

**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WATER CONSUMPTION  
AND MANAGEMENT ISSUE: RESPONSIVENESS OF HOTELIERS IN  
AQABA SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE, JORDAN**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES IN  
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**BY:**

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## ABSTRACT

This study attempts to address the issue of water consumption and management from the perspective of tourism business' responsibility. Guided by the theories of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the study looks at the responsiveness of hoteliers in Aqaba Economic Zone. Specific objectives include: 1) to determine the current status of tourism and hospitality industry in ASEZA, and the current state of water production and consumption in ASEZA using secondary information; and 2) to understand hoteliers' responsiveness through their a) awareness and attitudes towards water consumption and management issues related to the hospitality industry; b) existing practices (internal drives and initiatives) in water management and consumption and c) perspectives on external drivers for water consumption and management using empirical data. To get the information, hoteliers of all 35 hotels of various ratings were approached and interviewed using an open ended survey instrument. The analysis revealed that as tourism become more and more important in Jordan, so does the growth of hotel and apartments to cater for tourists' accommodation. This strengthens the assumption that there is an increasing need for more water resources and water treatment capabilities to cater for the growth. However, analysis also revealed that published data on water needs by tourism in Jordan does not show this because it excludes water usage by other tourism attributes such as toilets in places of attractions, restaurants and rest houses. Instead, those attributes are considered as commercial and residential consumers of water due to technical reasons. Thus, water demand and usage of tourism appears relatively small when in fact, it should be much more significant. Nonetheless, in light of the positive tourism growth, and the low water availability in Jordan, the country should be more realistic in its water usage estimation and prepare an economic strategy to encounter the water shortage in the future, one of which is through CSR.

The second part of the study's analysis showed that there was responsiveness toward the rationing of water consumption by hotels managers, since they recognize the issue to be critical and consider water rationing to be as a beneficial part of hotel management. The context in which these hoteliers operate (the dry climate which necessitate control of water use, the establishment of Aqaba Water Company to guide and push them in the right direction, the obvious benefits of water rationing on their operation costs and the general awareness about the links and relationships between their business and the water situation in Jordan) play a big role in molding this responsiveness. The theoretical implications of business responsiveness to water consumption and management issues are that attributes such as 1) business' survival instinct; 2) internal policy and employee support; 3) moral support from governmental and nongovernmental agencies; and 4) business profile are instrumental in enhancing positive responsiveness towards environmental issue, at least in the context of ASEZA. Other theoretical drivers that are relevant (in various degrees) in the context of water consumption and management issue in ASEZA hotel industry are top management commitment, cost minimization, and customer demand (as hotels with foreign clients are more aware of the issue). The issue of "mimicry" of a model agency's norms and actions as suggested by Gladwin's Institutional Model can be applied to the study context because hoteliers emulate Aqaba Water Companies norms and values when dealing with water management issue. Managerial implications of this study are also discussed.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Background**

Water is a precious resource. Reserves of pure water through rain water, surface water including rivers, lakes, streams, springs, pools, and underground water are essential resources that must be protected. However, the amount of clean usable water is fast deteriorating prompting many international organizations interested in water to conclude that it is water and not energy that will be the problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some researches expect that future of many countries will be difficult due to the economic, socio-political, and environmental constraints caused by water shortage.

With the worsening phenomenon of global warming, industrial pollution and high water consumption, the need to address the issue of water conservation is timely. This study attempts to address this issue from the perspective of tourism business' responsibility to address declining availability of consumable water in a given area. The study is guided by the theories of Corporate Social Responsibility. CSR is about "how businesses align their values and behaviour with the expectations and needs of stakeholders - not just customers and investors, but also employees, suppliers, communities, regulators, special interest groups and society as a whole." (<http://www.csrnetwork.com/csr.asp>). It underlines that the responsibility of business goes beyond mere profit making to include accountability to stakeholders particularly in environmental issues.

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