



How employees perceive and (dis)engage with ‘green’ practices in luxury hotels

Viachaslau Filimonau^{a,*}, Lixi Bai^b, Alexander Romanenko^c, Valentina Tarakanova^c, Vladimir A. Ermolaev^d

^a University of Surrey, Stag Hill, Guildford GU2 7XH, UK

^b Faculty of Management, Bournemouth University, Talbot Campus, Fern Barrow, Poole, Dorset BH12 5BB, UK

^c K.G. Razumovsky Moscow State University of Technologies and Management (the First Cossack University), Faculty of Digital Technologies, Department of Fire Safety and Low Temperature Systems, Moscow, Russia

^d Department of Commodity Science and Expertise, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Stremyanny Lane 36, Moscow 117997, Russia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Upscale hospitality
Environmental management
Human resources management
Frontline staff
Pro-environmental behaviour

ABSTRACT

The success of implementation of ‘green’ practices in hotels depends on employees. Many studies assume that hotel employees perceive ‘green’ practices positively and, therefore, engage with environmental conservation. Employees can, however, feel negative towards ‘green’ practices and disengage with their implementation. By interviewing 28 frontline employees in luxury hotels in China, this study explores their perceptions of ‘green’ practices and related behavioural response. The study finds that employee perceptions can be categorised as positive, neutral, and negative falling into four types: value creation; image building; control system; formalism. These perceptions trigger five patterns of behavioural response ranging from positive (pro-active support), via neutral (passive compliance; indifference) to negative (informal protest; avoidance). The study enables preliminary conceptualisation of complex employee response to environmental sustainability interventions in luxury hotels in China and beyond. The study outlines measures for hotel administrations to facilitate positive staff attitudes to environmental conservation.

1. Introduction

Hotels contribute significantly to the global environmental footprint and they should, therefore, reduce it by implementing ‘green’ practices (Salehi et al., 2021). The implementation of ‘green’ practices in hotels can, however, be challenging due to stakeholder disengagement (Chan et al., 2020). Stakeholder perceptions should be examined to establish the determinants of their (dis)engagement with environmental conservation (Khatter et al., 2021).

Research on stakeholder (dis)engagement with ‘green’ practices in hotels has paid a lot of attention to customers and managers while employees have been studied less frequently (Pham et al., 2019). Research on employees is necessitated because they oversee the implementation of ‘green’ practices, and their perceptions and behaviour are, therefore, crucial for achieving ‘pro-environmental organisational performance’ (Okumus et al., 2019). Research can inform the design of ‘green’ human resources management (HRM) in hotels supporting staff in their pro-environmental commitment and behaviour (Y.J. Kim et al.,

2019; Y.H. Kim et al., 2019).

There are research gaps in understanding perceptions and establishing determinants of subsequent (dis)engagement of hotel employees with ‘green’ practices (Aboramadan and Karatepe, 2021). One gap is the limited differentiation between hotel segments. Frontline staff are assumed to have similar perceptions and behaviour towards ‘green’ practices regardless of what hotel category they represent (Peng et al., 2020). Perceptions and (dis)engagement of employees in limited-budget hotels can, however, differ from those in luxury hotels due to significant variations in resource availability and corporate goals/business values (Sukhu and Scharff, 2018).

Luxury hotels represent an interesting object to study ‘green’ practices given the debated nature of the interplay between luxury and sustainability (Moscardo, 2017). Public perception of luxury evokes ostentation, excess, and hedonism while sustainability is sometimes interpreted as moderation and sobriety (Amatulli et al., 2018). This perceived incompatibility may trigger specific behavioural responses from luxury hotel stakeholders (Sahin et al., 2019). For example,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: v.filimonau@surrey.ac.uk (V. Filimonau).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103567>

Received 30 November 2022; Received in revised form 17 May 2023; Accepted 31 July 2023

Available online 5 August 2023

0278-4319/© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

customers do not necessarily associate luxury hotels with environmental sustainability (Peng and Chen, 2019b). Managers of luxury hotels are not always prepared to sacrifice the upscale image for environmental conservation (Chan, 2021). Similar associations may exist among employees of luxury hotels, thus impacting their commitment and (dis)engagement with 'green' practices (Chan and Hawkins, 2010).

Another knowledge gap relates to the research methodology used by empirical investigations of frontline employees' perceptions and (dis)engagement with 'green' practices. Most studies have adopted a quantitative research design, such as the method of staff survey, whereby they test influence of various 'green' psychological parameters and behavioural models (see, for example, Kim and Choi, 2013; Peng et al., 2020; Su and Swanson, 2019). Although this approach to empirical investigations is valuable, it does not, however, reveal complex, multiple factors affecting hotel employees' feelings and decisions (Choy et al., 2021). Quantitative studies, such as surveys, are not always suitable for verifying behaviour as they only examine declared perceptions and behavioural intentions (Dolnicar, 2015). A more nuanced approach to empirical investigations of 'green' practices in hotels is necessitated to better understand true feelings, emotions, and behavioural response of frontline staff (Pham et al., 2019).

The last knowledge gap is that research often assumes a positive effect of environmental conservation on frontline employees (Okumus et al., 2019). However, evidence suggests that staff do not always willingly engage with environmental conservation as this engagement requires an extra effort at no additional pay (Chan and Hawkins, 2010). Further, 'green' practices may dissatisfy customers and employees will, therefore, be required to rectify this dissatisfaction besides their regular duties (Sourvinou and Filimonau, 2018). Research should, therefore, apply a (more) 'balanced', 'nuanced' and critical stance to analysis. This stance can help to understand the positive as well as the negative sides of a complex relationship between perceptions and behaviour of frontline hotel employees and 'green' practices (Donia and Sirsly, 2016).

This current study responds to the call for more nuanced research on potentially different responses of hotel staff to the implementation of 'green' practices as set by Donia and Sirsly (2016), Sourvinou and Filimonau (2018) and Pham et al. (2019). To this end, the study will explore perceptions and behaviour of frontline employees towards 'green' practices in luxury hotels in China. The research question set by the study is as follows: 'What (positive or negative) effect do 'green' practices exert on perceptions and behaviour of luxury hotels' frontline workforce?'

2. Literature review

2.1. Luxury hotels, environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility

Luxury hotels are defined in the current study as the hotels which are unique and superior in quality and which provide excellent levels of service, symbolizing the wealth and status of their customers (Peng and Chen, 2019a). In terms of comfort, luxury hotels correspond to the category of 5-star hotels and above (Which?, 2021). Environmental sustainability is getting increasingly appealing for luxury hotels (Ama-tulli et al., 2021). This is partially due to growing customer concern over the environmental implications of hotel stay (Y.J. Kim et al., 2019; Y.H. Kim et al., 2019). This is also in part because of increasing pressure from other stakeholders, such as investors and policymakers, who expect luxury hotels to make their operations more environment-benign (Su and Chen, 2020). Lastly, the recent cost of living crisis demands luxury hotels to invest in environmental sustainability as a means of cost optimisation (Nestle, 2023). For example, energy conservation enables hoteliers to not only conserve the environment, but also reduce their business running costs.

To fulfil multiple stakeholder expectations, luxury hotels have set to become good corporate citizens (Bohdanowicz et al., 2011). As a result, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become normative among

many luxury hotels (Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018) although the literature acknowledges that it is primarily adopted by larger and chain-affiliated enterprises rather than small and medium-sized ones (Chen, 2019). When pursuing CSR, luxury hotels do not only conserve natural resources, but also strive to generate wider societal benefits (Dutt et al., 2023). For instance, there are examples of luxury hotels improving the quality of life of local communities (Bohdanowicz and Zientara, 2009), contributing to lives of indigenous people (Sotomayor et al., 2021), employing people with disabilities (Köseoglu et al., 2021), and providing childcare to female residents and employees (Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou, 2019).

From the employment perspective, as part of their CSR mission, luxury hotels can encourage staff to protect the environment at work, thus prompting them to exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE) (Zientara and Zamojska, 2018). Luxury hotels can also strive to change behaviour of their employees at home; for instance, as Mensah et al. (2021) argue, by engaging with environmental conservation in the workplace, employees are likely to sustain this engagement in their households. This suggests that, by investing in CSR and, more specifically, by adopting 'green' practices, luxury hotels can facilitate a positive societal spillover effect whereby pro-environmental behaviour of staff can be observed in the realms outside work (Sourvinou and Filimonau, 2018).

2.2. Hotel employees, human resources management (HRM) and 'green' practices

Although successful implementation of 'green' practices in hotels depends on frontline employees' engagement, pro-environmental commitment and behaviour of staff can be difficult to achieve (Zientara and Zamojska, 2018). Pro-environmental employee behaviour is not always formally required by hotels but expected in addition to 'regular' organisational behaviour of staff (Fatoki, 2019). Although this 'additional' behaviour benefits hotels, encouraging employees to engage with it is challenging because of a poor understanding by employees of personal benefits alongside insufficient rewards (Chan et al., 2017).

Hotels committed to conserve the environment should (re-)design their human resources management (HRM) policies and procedures to incorporate the 'green' element (Y.J. Kim et al., 2019; Y.H. Kim et al., 2019). This 'green' HRM should aim at fostering pro-environmental mindset and behaviour of staff (Zientara and Zamojska, 2018). The importance of engaging staff with environmental conservation via 'green' HRM is justified by theories of organisational performance. These suggest that positive changes to business operations can only be achieved by changing the behaviour of an organisation's members, such as employees (Truss et al., 2013). However, staff tend to resist changing their mindsets and behaviour (Albrecht et al., 2015). Theory of (social) practice explains this by the influence of work routines and habits which employees should have developed with time (Bourdieu, 2005). For example, restaurant staff can be accustomed to wasting food when cooking and a manager's request to change the cooking routine to avoid wastage may be rejected by staff. The argument 'I've been doing this for years, why change?' is often used by employees when resisting pro-environmental behavioural changes (Filimonau and Uddin, 2021).

This underlines the need to better understand what facilitates pro-environmental behavioural changes among frontline hotel employees (Fatoki, 2019). By integrating the requirements for specific behaviour in 'green' HRM, hotels can signal prospective and current staff the importance of aligning with pro-environmental corporate goals by practicing specific behavioural patterns (Chan et al., 2014). However, such integration alone is insufficient and dedicated HRM policies and procedures are required to support, empower, and reward employees for pro-environmental behaviour, thus reducing the negative effect of work routines and habits (Renwick et al., 2013).

2.3. Hotel employees' perceptions of 'green' practices and the related behaviour

Pro-environmental organisational practices in hotels do not necessarily lead to anticipated outcomes because frontline staff can perceive environmental conservation unimportant (Wang et al., 2020). Employees can ignore 'green' practices if they do not consider them meaningful (Albrecht et al., 2015). 'Green' HRM should aim to influence frontline employees' perceptions, thus prompting staff engagement with pro-environmental organisational practices (Aboramadan and Karatepe, 2021).

Multiple theories can explain why hospitality employees engage with 'green' practices. For example, Theory of Planned Behaviour has been used to understand the antecedents of ecological behaviour intentions (Chan and Hon, 2020), showcasing the important role of such factors as personal attitudes and social norms in shaping staff (un)willingness to conserve the environment. Norm activation model (NAM) can aid in understanding how personal norms of employees can prompt environmental conservation in the workplace (Chi et al., 2023). Lastly, value-belief-norm (VBN) theory has been applied to examine how personal, pro-environmental values of staff can shape their pro-environmental beliefs and, consequently, determine their pro-environmental norms at work (Chua and Han, 2022). Importantly, all these theories are often extended with other theoretical constructs or concepts to strengthen their analytical power when explaining why hospitality employees (dis)engage with environmental conservation (see, for example, Chou, 2014; Luu, 2019; Wang, 2016).

Further, studies have measured employees' perceptions of 'green' practices in hotels and investigated their impact on pro-environmental staff behaviour. For example, Kim and Choi (2013) find a correlation between 'green' practices, staff perception and organisational commitment. Y.H. Kim et al. (2019); Y.J. Kim et al. (2019) and Yoon et al. (2016) highlight a positive relationship between 'green' practices and employees' eco-friendly behaviour. Okumus et al. (2019) showcase a positive effect of 'green' practices on staff's environmental concern and pro-environmental behaviour.

Studies have also examined the role of various, internal and external, variables in shaping staff's perceptions of 'green' practices in hotels and affecting their behavioural response. Haldorai et al. (2022) demonstrate the importance of pro-environmental commitment of top management teams for engaging frontline employees with environmental conservation. Aboramadan and Karatepe (2021) showcase the critical role of organisational support articulated by 'green' HRM in pro-environmental job performance. Chan et al. (2014) indicate how personal environmental concern of staff positively affects their engagement with 'green' practices. Okumus et al. (2019) emphasise relevance of personal environmental knowledge for stimulating pro-environmental behaviour of employees.

The above studies have all hypothesised a positive correlation between 'green' practices in hotels, 'green' HRM, employees' perceptions and pro-environmental behavioural intention. The hypotheses have been confirmed in staff surveys which test potential pathways between various psychographic and organisational variables rather than explore the actual feelings of frontline employees and their behavioural response. Studies underpinned by qualitative or mixed research methods may have yielded different results given the complexity of relationships between 'green' practices in hotels, staff's perceptions and behaviour (Pham et al., 2019).

There is evidence that hotel employees do not always perceive environmental conservation in hotels positively. First, staff do not appreciate additional work associated with 'green' practices (Chan and Hawkins, 2010). Second, 'green' practices require pro-environmental (re-)training which employees do not appreciate because the (re-)training time is often unpaid (Renwick et al., 2013). Third, 'green' practices can be perceived by staff as cumbersome and stressful (Sourvinou and Filimonau, 2018). Fourth, employees may feel that

environmental conservation is implemented by hotels at the sacrifice of their own interests (Scheidler et al., 2019). Fifth, employees may misunderstand the meaning of 'green' practices (Chan and Hawkins, 2012). Lastly, staff, especially those with supervisory and managerial responsibilities, may be sceptical about the real motives behind a hotel's commitment to environmental conservation (Sharma et al., 2020). Employees may assume that 'green' practices are implemented by hotels in business self-interest, thus suspecting corporate hypocrisy (Rahman et al., 2015). Staff can even see corporate pro-environmental commitment as an attempt of 'greenwashing' rather than a genuine corporate desire to save the environment (Tahir et al., 2020).

This evidence of negative staff's perceptions of environmental conservation is, however, fragmented which calls for more systematic research on the reaction of hotel workforce to the implementation of 'green' practices. Research is necessitated for each hotel segment but, for several reasons, particularly valuable for luxury hotels. First, the interplay between luxury hospitality and environmental sustainability remains understudied, especially from the viewpoint of such stakeholder as frontline employees (Peng and Chen, 2019b). Second, luxury hotels maintain high standards of service which require employees to work hard (Ramkissoon et al., 2020). Any extra tasks in the form of pro-environmental behaviour can be viewed by staff as an unwelcoming burden. Lastly, employees of luxury hotels do not always appreciate the suggested 'marriage' between luxury and environmental sustainability and develop negative feelings towards pro-environmental behaviour at work (Filimonau et al., 2020).

This study will adopt a (more) 'balanced', nuanced perspective when examining the effect of 'green' practices in luxury hotels on perception and subsequent (dis)engaging behaviour of employees. The study will focus on luxury hotels in China whose market has been growing prior to COVID-19 (Qian, 2021). As increasingly more luxury hotels in China consider integrating 'green' practices into their business agendas (Choy et al., 2021), it is important to study the effect of this integration on frontline workforce.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research philosophy and research method

The study was underpinned by the philosophy of interpretivism which assumes that individuals shape the environment in which they live and work (Levers, 2013). Interpretivism suggests a variety of human thoughts and opinions which are subjective and, therefore, require careful evaluation and interpretation (Holden and Lynch, 2004), such as in the case of perception of 'green' practices by frontline employees in luxury hotels. Interpretivism advocates that the subjective meanings attached by individuals to various phenomena can be used for knowledge creation, especially in situations whereby this knowledge is scarce or fragmented (Scotland, 2012). This is where the current study adds to the literature as past research on 'green' practices and hotel employees' perceptions and behaviour has primarily been underpinned by the philosophy of positivism. Positivism aims at establishing statistical connections and building generalisations rather than providing in-depth evaluations of complex societal phenomena (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012), such as pro-environmental organisational performance and the role of frontline staff in environmental conservation in hotels.

The inductive approach was followed. Although theories of organisational performance and (social) practice can provide useful insights into how frontline employees of luxury hotels perceive 'green' practices and what subsequent behaviour they may choose to engage with, these theories cannot explain individual motives and behavioural responses comprehensively. This portrays the current study as exploratory while exploratory investigations strive to enhance theoretical foundations rather than test their applicability in wider contexts (Creswell, 2013). Further, while certain behavioural theories (for example, theory of planned behaviour, norm activation model and value-belief-norm

theory) can aid in establishing a correlation between 'green' practices in luxury hotels and employees' behavioural intention (see Wang, 2016 for a review), they cannot fully explain human emotions behind actual behaviour (Meng et al., 2022).

In line with interpretive research philosophy and the inductive approach, this study adopted the method of qualitative research i.e., in-depth semi-structured interviews, for data collection and analysis. Qualitative research builds close(r) relationships with study informants, thus providing a better scope to understand emotions and feelings (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015). Qualitative research enables a deep (er) understanding of the actual behavioural response to external stimuli (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Lastly, flexible design of qualitative research facilitates follow-up questions which can aid in comprehending the exact motives behind specific behavioural acts (Creswell, 2013).

3.2. Study design and administration

The literature review informed the design of an interview protocol (Supplementary material, Appendix 1). The protocol incorporated questions to (1) establish the level of personal knowledge and awareness of environmental sustainability and 'green' issues in day-to-day lives; (2) identify 'green' practices implemented (or planned for implementation) by luxury hotels (see next paragraph for details); (3) understand the extent of staff (current or envisaged) engagement with the implementation of 'green' practices; (4) evaluate how employees felt about and how they (dis)engaged with 'green' practices, including their positive and negative perceptions and behavioural response. The ideas for these questions were derived from Chan and Hawkins (2010); Scheidler et al. (2019) and Sourvinou and Filimonau (2018).

The protocol was developed in English and back translated in Mandarin by two bilingual academics. Prior to translation it was reviewed for face and content validity by four academics majoring in hospitality management and specializing in human resources management and environmental management. The protocol was pre-tested with five hotel employees.

Study informants were recruited among permanent frontline employees of luxury hotels in China. The key selection criterion was that the luxury hotels which the study informants represented should have engaged in environmental conservation. The luxury hotels were expected to have implemented at least some of the following 'green' practices: (1) energy and water saving measures (for example, water-efficient showers) and consumer engagement campaigns (for instance, towel reuse); (2) solid waste management (for example, food waste separation at source); (3) sustainable building (for example, adoption of 'green' building standards); (4) sustainable procurement (for instance, use of local ingredients in cooking). The list of these exemplary 'green' practices was developed from Pereira et al. (2021).

Given the specific criteria set for this study's informants i.e., a permanent frontline employee in a luxury hotel in China with a record of implementation of 'green' practices, purposive sampling was initially used for recruitment. Purposive sampling identified the sampling units that could provide the most relevant and valuable information (Teer-oovengadum and Nunkoo, 2018). The study informants were recruited using a personal network of one of the research team members. Originally, ten study informants were recruited in this manner. Following their interviews, snowball sampling was applied for further recruitment using professional networks of the study informants.

One employee per hotel was invited to participate for diversity of views and opinions. The recruitment attempted to ensure that the study informants represented different hotel departments as staff perceptions and engagement with 'green' practices could vary depending on working tasks (Chan and Hawkins, 2010). As research indicated that employees with supervisory responsibilities could be uncertain about the 'green' practices in hotels (Sharma et al., 2020), frontline staff with supervisory experience were also recruited.

The sample size was determined by perceived data saturation which

was initially detected with 19 interviews. Following thematic analysis (see Section 3.3. Data analysis), an additional round of data collection was held to prove validity of the study's tools, processes, and data by testing the initial findings with additional participants (Hayashi et al., 2019). The final sample consisted of 28 study informants representing luxury hotels from different localities in China (Table 1). Although sample size is deemed of less relevance for qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2021), there are indications that interview data can be saturated with 10–30 samples (Thomson 2010 cited by Marshall et al., 2013). The current study fits into this indicative range.

Interviews were conducted in April–September 2020 i.e., after the hotel industry in China had re-opened following a period of significant COVID-19 restrictions. To encourage participation by limiting personal contact, interviews were undertaken via WeChat. WeChat is a popular instant messaging, social media, and mobile payment app in China which is widely used in social science research for recruitment of study participants and data collection (Moffa and Di Gregorio, 2023). Interviews lasted between 32 and 65 min; they were digitally recorded for subsequent transcription and professional translation. The study informants were not incentivised for participation.

Social desirability bias may affect interview findings (Nederhof, 1985). To reduce its occurrence, purposive and snowball sampling was applied for recruitment of willing participants whereby personal and professional contacts of the research team and, later, past study informants served the purpose of building trust. The informants were reassured in complete confidentiality of the study's findings and the responses provided were anonymised. Following transcription of interviews, individual transcripts were given to all study informants and the opportunity was offered to re-check and approve the material collected. At this stage, the informants were provided with an option to withdraw.

3.3. Data analysis

Interview data were analysed thematically following the guidelines of data codification provided by Gibbs (2007). Raw data were codified with the help of NVivo, version 12. For trustworthiness, the following measures were applied as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). First, the data were codified by the same researchers who designed and conducted the interviews. Second, data codification was undertaken independently by two members of the research team. The results were compared, and an extra round of data codification was applied in case of disagreements. Lastly, as recommended by Burnard (1991), the results of data codification were presented to three randomly selected study informants. They were explained how the final coding structures were derived and the feedback was requested on correctness of data interpretation. Suggestions made by the study informants at this stage were integrated in the final data coding structures.

4. Findings

4.1. General perception of 'green' practices

Most informants were familiar with environmental sustainability and engaged with various 'green' practices in their day-to-day lives. Examples of at-home recycling, use of energy saving bulbs, saving water when showering and use of public transport were frequently given. As for the 'green' practices of luxury hotels, the extent of their adoption varied. While many hotels, particularly the chain affiliates, adopted a broad range of pro-environmental measures, smaller hotels only adopted a limited number of 'green' practices. Budgetary constraints were the main reason for the limited embracement of environmental conservation by smaller hotels which aligned with Chan et al. (2018) and Chan et al. (2020). Energy-saving bulbs, building insulation, water-saving facets, towel reuse programmes and solid waste separation at source were referred to by the study informants as the most popular 'green'

Table 1
Study informants (n = 28).

ID	Gender	Age	Position	Hotel location	Hotel size		Department	Work experience in this hotel (years)	Work experience in hospitality (years)
					Small (<50 rooms)	Medium (51–100 rooms)			
I1	Female	34	Front-line	Shanghai	Small		Room service	3	6
I2	Female	24	Front-line	Beijing	Small		Guest service	2	3
I3	Male	29	Front-line	Guangzhou	Medium		Catering	4	6
I4	Male	28	Front-line	Shanghai	Large		Guest service	5	7
I5	Female	25	Front-line	Shanghai	Large		Room service	3	3
I6	Female	30	Front-line	Beijing	Medium		Catering	5	7
I7	Male	27	Front-line	Shenzhen	Large		Catering	4	5
I8	Male	33	Front-line	Nanjing	Medium		Guest service	5	8
I9	Male	36	Front-line	Beijing	Medium		Room service	6	10
I10	Female	24	Front-line	Xi'an	Small		Room service	3	4
I11	Male	22	Front-line	Beijing	Large		Catering	2	2
I12	Female	27	Front-line	Shanghai	Large		Guest service	5	6
I13	Female	32	Front-line	Guangzhou	Large		Guest service	6	6
I14	Male	41	Front-line	Shenzhen	Medium		Catering	8	8
I15	Female	28	Supervisory	Beijing	Medium		Catering	5	5
I16	Male	24	Supervisory	Beijing	Small		Guest service	2	2
I17	Female	28	Supervisory	Shanghai	Large		Room service	5	8
I18	Female	35	Supervisory	Guangzhou	Large		Catering	10	12
I19	Male	40	Supervisory	Chengdu	Large		Room service	5	10
I20	Male	36	Supervisory	Shanghai	Large		Guest service	8	15
I21	Male	25	Front-line	Shanghai	Small		Catering	3	4
I22	Female	26	Front-line	Beijing	Large		Room service	3	3
I23	Male	32	Front-line	Beijing	Medium		Catering	7	9
I24	Female	25	Front-line	Guangzhou	Medium		Room service	2	4
I25	Female	23	Front-line	Guangzhou	Small		Guest service	2	3
I26	Female	30	Front-line	Shanghai	Medium		Catering	5	9
I27	Female	33	Front-line	Beijing	Medium		Catering	10	10
I28	Male	25	Front-line	Beijing	Small		Room service	3	4

practices in their hotels:

'My hotel does a bit of everything. We use energy-saving equipment in rooms, public areas, and operations. We use electric vehicles for transportation. We save water and separate waste. As far as I know we even use organic food in our restaurant... We're affiliated to the [HOTEL NAME REMOVED] chain, and this is part of their corporate policies' (I4)

4.2. Perception of 'green' practices

The study informants felt differently about the 'green' practices adopted in their hotels. These different perceptions were summarised in four categories: (1) value creation; (2) image building; (3) control system; and (4) formalism. Table 2 presents this categorisation by drawing upon the results of data codification and linking each category of employee perceptions to the representative quotes. Table 2 also classifies employee perceptions as positive, neutral, and negative.

Positive perception of 'green' practices was attributed to the (additional) value created by environmental conservation in hotels for business, customers, and Chinese society. Financial savings achieved by implementing 'green' practices were seen as a driver of improved operational performance. 'Green' practices could signal pro-environmental commitment of a hotel, thus offering market advantage in the form of enhanced customer appeal. 'Green' practices would also enable hoteliers to obtain positive feedback from consumers, thus building loyalty. Lastly, 'green' practices could appeal to wider Chinese society by portraying hotels as good corporate citizens, thus generating political dividends and public support.

Neutral perceptions of 'green' practices were associated with corporate image building and improved organisational control. 'Green' practices could aid in marketing and reputation. 'Green' practices were seen beneficial from the viewpoint of operational cost reduction and legal compliance. 'Green' practices were also seen instrumental to changing organisational culture by encouraging employees to conserve

the environment at work. Concurrently, some study informants considered 'green' practices as a tool of increased control exerted by hoteliers via HRM departments. The implementation of 'green' practices required employees to adhere to the related instructions. Some study informants viewed this suspiciously as a means of developing extra measures of individual performance control to be used for penalising non-compliant staff:

'We're now required to waste less food when we cook. The problem is that, if I cook this way, the customer may be unhappy. I may not cut the meat to perfection. If the customer complains, I'm in trouble. I just feel like these new 'green' requirements are meant to control us so that our performance bonuses don't need to be paid...' (I7)

Lastly, negative perception of 'green' practices was assigned to formalism in the implementation of pro-environmental measures. Concerns were raised regarding the actual business intention behind the adoption of 'green' practices. Some study informants blamed hotels for increasing their profits as opposed to being altruistic in their 'greening' intentions. Some study informants referred to symbolism in implementing 'green' practices i.e., there was perceived dissonance between the extent of hotels' pro-environmental declarations and real actions. Lastly, some study informants, on condition of anonymity, alleged hotels in greenwashing. Pro-environmental claims made by hotel administrations would not match their practices, thus leading to employees' distrust and dissatisfaction.

4.3. (Dis)engagement with 'green' practices

Different perceptions of 'green' practices prompted various behavioural responses ranging from positive to negative with the neutral-to-negative stance being prevailed (Table 3). This raises questions about the results of previous studies on staff perception of 'green' practices in hotels and the related behaviour which highlighted positive relationships between these variables. By using qualitative research design, this

Table 2
Employee perceptions of ‘green’ practices.

Theme Perception category	Code Perception type	Exemplary quote	Overall attitude
VALUE CREATION	Improved consumer experience	‘We sometimes get positive feedback on our ‘green’ practices. Some customers, but not all, feel pleased that they receive eco-friendly services’ (I3)	Positive
	Market advantage	‘It’s an extra sale point. By being ‘green’ we differentiate ourselves from competitors. This makes us unique in eyes of our customers’ (I19)	
	Meeting societal expectations	‘Our government and people encourage us to go ‘green’. Reducing energy and water use is simply the right thing to do’ (I1)	
	Better operational efficiency	‘I hear we’ve saved a lot of energy and water by implementing ‘green’ practices. This means saving money which is good for business’ (I11)	
IMAGE BUILDING	Marketing	‘Modern upper-class customers in China seem to value the concept of being ‘green’, so we cater for them by promoting what we do to conserve the environment’ (I10)	Neutral
	Advertising	‘Green’ practices are great for advertising. We highlight them on our website. Our ‘green’ practices have been reported by the mainstream media, which improves our image greatly’ (I2)	
	‘Green’ reputation	‘Hotels in China have been criticised for their negative environmental impacts, especially resource consumption and waste generation. Our hotel implements ‘green’ practices to showcase to the public what we do to change the reputation of heavy polluters’ (I17)	
CONTROL SYSTEM	Cost control	‘Luxury products are expensive. ‘Green’ practices help the hotel to reduce costs. However, this is only good for our boss, not for us, employees’ (I8)	
	Employee control	‘The hotel cannot control customers’ environmental behaviour, but it can control employees. According to our HRM policies, employees must follow certain instructions. Although some of these are genuinely for the ‘green’ purposes, some are just intended to control employees in the name of ‘greening’ the business’ (I14)	
	Legal compliance	‘There are standards on emissions that a hotel business needs to meet. Be going ‘green’ our hotel can comply with regulations, so it’s not in trouble if an audit comes’ (I12)	
	Organisational culture	‘This is part of our corporate policies. ‘Green’ practices are something what our	

Table 2 (continued)

Theme Perception category	Code Perception type	Exemplary quote	Overall attitude
FORMALISM	Hypocrisy	headquarters want us to do. If this becomes part of the organisation’s values, then everyone must do it’ (I5)	Negative
		‘I don’t think our hotel implements ‘green’ practices for the social good. Instead, I feel, these practices merely create values for the hotel itself. There is little we get out of them...’ (I17)	
	Symbolism	‘I believe that being ‘green’ is merely a symbol rather than a real action in our hotel. Just symbolizing that we are ‘green’ seems enough and further practices are not necessary’ (I4)	
	Greenwashing	‘I’ll be honest with you; our hotel greatly exaggerates its ‘green’ practices and contribution. What I’ve seen published on our website has little to do with what I’ve witnessed on the ground’ (I7)	

current study demonstrated that staff interviews could provide an interesting perspective on why hotel employees would (dis)engage with ‘green’ practices in the workplace. This perspective can complement the results of previous, largely quantitative, investigations, thus offering a more balanced, nuanced outlook on the issue in focus.

Positive behaviour resulted from the employees’ perception of ‘green’ practices as being aligned with their personal pro-environmental values. Seeing organisational ‘green’ commitment, the study informants felt encouraged to conserve the environment. This prompted staff to support and engage with ‘green’ practices. The number of the study informants exemplifying explicit, pro-active, support of ‘green’ practices was, however, small.

Most study informants declared various types of neutral behaviour. Some employees felt indifferent towards ‘green’ practices viewing these as another, routine work duty. Despite perceived insignificance of environmental conservation, these employees would still engage with ‘green’ practices considering these integral to their work contracts. This perception drove largely passive behavioural compliance whereby employees would implement environmental conservation measures either just ‘to show that I’ve tried’ (I8) or to avoid punishment for the non-engagement. Lastly, a few employees would engage with ‘green’ practices for a reward, such as a supervisory praise or a monetary bonus. These types of neutral behaviour are not damaging to a hotel business, but they need to be closely monitored by hotel administrations as they can easily become negative:

‘As a supervisor, I tend to speak with staff to see what worries them and why. In private, they often complain that they don’t particularly care about environmental things. However, they still do it [environmental conservation] as they’re instructed so. This [performance] troubles me a bit as, if the staff don’t understand the importance of going ‘green’, then they won’t be working hard to make it happen...’ (I16)

Lastly, some study informants spoke about their negative behaviour towards ‘green’ practices at work. Some employees protested informally about the need to conserve the environment by expressing their dissatisfaction in private i.e., when discussing work matters with fellow employees, friends, and family members. Some study informants were, however, more radical by refusing to engage with ‘green’ practices. This disengagement was implicit whereby employees pretended to conserve

Table 3
Employee behaviour in response to ‘green’ practices.

Theme Behaviour category	Code Behaviour type	Exemplary quote	Overall direction
PRO-ACTIVE SUPPORT	Alignment with personal values	<i>‘I feel good about that our hotel aims to save resources and reduce environmental pollution. I think this is what we all ought to do anyway’</i> (I12)	Positive
	Behavioural change	<i>‘I feel obliged to help the hotel achieve what it has set to achieve. I have even made some suggestions about energy savings for the hotel’</i> (I3)	
INDIFFERENCE	Part of regular workload	<i>‘I just take it [‘green’ practices] as another work duty. I know many of my fellow employees are the same. I don’t think it’s particularly important or necessary, but I must do it as part of my job contract’</i> (I14)	Neutral
	Perceived insignificance	<i>‘OK, my manager asks me to do it, but I don’t really care about ‘green’ activities because I think work is much more important than that. I just do it [‘green’ practices] as I have to, not because I want to...’</i> (I15)	
PASSIVE COMPLIANCE	Compliance for reward	<i>‘I think it’s [‘green practices] OK, but, personally, I do these simply because the hotel encourages me to do so. We get small rewards from management for ‘green’ ideas, so this is why I engage...’</i> (I6)	
	Compliance due to a threat of punishment	<i>‘Frankly speaking, I only do this [‘green’ practices] because my work is monitored by cameras. In our hotel, employees will be punished if they are found to have violated the ‘green’ principles...’</i> (I9)	
	Doing a bare minimum to comply	<i>‘Honestly? I only do this [‘green’ practices] because my supervisor asks me to. I do a little bit just to show that I’ve listened to them and tried to do what I’m told’</i> (I10)	
INFORMAL PROTEST	Complaining to fellow workers	<i>‘Many employees in our hotel discuss the negative aspects of these [‘green’] practices because they have to make a sacrifice for being ‘green’. For example, they have to separate waste, which no one wants to do. I even hear some managers complaining about the meaninglessness of these [‘green’] activities...’</i> (I18)	Negative
	Complaining to family members	<i>‘I honestly don’t like it [‘green’ practices] because they are just another work burden. But what can I do even if I am unhappy? I can moan this to my friends at work. I can also gossip with my family’</i> (I13)	

Table 3 (continued)

Theme Behaviour category	Code Behaviour type	Exemplary quote	Overall direction
AVOIDANCE	Implicit non-engagement	<i>‘It may look like I behave in an eco-friendly manner, but this is not the case, really. If there is a chance, I won’t be doing it [‘green’ practices]. I mean I will try to avoid it if I can’</i> (I1)	
	Explicit non-engagement	<i>‘I think many ‘green’ practices implemented in our hotel are meaningless and I am, hence, not willing to cooperate. Yes, I have to be careful when I do so to ensure it doesn’t come out too explicitly. But there is always an excuse as far as I’m concerned. Such as: I didn’t turn the light off because the customer didn’t want me to. This works!’</i> (I5)	

the environment but tried to ‘avoid it if I could’ (I11). The disengagement was also explicit whereby employees refused to conserve the environment prioritising other business needs, such as customer satisfaction. Although the number of study informants with declared explicit negative attitudes and resultant behavioural disengagement was small, their presence is concerning from the hotel administration’s viewpoint. Such employees can sabotage the implementation of ‘green’ practices which calls for the design of organisational measures to change their behaviour.

5. Discussion and implications

The study revealed how frontline employees in luxury hotel in China perceived ‘green’ practices implemented by hotel administrations and what behavioural responses they adopted in the result. The study evidenced that staff’s perceptions of environmental conservation and the related behaviour ranged from positive to negative. Fig. 1 conceptualises the study’s findings as a streamlined ‘perception-behavioural response’ framework. The framework can aid hotel administrations in the design of measures to reinforce staff’s attitudes and enhance their behavioural response towards the implementation of ‘green’ practices.

From the theoretical perspective, the study’s findings provided new insights into the workforce-related challenges of the implementation of ‘green’ practices in luxury hotels in China and beyond. Previous studies focused, almost exclusively, on positive staff’s perceptions (see, for example, Chou, 2014; Kim and Choi, 2013; Peng et al., 2020) and engaging behaviour (see, for instance, Chan et al., 2017; Fatoki, 2019; Okumus et al., 2019) and ignored potential negative feelings/attitudes and disengaging behavioural responses. The focus on the positive associations between ‘green’ practices and employee perceptions and behaviour is understandable because it encourages hotel administrations to invest in environmental sustainability. However, research on negative perceptions and behaviour is also warranted as it enables hotel administrations to understand the reasons for negative feelings, attitudes, and behaviour of staff and design appropriate counteracting measures. For example, by showcasing corporate commitment to ‘green’ practices via direct participation of executive managers as suggested by Haldorai et al. (2022), hotel administrations can avoid a critique in image building, cost control and, especially, formalism. This measure can prompt the frontline employees with neutral and negative perceptions of ‘green’ practices to develop a more positive outlook on environmental conservation. This can trigger patterns of staff behaviour

Legend: POSITIVE NEUTRAL NEGATIVE Straight lines = direct relationships; Dotted lines = Potential indirect relationships

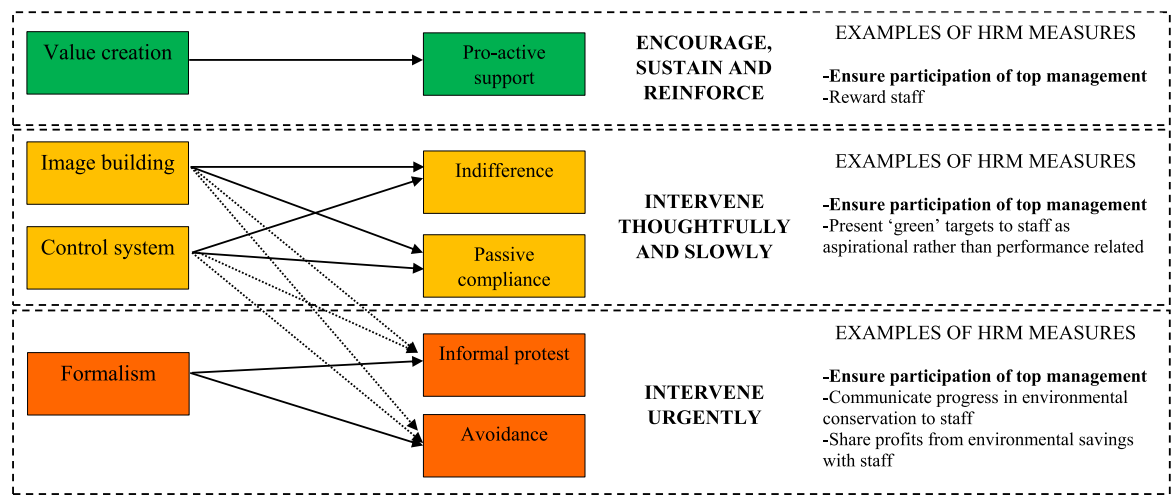


Fig. 1. Perceptions and the related behavioural response towards ‘green’ practices among luxury hotel employees. Legend: POSITIVE NEUTRAL NEGATIVE Straight lines = direct relationships; Dotted lines = Potential indirect relationships.

which are better aligned with the corporate goals of environmental sustainability.

The study outlined five categories of potential behavioural response of frontline employees to ‘green’ practices. Positive behaviour in the form of pro-active support was previously identified in the literature (Y. J. Kim et al., 2019; Y.H. Kim et al., 2019). However, the literature did not establish the forms of neutral and negative staff behaviour. This current study found that some employees felt indifferently towards environmental conservation i.e., neither engaging with ‘green’ practices willingly and actively, nor resisting the implementation of ‘green’ practices. Likewise, this current study demonstrated that some employees chose to engage with ‘green’ practices in fear of punishment or in pursuit of a reward. Most importantly, this current study showcased that some staff opposed environmental conservation. This opposition was found to be ‘soft’ i.e., exemplified by informal protest, and ‘hard’ i.e., articulated by explicit disengagement with ‘green’ practices. Hence, this current study demonstrated the ‘dark’ side of the implementation of ‘green’ practices in luxury hotels, thus adding to the yet scarce and fragmented evidence highlighted by Chan and Hawkins (2010) and Sourvinou and Filimonau (2018).

The current study yielded findings complementing research on organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE) in the context of luxury hospitality (Zientara and Zamojska, 2018). OCBE is concerned with voluntary and reward-free engagement of employees with ‘green’ practices at work that extend beyond the job requirements and/or contract obligations (Pham et al., 2019). OCBE, therefore, assumes that staff receive emotional satisfaction or even an emotional reward from conserving the environment (Zhao and Zhou, 2021). When projected into the findings of the current study, positive behaviour of employees in the form of pro-active support (Fig. 1) corresponded to OCBE as defined in the literature.

However, the opposite of OCBE is involuntary behaviour of employees towards environmental conservation (Kim et al., 2020). Staff can engage with ‘green’ practices at work unwillingly i.e., simply because they are required to (for example, it is prescribed in their contract or requested by a supervisor) or in fear of punishment (Zientara

and Zamojska, 2018). In the context of the current study, the neutral and negative behavioural patterns established in interviews (Fig. 1) corresponded to this involuntary employee behaviour, thus adding to the literature on OCBE in luxury hotels.

From the management perspective, the current study outlined measures which could encourage frontline staff to engage with ‘green’ practices (Fig. 1). Positive perceptions and behaviour should be sustained and reinforced. To this end, employees should be regularly reminded about the critical role they play in conservation of natural resources and, ultimately, in the mission of their hotels to become good social citizens. This can prompt voluntary pro-environmental behaviour at work, thus being aligned with the goals and principles of OCBE (Pham et al., 2019).

Employees can also be rewarded for their dedication to environmental conservation. The rewards can be intangible, such as positive supervisory feedback and recognition. However, the rewards can also be monetised. For instance, staff can be encouraged to provide feedback on how to save energy or water. The financial savings achieved from implementing ‘green’ practices in the result of this feedback can then be shared with employees, thus reinforcing their pro-environmental commitment (Filimonau and Magklaropoulou, 2020). Although monetary rewards violate the principles of OCBE (Zientara and Zamojska, 2018), they can nevertheless aid luxury hotel administrations in promoting environmental conservation among those employees who participate in ‘green’ practices involuntarily. However, the ‘right’ balance is necessitated in the design and deployment of such rewards to ensure that hotel staff do not conserve the environment purely because of financial benefits. Raising environmental awareness of employees and facilitating the transition towards voluntary engagement with environmental conservation should be the ultimate goal of luxury hotel administrations. Using the above (tangible and intangible) reward examples, but also other ‘best practices’ in facilitating pro-environmental employee behaviour, HRM departments should develop and deploy dedicated policies and procedures, targeting staff with different, positive, neutral and negative, perceptions and the related patterns of workplace behaviour.

The largest number of frontline employees were neutral in their perceptions of 'green' practices and the related behaviour. These employees represent the most important workforce category to be targeted by hotel administrations as they can move towards the positive, but they can also slip towards the negative, range of the 'perception-behaviour' spectrum. 'Green' HRM policies and procedures should aim at engaging these employees thoughtfully and slowly (Fig. 1). First, hotel administrations should signal frontline staff their genuine corporate commitment towards environmental sustainability. Top managers can showcase this by practicing environmental conservation at work (Su and Swanson, 2019). Second, 'green' HRM policies and procedures should be presented to employees as 'aspirational' rather than mandatory, thus reassuring staff that the goals of environmental conservation are visionary rather than performance-related (Chan and Hawkins, 2010). This measure can reduce staff's scepticism towards 'green' practices and discourage passive compliance. If combined with other measures, such as rewards, this measure can even prompt positive attitudes and behaviour among frontline employees.

The frontline employees with negative perceptions of environmental conservation in luxury hotels and negative behavioural response in the form of opposition/protest and disengagement require urgent attention from hotel administrations (Fig. 1). These employees view 'green' practices from the perspective of hypocrisy, symbolism and even greenwashing. Hotel administrations need to design measures to change such perceptions and trigger staff engagement.

First, frontline employees should be explained the purpose of 'green' practices, thus breaking the perception of greenwashing. The progress made by a hotel in achieving its 'green' goals should be regularly communicated to workforce and become a dedicated agenda item in departmental and team meetings (Chou, 2014). Second, to avoid accusation in symbolism, hotel administrations should constantly demonstrate their commitment to environmental sustainability. Similar to the case of employees with neutral perceptions, this can be achieved by routinely involving top executives in pro-environmental actions or engaging top executives in inter-departmental sustainability competitions with other hotel staff (Haldorai et al., 2022). The progress in environmental conservation should be celebrated and the champions should be named, complemented and/or rewarded. Lastly, to address the negative perception of hypocrisy, profit-sharing with staff can be considered (Filimonau and Magklarpoulou, 2020).

6. Conclusions

The success of implementation of 'green' practices in luxury hotels depends on genuine engagement of frontline staff. This engagement is subject to how employees perceive 'green' practices. Research has established positive relationships between 'green' practices, staff perceptions and behaviour. Little attention has, however, been paid to negative perceptions and the resultant disengagement of employees with environmental conservation, especially in luxury hotels.

This current study revealed a range of frontline staff's perceptions and related behavioural responses towards the implementation of 'green' practices in luxury hotels in China. The study showcased that many employees developed neutral perceptions and behaviour while some exemplified negative attitudes and, consequently, disengaged with environmental conservation. The study demonstrated the importance for hotels to account for the positive but especially neutral and negative perceptions and behavioural responses of employees. More nuanced research on this topic can aid hotel administrations in designing 'green' HRM policies and procedures for counteracting negative perceptions and resultant disengagement with 'green' practices. Measures were proposed in the current study to target employees with positive, neutral, and negative perceptions and behaviour.

Given that this exploratory study employed the methods of qualitative research for data collection and analysis, future research should aim at generalising and confirming this study's findings by using a larger and

more representative sample. The geographical focus of this study on China implies that future research should replicate this study in a different market. Further, this study was only concerned with luxury hotels due to perceived incompatibility between the notions of luxury and environmental sustainability. Future research should aim at expanding the scope of analysis towards other hotel categories, such as limited-budget and mid-range. Lastly, this study focused on frontline employees. Future research should look at other hotel stakeholders, such as managers and top executives. This is to investigate the feasibility of measures which (luxury) hotels can adopt to encourage employees' positive perceptions and engage them with the implementation of corporate pro-environmental agendas.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Viachaslau Filimonau: Conceptualization, Data curation, Data analysis, Formal analysis, Supervision, Writing – original draft. **Lixi Bai:** Conceptualization, Data collection, Data analysis, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft. **Alexander Romanenko:** Data collection, Data analysis, Data curation, Writing – review & editing. **Valentina Tarkanova:** Data collection, Data analysis, Data curation, Writing – review & editing. **Vladimir A. Ermolaev:** Data collection, Data analysis, Data curation, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors hereby declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. Supporting information

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103567.

References

- Aboramadan, M., Karatepe, O.M., 2021. Green human resource management, perceived green organizational support and their effects on hotel employees' behavioral outcomes. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 33 (10), 3199–3222.
- Albrecht, S.L., Bakker, A.B., Gruman, J.A., Macey, W.H., Saks, A.M., 2015. Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage: an integrated approach. *J. Organ. Eff.: People Perform.* 2 (1), 7–35.
- Amatulli, C., De Angelis, M., Korschun, D., Romani, S., 2018. Consumers' perceptions of luxury brands' CSR initiatives: an investigation of the role of status and conspicuous consumption. *J. Clean. Prod.* 194, 277–287.
- Amatulli, C., De Angelis, M., Stoppani, A., 2021. The appeal of sustainability in luxury hospitality: an investigation on the role of perceived integrity. *Tour. Manag.* 83, 104228.
- Bohdanowicz, P., Zientara, P., 2009. Hotel companies' contribution to improving the quality of life of local communities and the well-being of their employees. *Tour. Hosp. Res.* 9 (2), 147–158.
- Bohdanowicz, P., Zientara, P., Novotna, E., 2011. International hotel chains and environmental protection: an analysis of Hilton's we care! programme (Europe, 2006–2008). *J. Sustain. Tour.* 19 (7), 797–816.
- Bourdieu, P., 2005. *Habitus*. In: Hillier, J., Rooksby, E. (Eds.), *Habitus: A Sense of Place*. Aldershot, Ashgate, pp. 43–52.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2021. To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qual. Res. Sport, Exerc. Health* 13 (2), 201–216.
- Burnard, P., 1991. A method of analysing interview transcripts in qualitative research. *Nurse Educ. Today* 11, 461–466.
- Chan, E.S., Hawkins, R., 2010. Attitude towards EMSs in an international hotel: an exploratory case study. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 29 (4), 641–651.
- Chan, E.S., Hon, A.H., 2020. Application of extended theory of planned behavior model to ecological behavior intentions in the food and beverage service industry. *J. Foodserv. Bus. Res.* 23 (2), 169–191.
- Chan, E.S., Hon, A.H., Chan, W., Okumus, F., 2014. What drives employees' intentions to implement green practices in hotels? The role of knowledge, awareness, concern and ecological behaviour. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 40, 20–28.
- Chan, E.S., Hon, A.H., Okumus, F., Chan, W., 2017. An empirical study of environmental practices and employee ecological behavior in the hotel industry. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* 41 (5), 585–608.
- Chan, E.S.W., 2021. Influencing stakeholders to reduce carbon footprints: hotel managers' perspective. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 94, 102807.
- Chan, E.S.W., Hawkins, R., 2012. Application of EMSs in a hotel context: a case study. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 31 (2), 405–418.

- Chan, E.S.W., Okumus, F., Chan, W., 2018. Barriers to environmental technology adoption in hotels. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* 42 (5), 829–852.
- Chan, E.S.W., Okumus, F., Chan, W., 2020. What hinders hotels' adoption of environmental technologies: a quantitative study. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 84, 102324.
- Chen, L.F., 2019. Hotel chain affiliation as an environmental performance strategy for luxury hotels. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 77, 1–6.
- Chi, X., Meng, B., Lee, H., Chua, B.L., Han, H., 2023. Pro-environmental employees and sustainable hospitality and tourism businesses: Exploring strategic reasons and global motives for green behaviors. *Bus. Strategy Environ. Press.* <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3359>.
- Chou, C.J., 2014. Hotels' environmental policies and employee personal environmental beliefs: interactions and outcomes. *Tour. Manag.* 40, 436–446.
- Choy, M., Cheng, J., Yu, K., 2021. Evaluating the environmental sustainability strategies of the housekeeping department: the case of an international hotel chain in Hong Kong. *China Tour. Crit.* 2 (1), 115–132.
- Chua, B.L., Han, H., 2022. Green hotels: the state of green hotel research and future prospects. *J. Travel Tour. Mark.* 39 (5), 465–483.
- Creswell, J.W., 2013. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Dolnicar, S., 2015. In future, I would love to see ... a reflection on the state of quantitative tourism research. *Tour. Rev.* 70 (4), 259–263.
- Donia, M.B., Sirsly, C.-A.T., 2016. Determinants and consequences of employee attributions of corporate social responsibility as substantive or symbolic. *Eur. Manag. J.* 34 (3), 232–242.
- Dutt, C.S., Harvey, W.S., Shaw, G., 2023. Exploring the relevance of Social Exchange Theory in the Middle East: a case study of tourism in Dubai, UAE. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* 25 (2), 198–220.
- Eriksson, P., Kovalainen, A., 2015. *Qualitative methods in business research: a practical guide to social research.* Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Fatoki, O., 2019. Hotel employees' pro-environmental behaviour: effect of leadership behaviour, institutional support and workplace spirituality. *Sustainability* 11, 4135.
- Filimonau, V., Magklaropoulou, A., 2020. Exploring the viability of a new 'pay-as-you-use' energy management model in budget hotels. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 89, 102538.
- Filimonau, V., Uddin, R., 2021. Food waste management in chain-affiliated and independent consumers' places: a preliminary and exploratory study. *J. Clean. Prod.* 319, 128721.
- Filimonau, V., Derqui, B., Matute, J., 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic and organisational commitment of senior hotel managers. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 91, 102659.
- Gibbs, G.R., 2007. Thematic coding and categorizing. In: Gibbs, G.R. (Ed.), *Analyzing qualitative data.* Sage, London, pp. 38–56.
- Haldorai, K., Kim, W.G., Garcia, R.L.F., 2022. Top management green commitment and green intellectual capital as enablers of hotel environmental performance: The mediating role of green human resource management. *Tour. Manag.* 88, 104431.
- Hayashi, P., Abib, G., Hoppen, N., 2019. Validity in qualitative research: a processual approach. *Qual. Rep.* 24 (1), 98–112.
- Holden, M.T., Lynch, P., 2004. Choosing the appropriate methodology: understanding research philosophy. *Mark. Rev.* 4 (4), 397–409.
- Khatter, A., White, L., Pyke, J., McGrath, M., 2021. Stakeholders' influence on environmental sustainability in the Australian hotel industry. *Sustainability* 13, 1351.
- Kim, S.-H., Choi, Y., 2013. Hotel employees' perception of green practices. *Int. J. Hosp. Tour. Adm.* 14 (2), 157–178.
- Kim, W.G., McGinley, S., Choi, H.M., Agmapisarn, C., 2020. Hotels' environmental leadership and employees' organizational citizenship behavior. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 87, 102375.
- Kim, Y.H., Barber, N., Kim, D.K., 2019. Sustainability research in the hotel industry: past, present, and future. *J. Hosp. Mark. Manag.* 28 (5), 576–620.
- Kim, Y.J., Kim, W.G., Choi, H.M., Phetvaroon, K., 2019. The effect of green human resource management on hotel employees' eco-friendly behavior and environmental performance. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 76, 83–93.
- Köseoglu, M.A., Hon, A., Kalargyrou, V., Okumus, F., 2021. Hiring people with disabilities as a CSR strategy in the tourism industry. *Tour. Anal.* 26 (1), 41–55.
- Lavers, M.-J.D., 2013. Philosophical paradigms, grounded theory, and perspectives on emergence. *SAGE Open* 1–6 (October–December).
- Lincoln, Y.S., Guba, E., 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry.* Sage, Beverly Hills, CA.
- Luu, T.T., 2019. Building employees' organizational citizenship behavior for the environment: the role of environmentally-specific servant leadership and a moderated mediation mechanism. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 31 (1), 406–426.
- Marinakou, E., Giousmpasoglou, C., 2019. Talent management and retention strategies in luxury hotels: evidence from four countries. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 31 (10), 3855–3878.
- Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., Fontenot, R., 2013. Does sample size matter in qualitative research?: A review of qualitative interviews in IS research. *J. Comput. Inf. Syst.* 54 (1), 11–22.
- Meng, B., Lee, M.J., Chua, B.-L., Han, H., 2022. An integrated framework of behavioral reasoning theory, theory of planned behavior, moral norm and emotions for fostering hospitality/tourism employees' sustainable behaviors. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 34 (12), 4516–4538.
- Mensah, H.K., Agyapong, A., Osei, B.A., 2021. Effect of corporate social responsibility on eco-citizenship behaviour in luxury hotels: eco-lifestyle as a moderator. *J. Glob. Responsib.* 12 (2), 189–209.
- Moffa, G., Di Gregorio, M., 2023. Exploring the use of WeChat for qualitative social research: The case of Italian digital diaspora in Shanghai. *Front. Sociol.* 8, 26.
- Moscardo, G., 2017. Sustainable luxury in hotels and resorts: is it possible? In: Gardetti, M.A. (Ed.), *Sustainable management of luxury.* Springer, Berlin, pp. 163–189.
- Nederhof, A.J., 1985. Methods of coping with social desirability bias: a review. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.* 15 (3), 263–280.
- Nestle, 2023. *Innovation and sustainability vital for hospitality despite cost-of-living crisis – say industry leaders in the latest podcast.* Available from: (<https://www.nestle.co.uk/en-gb/media/pressreleases/allpressreleases/innovation-sustainability-vital-nestle-professional>) [Accessed 16 May 2023].
- Okumus, F., Köseoglu, M.A., Chan, E., Hon, A., Avci, U., 2019. How do hotel employees' environmental attitudes and intentions to implement green practices relate to their ecological behavior? *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* 39, 193–200.
- Peng, N., Chen, A., 2019a. Examining consumers' luxury hotel stay repurchase intentions-incorporating a luxury hotel brand attachment variable into a luxury consumption value model. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 31 (3), 1348–1366.
- Peng, N., Chen, A., 2019b. Luxury hotels going green—the antecedents and consequences of consumer hesitation. *J. Sustain. Tour.* 27 (9), 1374–1392.
- Peng, X., Lee, S., Lu, Z., 2020. Employees' perceived job performance, organizational identification, and pro-environmental behaviors in the hotel industry. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 90, 102632.
- Pereira, V., Silva, G.M., Dias, Á., 2021. Sustainability practices in hospitality: case study of a luxury hotel in arrábida natural park. *Sustainability* 13, 3164.
- Pham, N.T., Tučková, Z., Jabbour, C.J.C., 2019. Greening the hospitality industry: how do green human resource management practices influence organizational citizenship behavior in hotels? A mixed-methods study. *Tour. Manag.* 72, 386–399.
- Qian, L., 2021. *Upscale hotel market booming on Chinese mainland.* Available from: (<https://www.shine.cn/biz/economy/2105128813/>) [Accessed 17 December 2021].
- Rahman, I., Park, J., Chi, C.G.-q., 2015. Consequences of "greenwashing": consumers' reactions to hotels' green initiatives. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 27 (6), 1054–1081.
- Ramkissoon, H., Mavondo, F., Sowamber, V., 2020. Corporate social responsibility at LUX* resorts and hotels: satisfaction and loyalty implications for employee and customer social responsibility. *Sustainability* 12, 9745.
- Renwick, D.W., Redman, T., Maguire, S., 2013. Green human resource management: a review and research agenda. *Int. J. Manag. Rev.* 15 (1), 1–14.
- Sahin, S., Baloglu, S., Topcuoglu, E., 2019. The influence of green message types on advertising effectiveness for luxury and budget hotel segments. *Cornell Hosp. Q.* 61 (4), 443–460.
- Salehi, M., Filimonau, V., Asadzadeh, M., Ghaderi, E., 2021. Strategies to improve energy and carbon efficiency of luxury hotels in Iran. *Sustain. Prod. Consum.* 26, 1–15.
- Scheidler, S., Edinger-Schons, L.M., Spanjol, J., Wieseke, J., 2019. Scrooge posing as Mother Teresa: how hypocritical social responsibility strategies hurt employees and firms. *J. Bus. Ethics* 157 (2), 339–358.
- Schwartz-Shea, P., Yanow, D., 2012. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes.* Routledge, New York.
- Scotland, J., 2012. Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *Engl. Lang. Teach.* 5, 9–16.
- Serra-Cantalops, A., Peña-Miranda, D.D., Ramón-Cardona, J., Martorell-Cunill, O., 2018. Progress in research on CSR and the hotel industry (2006-2015). *Cornell Hosp. Q.* 59 (1), 15–38.
- Sharma, T., Chen, J., Liu, W.Y., 2020. Eco-innovation in hospitality research (1998-2018): a systematic review. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 32 (2), 913–933.
- Sotomayor, S., Ventas, N., Gronau, W., 2021. Corporate social responsibility in luxury hotels in Cusco (Peru) to benefit indigenous communities. *Hosp. Soc.* 11 (2), 137–157.
- Sourvinou, A., Filimonau, V., 2018. Planning for an environmental management programme in a luxury hotel and its perceived impact on staff: an exploratory case study. *J. Sustain. Tour.* 26 (4), 649–667.
- Su, C.H.J., Chen, C.D., 2020. Does sustainability index matter to the hospitality industry? *Tour. Manag.* 81, 104158.
- Su, L., Swanson, S.R., 2019. Perceived corporate social responsibility's impact on the well-being and supportive green behaviors of hotel employees: The mediating role of the employee-corporate relationship. *Tour. Manag.* 72, 437–450.
- Sukhu, A., Scharff, R., 2018. Will 'doing right' lead to 'doing well'? An examination of green behavior. *J. Consum. Mark.* 35 (2), 169–182.
- Tahir, R., Athar, M.R., Afzal, A., 2020. The impact of greenwashing practices on green employee behaviour: Mediating role of employee value orientation and green psychological climate. *Cogent Bus. Manag.* 7 (1), 1781996.
- Teerovengadam, V., Nunkoo, R., 2018. Sampling design in tourism and hospitality research. In: Nunkoo, R. (Ed.), *Handbook of Research Methods for Tourism and Hospitality Management.* Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. 477–488.
- Truss, C., Shantz, A., Soane, E., Alfes, K., Delbridge, R., 2013. Employee engagement, organisational performance and individual well-being: exploring the evidence, developing the theory. *Int. J. Hum. Resour. Manag.* 24 (14), 2657–2669.
- Wang, Y., 2016. Modeling predictors of restaurant employees' green behaviour: comparison of six attitude-behaviour models. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 58, 66–81.
- Wang, Y., Kim, S., Rafferty, A., Sanders, K., 2020. Employee perceptions of HR practices: a critical review and future directions. *Int. J. Hum. Resour. Manag.* 31, 128–173.
- Which? 2021. *Hotel star ratings explained.* Available from: (<https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/uk-hotel-chains/article/hotel-star-ratings-explained-a0bgV3M8kfx2>) [Accessed 16 May 2023].
- Yoon, D., Jang, J., Lee, J.(J.), 2016. Environmental management strategy and organizational citizenship behaviors in the hotel industry: the mediating role of

organizational trust and commitment. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 28 (8), 1577–1597.

Zhao, H., Zhou, Q., 2021. Socially responsible human resource management and hotel employee organizational citizenship behavior for the environment: a social cognitive perspective. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 95, 102749.

Zientara, P., Zamojska, A., 2018. Green organizational climates and employee pro-environmental behaviour in the hotel industry. *J. Sustain. Tour.* 26 (7), 1142–1159.

Viachaslau Filimonau is Reader in Hospitality Innovation at the University of Surrey, UK. His research interests include sustainable mobilities, water and carbon footprint management in tourism and hospitality operations, and environmental management in tourism and hospitality enterprises.

Lixi Bai is a postgraduate student at Bournemouth University, UK. His research interests are sustainable hospitality operations and 'green' HRM.

Alexander Romanenko is Associate Professor within the Department of Fire Safety and Low Temperature Systems, Moscow, Russia. His research interests include food safety, and occupational safety at food enterprises.

Valentina Tarakanova is Head of the Department of Fire Safety and Low Temperature Systems, Moscow, Russia. Her research interest is food production, foodservice, and food safety.

Vladimir A. Ermolaev is Professor within the Department of Commodity Science and Expertise, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Moscow, Russia. His research interests include sustainable food production and consumption, food safety, and smart kitchen technology.