Planning for an environmental management programme in a luxury hotel and its

perceived impact on staff: an exploratory case study

Abstract

Hotels generate substantial environmental footprint. To minimise this footprint, hoteliers are increasingly engaging in environmental management programmes (EMPs). When designing such a programme, it is important that hotel managers do not only evaluate its effect on corporate strategy, finance and reputation, but also analyse its impact on staff. This is because employees are in the forefront of hotel environmental management interventions and can determine their success or failure. This is also due to the impact that EMPs can make on staff attitudes, both at work and in private life. This study explores how hotel employees perceive an opportunity to engage in an EMP in a luxury hotel. It finds that a well-designed and implemented programme can strengthen the levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment among hotel staff, subject to explaining the reasons for and outlining the benefits of environmental management interventions, incentivised participation, regular evaluation and adequate training. The study also shows that EMPs implemented in a hotel may drive more environmentally-responsible behaviour of employees outside work.

Keywords

Environmental management programme; hospitality industry; employee perception; job satisfaction; organisational commitment; luxury hotel, UK

1. INTRODUCTION

The need for more responsible, environment-benign corporate performance has long been recognised (Chou 2014). This concerns all sectors of the global economy and particularly applies to the hospitality industry whose environmental impacts are rising (Kasim 2009). The growing stakeholder pressure suggests that the environmental performance of hospitality enterprises ought to be improved (Siti-Nabiha *et al.* 2014).

The status of a socially and environmentally responsible commercial venture brings a number of intrinsic and extrinsic advantages (Font 2002) that can encourage hospitality enterprises to integrate sustainability principles into their operations (Dief and Font 2012; Font and Harris 2004; Tamajon and Font 2013). Work to understand the extent of these advantages has accelerated research on the role of environmental management programmes (EMPs) in hospitality business performance (Boley and Uysal 2014) alongside their effect on corporate marketing strategy (Hays and Ozretic-Dosen 2014), customer (Baker and Crompton 2000; Goldstein *et al.* 2008) and managerial (Garay and Font 2012; Huimin and Ryan 2011) perceptions. Although EMPs affect staff, employee perceptions and attitudes to environmental management interventions in the hospitality industry have been addressed by only a fraction of studies (Chou 2014).

Employees are instrumental in the successful deployment of environmental management interventions (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004). Concurrently, an effectively implemented EMP can contribute to staff commitment, thus strengthening organisational bonding, enhancing retention, improving job satisfaction and boosting employee morale (Brokaw 2009; Park and Levy 2013; Supanti *et al.* 2015). This occurs because EMPs raise environmental awareness of employees which enables staff to align themselves with the sustainability values of the organisation, and act pro-actively and collaboratively towards the achievement of these values (Park and Levy 2013). In contrast, if employees perceive that

their sustainability values are compromised by the corporate financial gains, then a discrepancy between the staff's ethics and the organisation's ethics arises and contributes to job dissatisfaction and low retention (Koh and Boo 2001).

Human resource management (HRM) plays an important role in driving the implementation of EMPs in the company (Wagner 2013). It can facilitate organisational change by using the appropriate instruments to motivate employees, engage staff in corporate sustainability efforts, and develop them as environmentally responsible individuals outside work (Datta 2015; Muster and Schrader 2011). However, little is known about how hospitality employees perceive EMPs in the workplace, which hampers development of effective HRM approaches for their engagement (Chan and Hawkins 2010). Case studies of specific hospitality sectors conducted in different political and socio-economic contexts are necessary to establish trends (Chou 2014).

This study contributes theoretically and to knowledge by critically evaluating the perceived impact of EMPs implemented in a specific hospitality sector, i.e. luxury hotels, and in a particular market, i.e. the UK, on staff work performance, morale and their environmental attitudes in the workplace, but also in personal lives. The focus is on the personal and professional values that hotel employees assign to the planned environmental management intervention. The study complements the growing research stream on the perceived impact of EMPs in hotels on employee job performance, satisfaction and motivation alongside the mediating role of HRM in enhancing positive attitudes of staff and encouraging employee engagement.

2. IMPLEMENTING EMPS IN HOTELS

The environmental footprint of the hospitality industry is substantial (Myung *et al.* 2012). Due to their 24-hour operational lifecycle, a variety of amenities on offer and reckless

consumer behaviour (Filimonau *et al.* 2011), hotels consume significant amounts of resources, generate large carbon footprint and produce excessive quantities of waste (Ball and Taleb 2011; Hu *et al.* 2015; Mensah 2013). Given the on-going steady growth of international tourism, the environmental impacts of hotels are anticipated to increase, requiring focused attention if there is to be meaningful mitigation.

There are manifold drivers for integration of sustainability thinking in hospitality business operations, including increased costs of access to natural resources, reinforced environmental legislation, enlarged consumer demand and enhanced pressure from shareholders and employees (Chan *et al.* 2014b; Cherapanukorn and Focken 2014; Dief and Font 2010; Fraj *et al.* 2015; Graci and Dodds 2008; Leonidou *et al.* 2013; Mensah 2013; Siti-Nabiha *et al.* 2014; Tuan 2017). A high public profile of the hospitality industry draws attention of stakeholders to its environmental performance which emphasises the need for a transparent corporate environmental strategy in hotels (Chung and Parker 2006). EMPs adopted by hoteliers constitute an integral part of their sustainability vision whose importance within the industry has recently grown (Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008a).

The benefits of adopting EMPs in hotels can be considered through the lens of resource based theory (Hart 1995). This theory suggests that competitive advantage, potential for positive market differentiation and financial incentives can drive company's commitment to protect the environment and contribute to the societal well-being (Aminudin 2013). When applied to hospitality, this suggests that hotels need to assign attention to the well-being of the public, the environment and the company's profits (Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008b; Nguen and Slater 2010) through productive cooperation with all stakeholders (Porter and Kramer 2006). Many hotels are therefore considering sustainability as a strategic, long-term priority, rather than as a short-term, stand-alone policy (Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011; Boley and Uysal 2014).

EMPs constitute a cornerstone of 'green business' operations that can be defined as the operations generating wealth while concurrently protecting the natural environment for future generations (Daft 2008). When translated to the hospitality context, a 'green' hotel is the one which aims to minimise the negative environmental and societal effects of its operations and educates its guests and staff about the environmental repercussions of their behaviour (Aminudin 2013; Gao and Mattila 2014; Stalcup *et al.* 2014). To aid in implementing EMPs internally, and to demonstrate organisational environmental commitment to the external stakeholders, hotels can opt to undergo eco-certification or adopt the environmental management systems (EMSs), such as ISO 14001 or EMAS (Leslie 2007). EMS enables its adopters to characterise an organisational culture and devise operational procedures and managerial practices for implementing and monitoring a corporate environmental policy that meets the international (in the case of ISO 14001) or European (in the case of EMAS) standards (Chan 2008; Rondinelli and Vastag 2000). EMSs do not aim to measure the environmental effects of business operations but provide a framework which assists companies in identifying and setting sustainability performance targets through better engagement with external (i.e. suppliers and customers) and internal (i.e. employees and top management) stakeholders (Poksinska *et al.* 2003). The main benefits of EMSs include: cost minimisation, improved customer relations, increased staff environmental awareness and increased recognition from regulators (Daily and Huang 2001). Employee training, staff environmental awareness building campaigns and engagement exercises constitute the key components of EMSs (Rondinelli and Vastag 2000).

Broader adoption of EMPs in hotels is constrained by such factors as initial implementation costs, unpredictable consumer reaction, and lack of in-house expertise (Stalcup *et al.* 2014). Graci and Dodds (2008) argue that, despite the better resource availability, luxury hotels can be particularly reluctant to adopt EMPs as there is a

misconception in this hospitality sub-sector that environmental efforts do not align with luxury and may therefore compromise guest comfort. Staff may impose another obstacle as they may, deliberately or accidentally, disengage with environmental management interventions in luxury hotels or prohibit their implementation due to the skill gap, value-action gap and poor attitudes (Eldemerdash and Mohamed 2013). Despite these barriers, the example of Hilton (Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011) demonstrates that EMPs can be successfully integrated into the organisational strategies of luxury hotels through active involvement and support of employees.

3. HOTEL STAFF, THEIR PERCEPTION OF AND ENGAGEMENT IN EMPS

Hanna *et al.* (2000) posit that employees are critical in implementing EMPs in hospitality enterprises. To succeed in environmental management interventions, managers should account for staff perceptions while hotel employees should embrace and support the corporate sustainability agenda (Kim and Choi 2013). Operational improvements towards sustainability are only feasible in hotels when staff actively engage through self-directed work, learning and innovation (Hanna *et al.* 2000).

Organisations that invest in the psychological capital of its workforce can improve their environmental performance (Jabbour *et al.* 2015). The psychological capital identifies the different states of employee's emotional well-being that have a positive impact on work performance, such as optimism, self-efficacy, hope and resilience (Luthans and Youssef 2007). It is of particular importance for the hospitality industry where staff attitudes, mood and morale play a crucial role in work performance, determine the quality of service provision and drive consumer satisfaction (Salanova *et al.* 2005). The psychological capital is critical for hotels where employees are exposed to the increased levels of stress that affect negatively staff attitudes and morale and lead to job dissatisfaction (Paek *et al.* 2015).

Investing in the psychological capital of the hotel workforce is important because organisational sustainability commitment often implies that staff will be required to perform extra tasks in their job roles which may cause discomfort or even resistance (Hon *et al.* 2013). The level of employee engagement with EMPs in hotels will depend on three major factors: environmental knowledge, environmental awareness and environmental concern (Chan *et al.* 2014a;b). According to the traditional 'values-action' model, environmental knowledge affects pro-environmental behaviour (Chan and Hawkins 2010) via enhanced environmental awareness about environmental impacts (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). It triggers environmental concern because it makes individuals more sensitive to and conscious of environmental problems. Environmental concern is defined as an individual's feelings and behavioural intentions to protect the environment (Chan *et al.* 2014a). Following this approach, environmental concern among hotel staff will be influenced by the amount and quality of knowledge they receive from management regarding the environmental impacts of hospitality operations and how these impacts are mitigated (Chan *et al.* 2014b). Hotels can achieve better work attitudes, greater productivity and lower turnover when they fulfil their staff expectations concerning corporate sustainability performance (Chiang 2010). According to Paille *et al.* (2014), hospitality enterprises should identify the factors that can motivate staff to behave more responsibly to better capitalise upon corporate sustainability initiatives.

Although there are internal and external obstacles to the implementation of environmental interventions in the hospitality industry (Chan 2008), the number of hotels choosing to adopt EMPs is growing. This is partially due to a positive correlation found between organisational sustainability commitments and staff attitudes (Kim and Choi 2013). Hotels that adopt EMPs can enhance employee job satisfaction and shape positive perception of corporate culture and goals among staff (Chiang 2010). Shared values and beliefs can motivate employees to more actively engage with the enterprise and participate in its EMPs

(Govindarajulu and Daily 2004). EMPs in hotels can contribute to the perceived task significance by employees which makes them feel more meaningful and enables them to better identify themselves with the organisation (Raub and Blunschi 2013). EMPs generate a sense of belonging and improve employee self-esteem by providing opportunities to make a positive change (Paco and Nave 2013). The perception of making a positive change to the society makes staff more motivated and job satisfied, and also brings about the reduction of emotional exhaustion which is common in the hotel sector (Lamm *et al.* 2015). This creates strong organisational commitment which boosts staff morale (Paek *et al.* 2015). As a result, employees work harder in order to promote the well-being of the organisation and that of the society; they become more creative and develop a sense of responsibility (Spanjol *et al.* 2015). Lastly, due to organisational sustainability commitment, employees become more environment-conscious and may develop enhanced ethical values outside work (Chou 2014; Raub and Blunschi 2014).

The positive correlation between EMPs in hotels and employee job satisfaction can be explained by organisational justice and cognitive dissonance theories (Koh and Boo 2001; Dailey and Kirk 1992). Organisational justice theory argues that the feeling of justice that employees have can affect their perception towards the organisation they work for and, consequently, towards the corporate outcomes (Hartman *et al.* 1999). When staff perceive that the organisation engages in environmental management interventions, they feel that the acts of fairness and equity extend to them, thus leading to better motivation and job satisfaction (Koh and Boo 2001; Spanjol *et al.* 2015; Yen *et al.* 2013). Cognitive dissonance theory suggests that the employees encounter increased job satisfaction and less negative feelings when they work for a socially and environmentally responsible company (Viswesvaran *et al.* 1998). Corporate disengagement with environmental management

principles produces a negative ethical environment and a conflict arises because staff have to compromise their values of fairness and equity which causes stress (Schwepker 1999).

As part of the carefully designed corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda, EMPs in hotels can further contribute to the enhancement of organisational identification by inspiring employees and offsetting negative feelings emerging from laborious hospitality employment (Aminudin 2013). Organisational identification is the feeling of oneness that employees have with a company (Chong and Tan 2010) which positively correlates with staff job satisfaction and retention (Aminudin 2013). According to social identity theory, when employees perceive that their employer has shared values, they view their working environment is an extension of their personal identity, and operate collaboratively towards the corporate vision as a result (Park and Levy 2014). However, EMPs in hotels should be designed with caution and always with the employees' interests in mind. Brody (2014) shows how a poorly developed EMP in the Starwood Hotels and Resorts has brought about job dissatisfaction among staff and caused resistance. This is due to the necessity to do more work for the same remuneration to achieve corporate environmental goals. All this demonstrates the critical role of employees in the success and failure of EMPs adopted in the hospitality industry. Dedicated HRM strategies are necessary to engage staff with the corporate sustainability agenda (Dias-Angelo *et al.* 2014).

4. **THE MEDIATING ROLE OF HRM**

HRM plays a manifold role in the successful adoption of EMPs in hotels. First, by encouraging staff participation, HRM can affect their motivation (Guerci *et al.* 2015) via transparent communication, attractive rewarding and regular appraisal of employee engagement (Paille *et al.* 2014; Raub and Blunschi 2014). Second, HRM should integrate the sustainability vision in recruitment (Grolleau *et al.* 2012) as, according to signalling theory, candidates are often attracted to work for a company with the 'green' credentials (Greening

and Turban 2000). This is particularly true for the hospitality industry with its large share of non-professional employees who, according to Grolleau *et al.* (2012), pay more attention to the corporate sustainability vision. Third, HRM should integrate the sustainability agenda into staff training, evaluation and development (Perron *et al.* 2006; Unnkrishnan and Hedge 2007). A successful environmental management intervention in hotels requires extensive environmental training to enhance employee commitment (Cook and Seith 1992; Dias-Angelo *et al.* 2014). Environmental training improves employee responsibility and builds loyalty which contributes to a positive public image and facilitates staff participation (Daily and Huang 2001). Environmental training positively affects employee behaviour at work and at home as it informs staff about the sustainability agenda and how it is embraced by their employer (Sammalisto and Brorson 2008). Through environmental training, employees can increase their adaptability to change and its lack can dissuade staff from participation in EMPs, thus inhibiting their success (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004).

Furthermore, to facilitate EMPs in hotels, HRM practices should empower employees. According to Leitch *et al.* (1995), empowerment gives staff the responsibility to identify environmental problems within business operations and enables them to take initiatives to address these problems (Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011). This enhances employee motivation to engage in EMPs (Mohrman *et al.* 1996). To empower employees, a corporate transformation into horizontal management may be required as it encourages staff to make suggestions, be more involved and have autonomy, thus making environmental management interventions in hotels more effective (Daily and Huang 2001).

Pro-active employee involvement is a determinant of EMPs in hotels (Rothenberg 2003). It can be facilitated via HRM encouraged teamwork which generates ideas through cooperation, coopetition, communication and collective knowledge (Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011; Leitch *et al.* 1995). This collective knowledge represents a particular value for an

organisation as it enables innovation (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004). HRM should also integrate environmental management considerations into the design of evaluation & reward systems as these will enhance staff commitment to achieve corporate sustainability goals (Chan and Hawkins 2010; Epstein and Roy 1997). Rewards can take various forms (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004) but should be individualised (Daily and Huang 2001) as a merit-based reward system leads to better individual staff commitment (Barrier 1996). This facilitates creativity and innovation (Amabile *et al.* 1996).

5. EMPS AT WORK AND THEIR EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES' PRIVATE LIVES

The primary challenge of HRM in implementing EMPs in hospitality enterprises is attributed to a prospective conflict between staff routine behavioural patterns and new demands imposed by EMPs in the workplace (Muster and Schrader 2011). HRM practices should be designed in a way that they affect staff both at work and at home (Elloy and Smith 2003; Spaargaren 2003). The settings approach suggests that staff behaviour is strongly influenced by certain settings that can facilitate or inhibit sustainable consumption (Muster 2010). Work settings can aid employees in acquiring new behavioural patterns, thus leading to more sustainable consumption in routine situations, such as at home (Muster 2010; Schrader 2007). This phenomenon is known as the spillover effect whose occurrence can be facilitated by certain corporate characteristics (Guest 2002). First, an organisation is considered a place of training and continuous learning (Crane *et al.* 2008). Sustainable consumption should be taught in the workplace settings rather than in the free time settings because staff learning will benefit from better training resources (Selsky and Parker 2005). Second, the hierarchical structure of the organisation implies that managers can act as role models, exemplifying sustainable consumption patterns to their subordinates (Daily and

Huang 2001). Lastly, organisations that have adopted EMPs can demonstrate the tangible benefits of sustainable consumption more effectively (Muster 2010).

The concept of green work-life balance (GWLB) can be used to describe the sustainability interaction effects of the work and private life domains of staff (Soderholm 2010). GWLB ensures that employees integrate environmental values in their private and professional lives by supporting the positive interactions between life-to-work and work-to-life (Datta 2015; Edwards and Rothbard 2000). By applying the GWLB concept, a hospitality enterprise can either motivate employees to adopt environmental attitudes in their personal life (so-called work-to-life interventions) or support transfer of the environmental management experiences of staff from their private lives to the workplace (so-called life-to-work interventions) (Ryan and Kossek 2008). Ideally, the work-to-life and the life-to-work interventions should co-exist, thus making the maximum positive effect on employee commitment to engage with EMPs at home and in the workplace (Thompson and Bunderson 2001).

The literature review has shown the potential advantages of implementing EMPs in the hospitality industry but, concurrently, highlighted the lack of research on how EMPs affect hotel employees, both at work and in their day-to-day life. This underlines an important knowledge gap which this study has set to address. Next section outlines the research design adopted for the purpose of this study.

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

Although the impact of EMPs adopted by hospitality enterprises on employee attitudes, job motivation, job satisfaction, and pro-environmental values in private life is recognised, it has been under-researched (Chou 2014). Luxury hotels constitute a particularly interesting research context because they can serve as the 'role models' by adopting EMPs and, thus,

setting trends for other hospitality sectors (Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011). However, the exclusive nature of luxury hotel operations can cause managerial reluctance, or even lead to managerial unwillingness, to implement EMPs in fear of compromising consumer expectations and imposing extra pressures on employees (Cherapanukorn and Focken 2014). It is therefore important to investigate the value of adopting EMPs for luxury hotel managers (Moscardo 2017).

This paper contributes to knowledge by reporting on a case study of a luxury hotel in London whose management have committed to broader integrate environmental management values into business operations. In pursuit of these values, a decision was made to implement an EMP in the hotel and engage with EMSs but, prior to deployment, feedback on the envisaged effect was sought from staff. As part of the new corporate vision, the management have committed to make the necessary investments to the hotel infrastructure to achieve savings in energy and water use. The role of staff was envisaged as active promoters of and participants in the environmental sustainability-driven agenda.

To collate and analyse the employee feedback, this study adopted the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research methods generate a deeper understanding of human behaviours and feelings, investigate motivations and describe the true meanings that people attach to a specific phenomenon or an experience, with subsequent building of hypotheses and theories (Ritchie and Lewis 2006). Qualitative research was deemed appropriate given that staff perceptions of EMPs in hotels alongside the effect of these programmes on employee performance remain under-studied (Chou 2014) while the generative and open nature of qualitative research enabled an in-depth exploration of these issues to create a basis for further scientific or managerial development (Ritchie and Lewis 2006).

It was proposed to collect primary data via in-depth, semi-structured interviews with hotel staff. These were preferred to focus groups due to the busy nature of the hotel business

under study which made the organisation and administration of focus groups difficult. Semi-structured interviews were also preferred due to their greater investigative flexibility and enhanced participant engagement (May 2002). The proposed method of primary data collection and analysis was discussed with hotel management and subsequently approved. The interview schedule was designed based on findings from the literature review and structured in five major themes: general knowledge and perception of environmental management practices, at work and in private life; attitudes to the potential adoption of an EMP in the workplace, alongside its perceived effect on job motivation and satisfaction; the role of HRM practices in facilitating staff engagement with an EMP at work; and the green work-life balance (GWLB).

The project employed a case study approach as it was conducted in a busy (average annual occupancy of circa 90%), five-star hotel located in central London. The case study hotel is an established business venture which comprised 69 rooms of different comfort categories (ranging from deluxe to suite) and had a number of leisure (i.e. a fitness club) and catering (a Michelin star restaurant) facilities on site. It employed circa 150 staff, both British and international, mostly on a contractual basis. At the time of the study, aside from basic on-site recycling of solid waste, the case study hotel had no established EMP in place.

The sampling was purposive as participants were recruited from among willing hotel staff. To capture the diversity of views and experiences, stratified random sampling (Marshall *et al.* 2013) was adopted in an effort to balance out the demographical profiles of participants, their hospitality work experience, the departments they represented and the hotel roles they played (Table 1). To disguise participant identify, interview results were anonymised by assigning pseudonyms. The interviews were designed to be informal; they were conducted by a fellow member of staff who had championed to lead on the implementation of the future EMP in the case study hotel. The champion was a valued, long-serving member of staff who

had good working and personal relationship established with all hotel employees, and was trained to administer semi-structured interviews. This included running two full-scale, trial interviews with academics that possessed expert knowledge on qualitative data collection and analysis and two pilot interviews with the representatives of the case study hotel's operations management team.

Social desirability bias is the effect which represents the tendency of interview participants to respond in a way which is socially acceptable by the others so as to get their approval (King and Bruner 2000) and presents a significant challenge to the findings of the kind of research undertaken in this study. However, at the time of interviews, participants were unaware about the 'Green Champion' status of the interviewer; they were further largely unaware of the managerial intention to implement an EMP in the case study hotel. The interviews took the form of friendly discussions held in informal settings (for example, during a lunch break) around the topics of the prospective 'green management' agenda which might be adopted by the hotel in the near future. The decision to use the 'Green Champion' when interviewing staff was taken to give greater importance to the need to conduct the interviews with an existing member of staff, who understood the issues and could conduct the interviews in a friendly, informal manner rather than use an external person, unfamiliar to the case study hotel's staff. However, the risk to the research in creating a social desirability bias is acknowledged.

[Insert Table 1 here]

The interviews were conducted within the period of July-August 2016 and lasted, on average, circa 35-50 minutes. Participants were not incentivised and the interviews were digitally recorded for subsequent transcription. The number of interviews (n=17) was determined by the 'saturation effect', i.e. the material collected was iteratively analysed (Srivastava and Hopwood 2009) and interviewing was drawn to a close after no new themes

were found to be emerging. Thomson (2010 cited by Marshall *et al.* 2013) argues that the 'saturation effect' is normally achieved with 10 to 30 interviews which this study fits into.

The thematic analysis was chosen to analyse the data collected due to its flexibility and recognised potential to produce a detailed and elaborate description of data (Braun and Clarke 2006). The thematic analysis was applied in this study through a semantic approach which enables the researcher to identify patterns within the data collected, assign significance to each pattern and interpret these patterns with a view to form theories (May 2002). Table 2 outlines the coding structure developed via thematic analysis in this study.

[Insert Table 2 here]

7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. Staff knowledge and perception of environmental management practices at work and in private life

In business context, sustainability represents a constant effort of a company to meet its profit targets while concurrently acting towards the common 'good' and the stakeholder well-being (Savitz and Weber 2007). Sustainability focuses on the environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions of business operations (Boley and Uysal 2014). It stands for corporate commitment to behave ethically, to support the quality-of-life of employees and their families, and to strengthen economic development of the local community (Johnson *et al.* 2014). Most participants were able to elaborate on the detrimental impacts of hotel operations and explained sustainability as an attempt of hospitality enterprises to protect the environment and preserve the natural resources for future generations. Although this environmental dimension of sustainability prevailed in participants' views, almost half showed solid understanding of the complex inter-linkages between hotel operations and their long-term effect on the environment, economy and society (Table 2). The responses were

consistent across the sample regardless of the staff role/department they worked in. According to Bohdanowicz and Zientara (2008b), hotels need to assign equal attention to their environmental and economic performance alongside societal well-being, while the first step towards achieving this goal is to ensure that hotel staff understand this corporate sustainability commitment and support its implementation in practice:

> '[Sustainability means that] The business has to make sure that it operates not only for the profit, but also with the bigger picture in mind. The business which takes care of its employees and the environment' (Poppy)

> 'It [sustainability] means that your business, in the long term, makes profit but, at the same time, engages with the local community and saves the environment' (Tom)

A probe was made to explore staff knowledge of any environmental management practices already adopted by the case study hotel. While the top management commitment is important in the design of environmental management interventions in hotels and adoption of EMSs (Chan and Wong 2006), it is critical to examine existing environmental measures implemented by the organisation alongside the employee awareness of these (Daily and Huang 2001). The knowledgeable and committed staff are more likely to identify areas for improvement and pro-actively engage with future environmental management interventions, subject to managerial support (Rondinelli and Vastag 2000). Most participants knew that the hotel recycled solid waste on site; in addition, a few extra areas were outlined where environmental management interventions were taking place on an ad-hoc basis (Table 2).

Procurement of organic/local produce and purchase of environment-benign cleaning agents were referred to as the operational areas that held substantial potential for environmental management interventions, subject to managerial reinforcement.

Employee adoption of environmental management practices at home was further studied. Most agreed to have implemented a range of the 'green' practices in private lives, such as waste recycling, use of 'smart' energy and water meters and purchase of local and organic produce. Generativity theory explains the high level of public commitment and concern for the well-being of the wider society which enhances social involvement and sustainability behavior in the home environment, but concurrently affects individual behaviour in the workplace (Wells *et al.* 2016). Given that most staff engage in, even though rather basic, environmental management actions at home, generativity theory pinpoints high probability of the alike behaviour at work, subject to external (managerial) stimulation.

7.2. Staff attitudes to the prospective adoption of an EMP in the workplace

The success of environmental management interventions in any business depends on employees and their responsiveness, involvement and support (Hanna *et al.* 2000). To gain acceptance of EMPs by staff in hospitality enterprises, it is important to ensure that environmental management interventions are carefully planned while employees' interests and needs are considered, with active staff participation in the design of these EMPs being an important precondition (Packer and Sharrar 2003). Consultations with staff are critical given that environmental management interventions at work can be seen by employees as interference with their personal freedom and as a coercive choice, and ultimately generate opposition. This holds true for hotels where EMPs often require employees to do extra tasks, many of which are manual, unpleasant, repetitive and/or laborious, such as waste separation, watering flowers and turning off lights. While staff can have positive attitudes to the environmental values of an organisation, they may be discouraged to embrace these due to

the necessity to do more work, thus signifying the value-action (also known as the attitude-behaviour) gap in the workplace. Explaining the benefits of environmental management interventions and supporting staff in their implementation is therefore an important element to rectify this potential opposition and engage employees (Muster 2010). It is further necessary to undertake managerial actions aiming to make staff involvement in EMPs less unpleasant and/or more rewarding. The rewards can take the form of managerial and peer recognition of the efforts applied by employees to enhance environmental performance of the hotel (Renwick *et al*. 2013). As demonstrated by Bohdanowicz *et al.* (2011), the rewards can also be monetised to ensure that hotel staff are tangibly motivated to contribute to EMPs. Most employees claimed that they would happily embrace EMPs in the case study hotel, share the new, sustainability-driven corporate values and would be pleased to work for a company which contributes to environmental conservation. According to Dias-Angelo *et al.* (2014), when employees feel that their job tasks are meaningful and they accomplish something greater, then the adoption of environmental management practices in the workplace will have higher chances to succeed:

> '*I'd be really proud and I'd support it [the new EMP]. I'd try to make my colleagues care about it. I'd be committed and would support in what I personally do, that is in the restaurant area where I work*' (Eva)

> "*I'd put it in my daily work routine. I'd love it! I'd do my best to give my opinion and offer my suggestions on where to improve*' (Katiana)

When employees know that the hotel engages in EMPs and they have compatible values with those of the organisation, this brings about the positive job attitudes (Lamm *et al.*

2015). Most participants claimed that, under the new, environmental management-driven corporate agenda, they would be prepared to do extra tasks as they would be proud working for the hotel and identify themselves with its environmental commitment. Social identity theory is confirmed here since it suggests that staff may perceive their workplace as an extension of their personal identity, and therefore share the same values with the organisation (Park and Levy 2014). However, in a few responses recorded, participants stated that this personal pro-environment commitment aligned with the corporate environmental management agenda should be reinforced though adequate explanation of what exact EMPs would be adopted and what benefits these would bring to the society and the environment. Chan *et al.* (2014a) state that staff should be educated on the environmental management interventions as good understanding of the positive societal and environmental effect drives more responsible employee behaviour. Importantly, some participants stated that the corporate environmental management agenda adopted by the hotel could influence their decision on where to look for a job. This verifies signalling theory which explains that prospective candidates are more attracted to work for a company that exhibits a 'greener' profile (Greening and Turban 2000).

'Well, I think sustainability is the future, and working for hotels that protect the environment will be a 'must'. I'd not feel comfortable working at a hotel which does not care about the environment or people' (David)

A probe was made to better understand what employees consider as the benefits of and the obstacles towards implementing EMPs in the case study hotel. Operational cost savings, positive effect on consumers, enhanced business reputation and improved staff morale were

cited as the pluses of environmental management interventions. Among the constraints, financial implications and the challenges in sustaining staff commitment and engagement were dominant (Table 2). The participants recognised themselves as the key stakeholders in the success of EMPs which confirms Hanna *et al.* (2000) who suggest that environmental improvements in hotels can only be achieved via genuine staff involvement. These findings are in line with Hart (1995) who posits that environmental management interventions in hospitality enterprises generate financial benefits, offer competitive advantage and increase job satisfaction among staff. EMPs further build employee loyalty, customer retention and public reputation (Graci and Dodds 2008). Stalcup *et al.* (2014) identify the lack of in-house expertise on how to implement the environmental management interventions, initial investment costs and possible guest resistance as potential barriers to the adoption of EMPsin hotels.

7.3. Effect of EMPs on hotel staff motivation and job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is difficult to define as it describes a feeling of achievement and meaningfulness which is highly subjective (Mullins and Christy 2013). It is influenced by various factors, including social, individual, cultural and organisational (Peterson *et al.* 2008). Skill variety, task identity and significance, managerial feedback and autonomy drive job satisfaction (Mullins and Christy 2013). Job security, opportunities for professional and personal development and acceptable remuneration also play a role (Peterson *et al.* 2008). Given the ambiguity of the concept, a probe was made to explore what job satisfaction meant for employees. Most participants referred to the fulfillment and the sense of achievement they get when they contribute to customer happiness as drivers of job satisfaction. Good relationships with colleagues, managerial recognition and a pleasant working environment were recorded as further important job satisfiers (Table 2). Surprisingly, salary was not identified as a determinant of job satisfaction. This can be partially explained by the nature of

employment in the case study hotel where staff receive a number of 'perks' in addition to traditional financial remuneration, such as free meals, subsidized on-site accommodation and reimbursement of transport expenses when working late shifts:

'Job satisfaction is the kind of feeling that you're doing something good in your job and you can achieve it. Also, this is about recognition of what you do by your management, it's about receiving good feedback from customers and getting on well with the other staff' (Anna)

Strong positive correlation between planned EMPs and job satisfaction was further established (Table 2). Most participants stated that environmental management interventions would have a positive impact on their job satisfaction as they would enrich the feeling of job meaningfulness and fulfillment. This is in line with Raub and Blunschi (2013) who posit that EMPs increase task significance as employees perceive their job as more meaningful which strengthens job satisfaction. This is also in agreement with Chiang (2010) who suggest that when employees embrace environmental management practices in their daily work routine, they show stronger organisational commitment and therefore greater job satisfaction. Likewise, according to Chan and Hawkins (2010), when staff support the corporate environmental management agenda and feel that they contribute to the societal and environmental well-being, they can stretch to perform extra tasks at work and achieve greater job satisfaction:

'Well, I think it'd be another step to bring you happiness in your job. You feel that

you have contributed to a good cause which is good and makes you feel proud'

(Jordan)

'[EMPs at work] They'd not be my 100% for job satisfaction, but they'd be an

important part of it, definitely' (Alan)

7.4. The role of HRM practices

Top management support affects organisational culture as it empowers employees and

drives desired behaviours; it is therefore important to facilitate the organisational transition to

a new corporate agenda, such as environmental sustainability (Gupta and Sharma 1996). Top

management support of EMPs represents an example of participative management that

informs employees and allows them to take the lead (Daily and Huang 2001), but also secures

staff awareness of environmental issues (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004). It is important that

the top management commitment is reflected in the design of dedicated HRM practices that

aim to encourage staff participation in planned environmental management interventions

(Bohdanowicz *et al.* 2011).

According to Grolleau *et al.* (2012), in the context of EMPs, the critical role of HRM

rests in the provision of organisational orientation, staff training, constant communication,

evaluation and rewarding of employee performance. These postulates were confirmed in this

study (Table 2) as the majority claimed that employees should be stimulated to partake in

EMPs via training. Training should not only build staff expertise in the adoption of

environmental management interventions, but also aim to present the rationale behind,

explain the societal and environmental benefits and set realistic targets for performance

evaluation. This will enhance employee commitment, build loyalty, assign responsibility and improve motivation to partake (Daily and Huang 2001):

'Training is important as I'd see it as a way to get information about what to do and better understand specific processes, such as how to separate waste or what to recycle. Training can be really engaging if the benefits are explained to you. People need to know the reasons for why they'll be doing certain environmental things...' (Claire)

Next to training, an effective evaluation and reward system for staff was demanded. A few participants stated that their commitment would be enhanced if they could see what difference their engagement with EMPs at work has made. According to Chan *et al.* (2014a;b), effective evaluation of employee engagement with EMPs translates into enhanced environmental awareness and, ultimately, determines the level of individual environmental concern which improves work performance. The outcome of environmental management interventions should therefore be explicitly broadcast to employees via, for example, regular internal corporate reports or newsletters, or at workplace social events. Incentives should be assigned to best performing staff. These incentives, aside from reinforcing environmental motivation of individual employees, can boost intra-departmental or intra-company coopetition (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004), thus accelerating the hotel's progress towards environmental management goals. This is in line with Epstein and Roy (1997) who state that clear communication contributes to collaboration which brings about effective teamwork towards the success of implementing EMPs among hotel employees. The positive impact of

effective communication, staff appraisal and reward systems for EMPs in hotels has been reported by Bohdanowicz *et al.* (2011) and is further supported herewith:

'If they [managers or company executives] acknowledge and reward you for what you've done, it's great... Also, if you're part of a team where everyone mutually cares about the environment, then it'd be much easier to do it [EMP] together than being by yourself. Competitions with fellow staff or having something fun going around about it, or seeing the managers being committed to it and competing with staff would be another good thing' (Anthony)

7.5. EMPs at work and GWLB

The behavioural patterns of employees outside work may not always comply with the environmental management efforts of the organisation because people have certain ways of living and these are not always environmentally sustainable (Muster and Schrader 2011). In their pursuit for being a 'good global citizen', hospitality enterprises should strive to enhance environmental awareness among their staff, thus ultimately leading to more responsible consumption patterns in private life. The role of EMPs at work can have a positive spillover effect on hotel employees (Guest 2002), thus contributing to the emerging GWLB agenda (Soderholm 2010), and a probe was made to test if this holds true for staff of the case study hotel.

The majority agreed that their private lives would be positively affected by EMPs if implemented at work. Better knowledge on how to make environmental improvements, first-hand experience in engaging with environmental management interventions at work and the proven/seen positive effect of these interventions would stimulate better embracement of

environmental management practices at home. This is in line with the models of enrichment and the spillover effect (Muster and Schrader 2011):

'There'd definitely be an overlap. You'd carry what you do at home into work and another way around. If you're good at environmental stuff at work, you'll certainly have it at home because you'll see the direct benefits if you do it at home. If you're made consciously aware of these [environmental management] things at work, you'll carry that consciousness to home' (Nick)

A small number of participants claimed that the 'work' and the 'life' spheres represent two different domains. They would not therefore like the job to intervene in any way in personal life. The feeling of unwelcomed intervention, the financial implications of adopting environmental management practices at home and the lack of time are commonly seen as the main obstacles towards the broader adoption of the GWLB agenda (Muster 2010). As Datta (2015) posits, EMPs at work can be seen by employees as an undesired interference with personal freedom and as an effort to influence consumption decisions which causes opposition. This could be resolved via the design of environmental management interventions as voluntary, rather than mandatory, programmes where willing staff partake only if and when they feel necessary (Paco and Nave 2013). Such voluntary programmes provide staff with an opportunity to understand what the company aims to achieve and develop relevant skills in support (Chiang 2010). Seeing involvement of fellow employees in EMPs, non-engaging staff can gradually change their attitude and become motivated to participate in actions that lead to the common 'good'.

Lastly, a small number of participants claimed that they could see the reverse spillover effect from the adoption of EMPs in the case study hotel. These employees thought they were doing more in terms of environmental management at home than the case study hotel was doing at work. In this case, the positive environmental management experience from staff's private lives should be carefully analysed by hotel managers and the feasibility of its application to the workplace context should be evaluated.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The hospitality industry generates substantial environmental footprint. The magnitude of this environmental footprint has been politically and publicly recognised and urgent mitigation measures have been called for. As a result, increasingly larger number of hospitality ventures are looking to adopt EMPs. When designing EMPs, employees should be given the foremost consideration. Not only do staff determine the success and failure of environmental management interventions in hospitality enterprises, but they can also be affected by the outcome, both in the work and private life settings.

This study examined attitudes of hotel staff to the envisaged implementation of an EMP in a luxury hotel. It found that most employees understood the significance of integrating environmental management practices in business operations of the organisation they worked for. They would support such interventions as these were seen as facilitators of more meaningful and fulfilling work routine, enhancers of job satisfaction and motivation, and constructors of corporate loyalty. Although the prospective positive impact of the new corporate, environmental sustainability-driven vision on the environment, hotel reputation, customer experience, and employee morale was acknowledged, many desired that the benefits of the envisaged environmental management interventions would be clearly explained and regularly communicated to staff to enhance commitment. Training was also demanded to ensure that employees understood how to engage with EMPs most effectively.

Thus, the study contributed to better understanding of the value of deploying EMPs in hotels and complemented existing knowledge on the determinants of their success.

The study identified HRM as a crucial function in facilitating environmental management interventions in hotels. It plays a role in the management-to-staff and staff-to-management communication and the design of environmental training, as per above. HRM is further instrumental in the development of an effective evaluation and reward system which should be put in place to improve staff commitment and encourage coopetition between individual employees and organisational departments towards achieving a mutual goal.

The study recorded a possible spillover effect from the adoption of EMPs in the case study hotel. The significant impact this could make on the environmental commitment of employees in private life and lead to more responsible consumption patterns outside work was recognised. This demonstrates the positive multiplying effect of implementing EMPs in hotels as these do not only lead to the improved corporate environmental performance, but can also benefit the wider society.

The study highlighted a number of promising research avenues. First, future research should look at the hotels where EMPs have already been implemented and/or are underway. The effect of these on staff should be examined, thus providing an ex-post, rather than ex-ante, outlook and enabling comparative analysis between the two. Second, a deeper understanding of the mediating role of HRM in the adoption of EMPs in hotels is necessary, both in general and specifically in the case study hotel. In the context of the case study hotel, it would be useful to gain insights of the representatives of the HRM department into the employee feedback collected. In generic terms, employee empowerment as facilitated by HRM practices represents a particularly interesting research object whose effect on staff embracement of environmental management interventions should be better understood. Third, managerial views on EMPs and their effect on hotel employees could be explored and

compared against the staff attitudes and expectations, especially in terms of training provision and design of dedicated evaluation and reward systems. Lastly, a comparative analysis of hotel employee attitudes in countries outside the UK, and in the different hospitality sectors, is important to evaluate an effect of various socio-economic variables, especially culture, on staff perception of EMPs in hotels.

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Table 1. Interview participants (n=17)

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT	ROLE	HOSPITALITY WORK EXPERIENCE Limited (<2 years) Moderate (2-5 years) Extensive (>5 years)
Adam	Male	In their 20s	No degree	Back-of-house	Employee	Limited
Alan	Male	In their 20s	University degree	Front-of-house	Employee	Moderate
Anna	Female	In their 20s	No degree	Front-of-house	Employee	Moderate
Anthony	Male	In their 20s	No degree	Front-of-house	Employee	Limited
Claire	Female	In their 30s	No degree	Administration	Supervisory	Moderate
David	Male	In their 20s	No degree	Front-of-house	Employee	Moderate
Eva	Female	In their 20s	University degree	Front-of-house	Employee	Moderate
Jordan	Male	In their 30s	University degree	Front-of-house	Employee	Extensive
Katiana	Female	In their 30s	University degree	Administration	Supervisory	Moderate
Kevin	Male	In their 30s	University degree	Administration	Supervisory	Moderate
Mark	Male	In their 20s	No degree	Back-of-house	Employee	Limited
Michael	Male	In their 40s	No degree	Back-of-house	Supervisory	Extensive
Nick	Male	In their 40s	University degree	Administration	Supervisory	Extensive
Perry	Male	In their 30s	No degree	Front-of-house	Employee	Moderate
Poppy	Female	In their 40s	University degree	Administration	Supervisory	Moderate
Rob	Male	In their 20s	University degree	Front-of-house	Employee	Moderate
Tom	Male	In their 40s	University degree	Administration	Supervisory	Extensive

Table 2. Coding structure with themes, codes and sub-codes. Figures signify the number of text passages found in interview transcripts that are accredited to each sub-code alongside the proportion of interview participants who mentioned these passages (%).

THEMES	CODES	SUB-CODES	TOTAL	%
Knowledge of environmental management practices	Awareness of negative environmental impacts attributed to hotel operations	Natural environment	9	53%
		A broad range of environmental and socio-economic impacts (e.g. pollution, employee well-being, suppliers, local economy)	8	47%
		Not aware of any	3	18%
		Future generations	2	12%
	'Green' practices in the workplace	Recycling of solid waste	10	59%
		Procurement of organic and local produce	3	18%
		Not aware of any	2	12%
		Environment-benign cleaning products	1	5%
		Switching electricity and water off when not in use	1	5%
	'Green' practices in private life	Recycling	13	76%
		Water and electricity usage meters	4	24%
		LED lighting	2	12%
		Purchasing local and organic food	2	12%
		Do not engage as I do not care	2	12%
		Walking/Cycling to work	1	5%
Employees' perceptions of a prospective environmental management programme in a hotel	New, sustainability-driven business agenda	Supportive and pleased	14	82%
		Attractive working environment	6	35%
		Proud as long as there is information and training provided	4	24%
		Would not make any difference	3	18%
	Benefits (+) and obstacles (-)	+Money and energy savings	10	59%
		-The cost of initial investment	8	47%
		+More customers	7	41%

		-Sustained staff commitment and engagement	6	35%
		+Improved social image	5	29%
		-Risk of losing a luxury image	3	18%
		+Enhanced staff morale	2	12%
		+Better place to work in general	2	12%
Job motivation and satisfaction	How employees understand the term	Guest happiness (measured via customer feedback)	8	47%
		Sense of achievement (measured via customer and managerial feedback)	5	29%
		Pleasant working environment	3	18%
		Recognition	1	5%
		Good relationships with colleagues	1	5%
		Salary	1	5%
	Perceived correlation between job satisfaction and environmental management programmes in a hotel	Positive, job becomes more exciting and meaningful	13	76%
		Positive, job becomes more interesting	2	12%
		No perceived correlation/Negative	2	12%
Role of HRM practices	Building environmental awareness and encouraging to partake in sustainability interventions	Training	10	59%
		Evaluation & reward system	7	41%
		Explicit communication	4	24%
		Teamwork	3	18%
		Regular monitoring of performance	2	12%
		Top management commitment	1	5%
Green Work-Life Balance	The role of the Work-to-Life interventions	Positive spillover effect	12	70%
		No spillover effect as private life has nothing to do with work	3	18%
		No direct spillover effect as I am more involved in sustainability at home, than at work – Life-to-Work interventions instead	2	12%