etc.). We classify the main types of safety in general into three blocks: physical safety, personnel safety, and system security.

Besides, in the system of interpreting the “hotel safety” concept we consider the levels of its formation and provision. We share the opinion of (Ramzina, 2019) regarding the three levels of system security in the accommodation industry (Figure 2).

At the global level, we mean safety, reliability, and quality of transport, hotels, and catering services; at the country level – increasing safety, guarantees, and quality of travel services, as well as products, and personnel of travel industry; the hotel level covers all types of safety, reliability and quality of guest comfort.

In the basic characteristics of the hotel safety concept, it is important to analyze the threats that arise in the activities of specialized enterprises. It

is the analysis of existing threats that lays the basis for distinguishing types of hotel safety. Such scientists as (Munin et al., 2015) distinguish three types of threats: physical, financial, and informational. Others identify 8 main groups of threats in the activities of hotel and restaurant business enterprises, among which: personnel, information support, technologies, finance, logistics, physical safety of guests, and regulatory framework (Havlovskaya and Rudnichenko, 2014). Researchers such as Leontyeva and Pochepynets (2012) identify two large groups of risks: external and internal, as well as characterize a group of risks, the consequences of which affect people and production systems; visible and invisible to guests and others. Yevdokymova et al. (2019) has a different approach characterizing possible threats in hotels: at the macro level (unstable political situation, man-made disasters, etc.), and at the enterprise level (interception of an important telephone conversation, criminal encroachments on hotel buildings or guests). Experts from the Setupmyhotel.com portal define 9 key types of threats in hotels: physical loss of property, fire, death in hotel, accidents on hotel site, vandalism, drunken guest, theft on site, threat of explosion and safe deposit.

Safety is not restricted to one aspect, it is classified into different manifestations. Having analyzed the scientific sources of information we can conclude that hotel safety is an object of many scientific investigations, however, the authors interpret main types of hotel safety differently, focusing only on one type. Single authors argue that safety should provide prevention of possible death and injury of hotel personnel and guests, among them accidental falls, cuts, burns, etc., as well as prevention of possible damage to property. Another one concludes that the installation of electronic locks, fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, and closed-circuit television devices by many hotel companies lay the basis for ensuring safety.

However, in our opinion, the “hotel safety” concept should be regarded more comprehensively. We share the opinion (Singh, 2015), classifying basic types of hotel safety into three groups: physical safety, safety of people, and system security (Figure 3).

Each dimension of safety (physical safety, safety of people and system security) has its own constituents. Thus, physical aspect of safety can be conventionally divided into two blocks: internal safety and external safety. Internal safety includes all measures that can be taken within the hotel –

Physical safety	Safety of people	System security
Safety from physical damage and influence of objective factors	Personnel and guest safety	Safety of the hotel operating system
service security	personnel	economic
physical	social	environmental
sanitary		financial
technical		
property		
information		
fire		
military		
cyber security		
		IT security
		resource
		food
		political

Figure 3 Classification of hotel safety types

Source: compiled by the author herself

Table 2 Characteristics of security types in the hotel enterprise

	Types of security	Physical safety	Safety of people	System security
1.	service security	safety of receiving basic and optional services. Life and health safety, for example, when receiving water procedures, medical treatments, etc.	ability and opportunity to provide services safely (personnel) – modern equipment that meets electrical and safety standards	understanding the components and informing guests about security, which is the basis of the hotel's functioning
2.	physical	safety of staying in the hotel, building durability – preventing the risk of destruction. Electrical safety when using appliances	safety and protection from misbehaviour of other guests or abuse of power by the staff	safety of movement on the flooring; safety of fixing elements of the furniture in the hotel rooms; strength of plumbing structures, etc.
3.	personnel	x	manifestation of employees' protection from discriminatory actions by the management; confidence in the jobplace stability, etc.	protection from disclosure of important or confidential information about processes or guests by the staff
4.	social	x	formation of a socially responsible style of enterprise activity in terms of providing the staff with social guarantees	formation and implementation of the socially responsible policy of the hotel industry enterprise facing environment, society, and stakeholders
5.	economic	x	x	ensuring the economic sustainability of the enterprise at the internal and external levels
6.	financial	x	financial guarantees of labor remuneration and providing social guarantees	stability of the financial component of the enterprise and its solvency
7.	environmental	x	use of non-toxic hygiene products, high-quality textiles, environmentally friendly and non-toxic construction materials, etc.	use (where possible) of renewable energy sources (wind, solar); waste sorting; environmental and ethical behaviour in relation to the environment; as well as obtaining and maintaining an environmental certificate
8.	sanitary	compliance with sound, noise, vibration, ventilation, lighting, humidity standards	safety of products and dishes in catering establishments; sanitation of common areas and facilities; compliance with anti-COVID-19 safety standards (air disinfection in case of detection of patients, availability of sanitizers)	compliance with the sanitary and hygienic safety of the staff; compliance with the requirements for cleaning premises and the surrounding area; safety of the laundry service; sanitary condition of the swimming pool; sanitary condition of the children's room; sanitary condition of the hairdresser's, etc.
9.	technical	reliable and durable barrier structures (for example, around the pool to avoid accidental falls by children)	informing and monitoring compliance with the rules and specifics of functioning electrical appliances and other technical equipment; safety of the appliances themselves provided for use by guests	compliance with occupational safety and health regulations; safety of using electrical appliances, equipment, and facilities. Safety of building structures and design solutions
10.	property	reliable fencing of the building, and reliable security gates to prevent unauthorized entering. Availability of safes in the rooms; individual room access keys; checking the integrity of employees	guarantee of security and prevention of unauthorized access to the room; guarantee of safety of leaving things in common areas for some time	availability of a security point in the hotel, a sufficient number of professional security guards; surveillance cameras; alarm systems
11.	information	storage of information about the activities of the hotel enterprise and guests	non-disclosure of information about guests: their names, time and period of stay. Placing guests' photos on open access resources only with their permission	ensuring reliable information support systems for guest accounting; control over the non-dissemination of insider information as to the specifics of hotel functioning
12.	fire	the availability of accessible and serviceable fire extinguishers and signage to their locations	availability of evacuation plans in each room and accessibility of emergency exits	fire alarms and the agreement with a fire company to respond quickly in case of fire. Use of non-flammable materials in construction
13.	military	The presence and accessibility of bomb shelters; the existence of air alarm notification systems.	accessibility of bomb shelters and availability of drinking water and food supplies for several days	understanding and a specific algorithm for staff actions in case of a missile or artillery attack
14.	cyber security	x	preventing leakage of guest databases with their personal information	protection against unauthorized access to the guest accounting system and accounting operations
15.	resource	x	with regard to the company's employees, human resource security is manifested in a sufficient number of employees in specific areas and the ability to perform professional duties	sufficiency of all types of resources needed for successful functioning of the enterprise: financial, human, information and other
16.	food	x	x	long-term agreements with suppliers for the supply of necessary raw materials; a clear system of stock replenishment and logistics
17.	political	x	no need to join certain parties or support a certain political force in order to remain an employee. Tolerance with regard to the party affiliation of guests	the non-political position of the company, which is manifested in tolerance with regard to any political event

Source: compiled by the author herself

preventing theft of guests' valuables, availability, and effective operating of the fire protection system, as well as the internal video surveillance system. The fact that security is an undeniable factor of sustainable development within the hospitality sector is evident.

Types of security correlating with sustainable development include social, economic, and environmental security varieties. However, the overarching question of hotel establishment security plays a pivotal role in investment decisions made by stakeholders in various forms of development, including sustainable initiatives.

Without ensuring the basic level of hotel operation – the formation of an appropriate level of security – it is impossible to talk about other aspects of its further development, such as sustainable development. At the same time, some security types (e.g. economic, social, and environmental) are direct elements of the implementation of the sustainable development concept. But the security issue as a basis for sustainable development is not limited to these three constituents. Within the economic dimension of sustainable development, we can single out financial security, cybersecurity (as a leakage of financial information), information security (as a leakage of knowledge about technology) and other security types can. In terms of ensuring the social dimension of sustainable development, it is also worth considering personal security (in the case of employees – in terms of compliance with labor guarantees), resource security (in terms of meeting the needs of employees and customers with the necessary amount of resources). The environmental component can also be interpreted in terms of resources, food, physical security (in terms of using environmentally safe materials), sanitary (use of environmentally safe detergents), and other aspects. A detailed description of each type of security is provided in Table 2.

External safety includes proper outside lighting of the building, its proper fencing, gates for controlling access to the hotel site, video surveillance systems around the perimeter, as well as valid contracts with security firms which can provide more qualified assistance in case of emergency (for example, a threat of armed assault, taking hotel guest hostage, etc.), as well as with fire services that will respond in case of a fire alarm in the establishment. It can be identified as a significant constituent of the social aspect of sustainable development.

Safety of people, in our opinion, is also comprised of two blocks: guest safety (temporary people in the establishment) and personnel safety (permanent staff). Guest safety is largely concerned with general issues of safety while staying in a hotel – starting with the aforementioned safety of avoiding property theft, the availability of fencing boundaries at the pool site, and ending, for instance, with preventing the dissemination of information about hotel guests. Personnel safety, to a greater extent, includes social guarantees for employees (social security), the availability of an effective system for compliance with labour safety norms and rules, etc. It also adds to the social aspect within the framework of sustainable development.

System security is the most comprehensive category that presupposes almost all types of safety proposed in this study. In different facets, the issue ranges from the availability of an effective personnel selection system to conducting systematic audits, as well as ensuring an emergency response system for everyday urgent situations.

For example, a survey conducted in 2018 by a weekly tourist center for investigating the operation of hotels, airlines, cruise lines, and conference centers proved that 53% of respondents from among American general hotel managers and security service managers believe that their hotels are vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Thus, over the past few years, hotels have increased their security budget just as much as airline and cruise companies.

Some types of safety have several or even all dimensions at once – physical and personnel safety, as well as system security.

Conclusions

We have analyzed the basic components of the “hotel safety” concept, clarified its theoretical foundations, suggested our own definition of the concept, and delineated its purpose, levels, and types. Besides, we have identified the main types of threats and the level structure of security systems in the accommodation industry. Security is an integral part not only of the sustainable development process itself, where all processes must be harmonized but also a constituent element of the assurances aimed at investor engagement.

The prospects for further research presuppose a detailed classification and characterization of hotel safety types.

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