

protocols within the working environment to avoid contacting the disease in every employee at work. This relates with the publication study of the International Labor Organization (2020) that in every working establishment, it is significant to have a safe, secure and healthy working conditions in order to avoid circumstances in every employee. Also, this is for the management of the company to sustain the workforce and quality of service in the industry. Second (2), the hotel continuously gives employee benefits, such as incentives, medical assistance, cash assistance, and the like. It implies that in every industry and/or working company, excellent packages of benefits and assistance in rewarding and appreciating employees' work are helpful in retaining them. This result of the study agrees with the findings of Stalmasecova & Genzorova (2017), that it has been really a significant and an excellent factor to motivate employees in the hotel. Through this strategy, it may result to success of the company. With the presence of this employee benefits, it may be an excellent form of building their corporate identity on interesting, excellent, and unique employee benefits and advantages. Third (3), the hotel values and extends employee contracts despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of this strategy implies that the accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City value and extend employee contracts continuously despite the Covid-19 pandemic, as it has something to do with all the employee rights, responsibilities, and the different duties and working conditions in every hotel industry which also signify the company's duty to pay their employees. This result contradicts with the study of International Labor Organization (2020) that with the threat of Covid-19, some contracts of employees from the different company/organization had experience severe stress and collapse of employees due to the forfeit of sales and income in the company. It has been reported that employee contracts are still vital to every business company/organization.

Furthermore, the fourth (4) strategy is a culture of teamwork among employees in the working environment built by the hotel establishment. This implies that in every business company and/or hotel industries, it is an excellent mark leading to better productivity in every employee, greater profitability, and highly collaborative work actions to be done by the employees allowing them to meet the goals of the hotel. With this result, it relates to the study of Wanyeki & Maina (2019), that collaborative working effort indicates and enhances the team effectiveness in terms of productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency at the workplace. Through the culture of teamwork, every employee in the hotel industry keeps each other and also realizes the group reward resulting to a more motivated and an excellent performance. Fifth (5), the hotel establishment promotes trustworthiness, tactful discipline, and ethical considerations. This result implies that every employee evolves to their trustworthy, tactful, and ethical behavior, which resulted in a culture of inspiring and developing aspect, and may establish an excellent culture of trust and respect in the working environment. This strategy is an advantage to retain the number of employees in the company and to increase productivity and loyalty. The result of this study agrees with the findings of Soria (2020) that in every company, employees

should acquire the ethical behaviors under the rule of the company, rightful discipline and quality of trust in which the hotel industries can achieve and sustain its goals not just within the company, but also to its employees.

The second to the highest ranked strategies of accredited hotels focused on the support given by hotels toward their employees amidst the pandemic. First, the hotel communicates clear roles and responsibilities assigned to employees amidst the pandemic. It implies that most accredited hotels conveyed all the necessary duties and obligations to each employee amidst the pandemic. In line with this, according to Fernandez & Worasuwan (2017), once employees are given autonomy, they have the necessary information to assess different situations, and they are empowered to make decisions and take responsibility. They feel they are able to communicate with both immediate colleagues and senior management in an open and honest way through a two-way open-door policy. Clearly, effective communication encourages staff to adjust their assumptions of what is expected of them. So, the management of expectations is one of the most important ways in managing employee retention. Second, the hotel empowers employees by having a good time listening to their ideas and suggestions amidst the pandemic. It shows that the majority of the employers emancipate their workers to tender their opinion and recommendations with regard to hotel operations amidst the pandemic. Based on the results of the study of Fernandez & Worasuwan (2017), listening is a key to improve employee retention because it creates an environment where employees feel valued, and it provides managers with insights into ways to continuously improve the workplace. By seeking first to identify and understand the needs and interests of the employees, it can create an environment that lets them voice out their thoughts and opinions. The more they share, the more information they may have to create innovative solutions for motivation and engagement. But it is more than just listening to the words they say. To become an effective listener, managers must go beyond the literal and learn to hear the intent, emotions, and deeper meanings that others are trying to communicate. Third (3), the hotel sets a work-life balance among employees. It can be inferred that, commonly, accredited hotels equalize work and personal life among their employees. Contrarily, as stated in the results of the study of Shrestha (2018), the relationship between age group and career growth, balanced work life, and employer branding indicates that younger employees view career growth opportunities as the strongest HR retention factor that could retain them with their current employment.

Moreover, the fourth (4) strategy deals about how the hotel conducts performance appraisals and continuous feedback for employees' performance. It implies that most accredited hotels ensured that there is a clear communication between their employees for them to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently amidst the pandemic. According to the study of Fernandez & Worasuwan (2017), management techniques in the hotel employee retention manifest itself in understanding themselves, proper communication, listening, engaging, and providing autonomy, personal and professional development,

trust, and reciprocity. Nevertheless, individual managers can have a profound effect on employee retention by implementing these strategies. They foster an environment in which workers are more likely to share the organization's values, to recognize their roles, to be happy and committed, and to provide higher-quality service to hotel guests. Fifth (5), the hotel management consistently works and helps boost employee morale amidst the pandemic. This implies that most accredited hotels persistently motivate and empower their employees to increase their confidence during this time of adversity. The results demonstrated that the more motivated the human factor is, the higher efficacy, loyalty, and individual performance is given to the institution in the chosen three dimensions: strategy, communications, and common feedback (Zámečník, 2020). Sixth (6), the hotel administration guides and manages employees on a professional standard of conduct. This implies that most accredited hotels exerted an effort to guarantee the improvement and development of their employees on a standard professional basis. This relates to the study of Yeswa & Ombui (2019), that the reward systems, career development, employee engagement, and training are major contributors to influencing employee retention in the Kenyan hotel industry. Thus, reward systems should be further improved.

The strategies that ranked as 3rd highest strategy got a mean of 3.60 which fully employed accredited hotels in Tuguegarao have implemented in retaining their employees. These were: First (1), the hotel provides training and development programs against the COVID-19 pandemic. This implies that some of the accredited hotels made their employees undergo series of training and development programs to avoid contracting the deadly disease during the COVID-19 outbreak. According to Gigauri (2020), in terms of development of HRM strategy to adapt to the new reality shaped by the pandemic and for managing remote working systems considering the employee perspectives, training and development of employees are vital. Second (2), the hotel observes work fairness in job scheduling, promotions and the like. This implies that some of the accredited hotels promoted fairness among their employees regarding their work schedule and promotion amidst the pandemic. High performers and non-hourly workers were more likely to cite advancement opportunities and organizational prestige as reasons for staying, whereas low performers and hourly employees were more likely to cite extrinsic rewards. These findings highlight the importance of differentiating human resource management practices when the goal is to retain valued employees (Hausknecht, Rodda & Howard, 2009); Third (3), the hotel has systematic policies, practices and good working conditions that retain employees. This implies that some of the accredited hotels practiced their systematic policies and took less consideration regarding the working condition of their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are positive inter-correlations among employee retention factor and other factors that relate to work conditions that support employee retention such as compensation, employee development, work engagement, work relations, and working hours (Ezeuduji & Mbane, 2017).

The least strategy that the accredited hotels employed was (1) the hotel persistently remunerated its employees even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme set by the government. This implied that remuneration for employees was an area that most hotels neglect and do not take as a threat in retaining their employees. The result of the study agrees with the findings of Khalid & Nawab (2018), that employee compensation significantly moderated the relationship between types of employee participation and employee retention. Furthermore, the study concluded that organizations of both manufacturing and service sectors should develop such practices, which could enhance employee engagement and voice within their task-related decisions. These participation practices would, in turn, enhance employee retention and would give organizations its aligned benefits.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City had used different strategies to retain their employees. These strategies are fully employed, namely: (1) The hotel communicates clear roles and responsibilities assigned to employees amidst the pandemic; (2) The hotel strictly follows government protocols to maintain a safe and secure working environment; (3) The hotel empowers employees by having a good time listening to their ideas and suggestions amidst the pandemic; (4) The hotel sets a work-life balance among employees; (5) The hotel continuously gives employee benefits, such as incentives, medical assistance, cash assistance, and the like; (6) The hotel provides training and development programs against the COVID-19 pandemic; (7) The hotel conducts performance appraisals and continuous feedback for employees' performance; (8) The hotel values and extends employee contracts despite the COVID-19 pandemic; (9) The hotel observes work fairness in job scheduling, promotions, and the like; (10) The hotel has systematic policies, practices, and good working conditions that retain employees; (11) The hotel management consistently works and helps boost employee morale amidst the pandemic; (12) The hotel administration guides and manages employees on a professional standard of conduct; (13) The hotel establishment builds a culture of teamwork among employees in the working environment; (14) The hotel establishment promotes trustworthy, tactful discipline and ethical considerations. However, the strategy concerning the remuneration of employees, even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme set by the government, is employed. Therefore, this is a good indication that the accredited hotels here in Tuguegarao City are undertaking efforts to retain all their employees.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have practical implications for the retention strategies of hotels and future direction of research. First, this study has a limited outline due to the relatively small number of respondents. Therefore, future researchers may

increase the sample size and associate with the other available and active hotels within the community to encapsulate the differences in the effective strategies of these operational hotels within the region. Furthermore, the researchers advise future researchers to use the same sample population but collect additional data using a qualitative or mixed methods. As for the participating accredited hotels, it is recommended that they maintain their strategy to retain their employees. Moreover, hotel owners or managers may share their employee retention strategies with other managers outside their firm to help the hotel industry in the region to retain their employees. To generate sufficient innovative capacity and achieve competitive advantages in the hotel sector, business managers may implement these strategies to improve stability, reduce employee turnover, and boost relevant expert knowledge in an organization.

The researchers also recommend to the Department of Tourism, the accrediting body of hotels, to use these strategies to strengthen the retention policies and practices of the hotel industry in Tuguegarao City towards providing a sustainable and satisfactory service.

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Environmental Sustainability Practices of Mt. Talama in Tabuk City, Kalinga

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Abstract—Environmental sustainability is concerned about how a company can affect natural resources, and it asks for action that would not jeopardize ecosystem health. It is also a state of equilibrium, stability, and interconnection that enables human civilization to meet its needs while not exceeding the ability of its supporting habitats to continue regenerating the resources required to meet those needs, nor through our activities reducing biological diversity. This study aimed to explore the environmental sustainability practices of Mt. Talama in Tabuk City, Kalinga through the environmental efforts and initiatives of the informants in the tourism site. There were eight (8) informants interviewed under the descriptive qualitative method. After the interview, commonalities were identified and major themes were developed. These were: (1) environmental sustainability practices implemented in Mt. Talama, (2) challenges on the implementation of environmental sustainability practices of Mt. Talama, and (3) coping mechanisms to address the challenges. Furthermore, it is concluded that there are four (4) environmental sustainability practices that are implemented in Mt. Talama which are proper waste disposal, tree planting, solar panel and partnership with the government. However, the encountered challenges or issues when implementing these practices are visitors' noncompliance with the laws and policies, improper waste disposal, and lack of funds to sustain the tourism site. Moreover, it is concluded that in order for them to deal with these challenges, they are guided by environmental laws and policies, and imposed penalties and punishment.

Keywords— *Environmental Sustainability, Practices, Challenges, wastes, laws and policies, Mt. Talama*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to new research, the earth is presently experiencing endless burdens brought about by intolerable human exercises relentlessly depleting the environment (Rogayan, 2019). It is indeed important to become aware of the effect of human activity on local areas and the world. In this way, the world can maintain being environmentally sustainable in all aspects of life. In research from Morelli (2011), environmental sustainability is concerned about how a company can affect natural resources, and it asks for action that would not jeopardize ecosystem health. It is also a state of equilibrium, stability, and interconnection that enables human civilization to meet its needs while not exceeding the ability of its supporting habitats to continue regenerating the resources required to meet those needs, nor through our activities reducing biological diversity. According to new research, it is further characterized as a business strategy for using processes without generating harmful effects on the environment and natural resources (Choudhury, 2015; Khan & Islam, 2015; Dixit & Chaudhary, 2020).

Moreover, according to new research, environmental sustainability is becoming a global and national concern nowadays due to environmental deterioration (Kalthom, 2020). In a research from Arora (2018), its uncontrollable deterioration has also been noted as one of the biggest issues every human faces today. According to new research, the Philippines, in particular, is suffering from the degradation of the natural environment. In a research from Briones (2005), it is presently

under severe environmental stress that leads to various unwanted consequences, such as soil erosion, water pollution, groundwater depletion, loss of natural habitats, and loss of biological diversity. As a result, many businesses now learn to utilize environmental sustainability as their key against exploiting the natural environment, especially in the tourism industry. According to new research, some environmental sustainability practices of these tourism-related companies use recycled items for preserving the world, purchase environmentally sustainable goods to ensure the health of future generations, encourage people to carry their bags to the store or market to avoid plastic usage that harms the environment, and filter litter to isolate garbage from recyclable material (Yahya & Hashim, 2016).

Moreover, in the Philippines, one of its mountainous regions is the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), recognized as one of Northern Luzon's major watersheds (ESSC, 2012). For the local populations, living within these mountains is of great importance. As in most mountain areas, the communities depend directly on the environment for their livelihood. However, the degradation of the environment that had been occurring throughout the region has raised the concern of the communities living within these areas. Moreover, in this region, one of its notable provinces is Kalinga, which had been considered the rice granary and white-water rafting capital in the Northern Philippines. This province had also been noted for its abundance in natural attractions, and one of them is Mt. Talama in Tabuk City that is located at the top of the mountain. It is also possibly Tabuk City's highest point that provides the best panoramic view of its western portion. This place is a good idea for eco-walk adventures, picnics with the family and loved ones, and a breathtaking experience, overall. It overlooks the Chico River, which contributes to shaping the place as one of the tourism destinations. The contribution of natural resources to tourism performance is growing in importance since many people are visiting the place for picnic, dating, and relaxation.

Consequently, Mt. Talama is an existing tourism site, and it seems to face major environmental challenges for having several tourists visiting the area. According to new research, environmental sustainability is a major concern, especially in the tourism industry, because even if it boosts the economy, it still significantly affects the tourism environment (Rama et al., 2018). According to Mullis (2017), an increasing number of travelers tend to arrive at a destination and then flock to the same tourist spot, causing overcrowding and environmental degradation problems. Proper management will be implemented to resolve these concerns, such as environmental sustainability practices. For these reasons, the researchers hope to provide the much-needed information on environmental sustainability practices to contribute valuable insights into the limited studies, particularly in Mt. Talama. Thus, the researchers aimed to conduct this study to explore the environmental sustainability practices of Mt. Talama in Tabuk City, Kalinga through the environmental efforts and initiatives of the informants in the tourism site. Specifically, it sought to answer the following: (1) What are the environmental sustainability practices implemented by the informants of Mt. Talama in Tabuk City, Kalinga? (2) What are the issues and challenges encountered by the informants in implementing the environmental sustainability

practices of Mt. Talama in Tabuk City, Kalinga? and (3) How do informants cope with the issues and challenges in implementing the environmental sustainability practices of Mt. Talama in Tabuk City, Kalinga?

II. METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative method of research. This study was conducted at Mt. Talama in Bulanao, Tabuk City, Kalinga. The informants of this study were seven (7) caretakers and one (1) private owner since they are the ones who mainly supervised the place and overall-in-charge in the implementation of the day-to-day environmental sustainability activities and practices in the area.

For the data gathering procedures, the researchers sent a letter of permission from the Vice President for Academics through the Academic Dean. Upon approval, the researchers also wrote a letter and sent it to the private owner of Mt. Talama to seek the same approval. After the owner's permission, the researchers went to Mt. Talama to gather data through interviews with the informants. The researchers also asked for the informants' consent. The interview process was done one by one to give the respondents privacy and comfort in answering the questions about their sustainability practices, challenges, and coping mechanisms in Mt. Talama. The researcher used the interview guide question and recorded it while the informants answered the researchers' questions. After the interview, the researchers transcribed each informant's answers. Thus, the researchers learned about the informants' practices, issues, and challenges. Photo documentation was also taken to provide evidence in the data gathering. Moreover, the researchers guaranteed that the responses would be kept with utmost confidentiality. Finally, all the responses were analyzed by the researchers. The gathered data was analyzed through thematic analysis. Then, it was examined one by one and categorized according to the themes to which they belong.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research study explored the environmental sustainability practices of Mt. Talama in Tabuk City, Kalinga. After the interview with the informants, an examination of the interview transcripts was conducted where commonalities were identified and major themes were developed. These were: (1) environmental sustainability practices implemented in Mt. Talama, (2) challenges on the implementation of environmental sustainability practices of Mt. Talama, and (3) coping mechanisms to address the challenges.

Theme 1: Environmental Sustainability Practices Implemented in Mt. Talama

A. Proper Waste Disposal

Proper waste disposal contributes to the improvement of air and water quality, as well as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It aids in reducing resource extraction, as well as

pollution and energy consumption. According to the informants, they have their schedules on who is in charge of collecting all the garbage scattered by the visitors and putting it in a trash bin. They'll also gather the garbage bin to collect the bottles, which they'll sell to junkyards. This denotes that the caretakers of Mt. Talama are oriented of their specific schedules and duties for collecting waste garbage up to its disposal to preserve the natural beauty of the tourism site.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 1: "Dakami iti mapan agcollection iti rugit. Kada cottage adda basuraan na". (We are the one who are collecting all the garbage. And in every cottage, there is a garbage bin).

Informant 4: "Amin bote kin plastic bottles ururnungin mi tapno mailako ken mapakinabangan pay". (We gather and sort all of the bottles and plastic bottles, which we then sell to junkyards).

Moreover, the respondents in the study gave four (4) environmental sustainability practices that had been implemented. These are the following practices that were mentioned: proper waste disposal, partnership with the government, tree planting, and solar panel. First, it is noted that proper waste disposal is one of their sustainability practices in Mt. Talama. Caretakers placed trash cans in various areas for the visitors to dispose of their garbage. As a result, the caretakers will collect the wastes that visitors have left behind. They separate the bottles so that they can sell them and increase their funds. This implies that the caretakers really care for the environment by preserving the natural beauty of the tourism site. This is somewhat similar to the concept discussed in the related studies. In a research from Alam & Ahmade (2013), to ensure that solid waste management does not harm the environment or pose a health risk to the people who live there, it must be properly implemented. According to new research, waste management is the process of collecting, transporting, and disposing of wastes in the most environmental-friendly way possible in order to limit or eliminate the harmful effects of waste (Amasuomo & Baird, 2016).

B. Tree Planting

Having a lot of trees produces oxygen, which people need to breathe. The caretakers have planted mango trees and pine trees for visitors to use as shelter if they do not get a cottage. This further represents that the caretakers of Mt. Talama are engaged in tree planting activities that benefit visitors and the environment. Moreover, this may help mitigate the effects of flooding and landslides in Mt. Talama since it is located on top of the mountain.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 1: "Makita yu met nga adu ti inmula mi nga kaykayu dituy Mt. Talama lalo kin dagita manga ken dagita pine tree sunga nagmula kami ta adda ti mang tingngel dituy daga ta nangatu paymet". (As you can see, we planted a lot of trees, specifically mangos and pine trees in order to hold the land).

Informant 6: "Mayat pay ta paglinungan dagijy um umay nga bisita nga haan ag cottage". (This is also good because the visitors can also have their shelter under these trees).

Moreover, it is noted that tree planting is another sustainability practice that they had. According to the respondents, they planted a lot of trees (mango trees and pine trees) since the area was located on top of the mountain, where visitors needed some fresh air and shelter. Besides, planting trees benefits Mt. Talama by reducing floods or landslides. This implies that having many trees planted on the site can help mitigate potential hazards. In the study of Marapara, Jackson, Hartley & Maxwell (2021), there is an increasing interest in the role of trees and forests in mitigating flood risk. Forestation and tree planting change surface and subsurface hydrology, frequently delaying peak discharge and reducing overland flow and flood risk.

C. Use of Solar Panel

Solar panels collect energy from the sun, a natural nuclear reactor. This decreases both the negative impact on the environment and the cost of electricity. According to the caretakers, the location has only one (1) solar panel, which acts as the only means for a nightlight. With this, they may save money on their electricity bills, which is beneficial to them and the environment. Moreover, it confirms that the place can provide lights at night for visitors using solar panels since the tourism site is open until 8:00 PM.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 8: "Ada ti maysa nga solar idjay, mausar nu rabii ta ada metlang ti umumay ngem aginggana alas otso laeng". (There is one solar there which is used at night because some people still come, but it is only allowed until eight o'clock).

Informant 3: "Jay makitam nga poste idjay kt solar diyay, isu ti agsirbi nga silaw idjay nga banda". (The pole you see there is a solar panel that serves light on that area).

Furthermore, the caretakers mentioned that they installed one solar panel to serve as a light at night since the site operates until 8:00 pm. This implies that having a solar panel can lower electricity bills while also providing light without using nonrenewable energy in Mt. Talama. Panwar et al. (2011) affirms that the utilization of readily available clean energy has now become essential. Renewable energy sources are utilized