

Sustainability and corporate social responsibility in hospitality and tourism

Welcome to *IJCHM*'s special issue on Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility in Hospitality and Tourism. I would like to specially thank to our guest editors Professor Babak Taheri and Dr Roya Rahimi for putting together this very strong and timely special issue. The articles included in this special issue should be well received by scholars, students and practicing managers in our field.

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Introduction

Sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in hospitality and tourism is laden with contradictions. From the simple “carbon offsetting” of budget flights to the warning from the Maldivian Government that their country will disappear due to rising water levels while also building, in one year, at least seven additional airports to service their resort islands. The academic literature does not always help; the continually inconclusive or contradictory findings of financial impact studies, often meaningless CSR reporting, and consumer cynicism over perceived “green-washing” activities ([Farrington et al., 2017](#)) further contribute to the lack of clarity in this area.

There is a need for a substantive move towards sustainable, ethical, responsible, environmentally or socially friendly strategies, but also towards concern for the well-being of future generations in the coming decades ([Farrington et al., 2017](#); [Jones et al., 2016](#); [Wells et al., 2016a](#)). Despite continued interest, this is a challenge for many countries, particularly with regards to meeting the ever-shifting opinions and customer expectations surrounding environmental issues pertaining to modern hospitality and tourism. Research should fundamentally debate the relevance and application of sustainability to the sector and its relationship with external stakeholders and move away from narrow focuses. More specifically, “one size does not fit all” with regards to sustainability and CSR, hence societies and organisations with different cultures and beliefs may be motivated to be involved in sustainability and CSR developments for different reasons and may also face diverse barriers to implementation ([Nyahunzvi, 2013](#); [Thompson et al., 2018](#); [Wells et al., 2015](#); [Wells et al., 2016b](#); [Xu, 2014](#); [Yadav et al., 2016](#)). Hence, the goal of this special issue was to encourage new theoretical and empirical development on sustainability and CSR studies in the hospitality and tourism field.

The papers in this special issue

This special issue contains 19 papers that provide a comprehensive overview and insights about the role and importance of sustainability and corporate social responsibility in hospitality and tourism. Next, we present a brief summary of the papers in the special issue.

In the first paper, [Artal-Tur et al. \(2019\)](#), using Nicaragua as a case study, design and test a model where the main outcome is the reproduction and enhancing of the community life. The researchers also revisit the ideas that successful sustainable initiatives require of a clear engagement of local populations and a community based bottom-up strategy of



development. In the second paper using quantitative approach, [Zhang *et al.* \(2019\)](#) examine how tourism impacts on local community, managers' attachment to the community and their identification with the value of heritage resources influence managers' corporate social responsibility (CSR) attitudes, using value identification and agency theories. Their findings indicate that managers' place attachment, their heritage value identification and their perceptions of positive tourism impacts affect their CSR attitudes. However, the negative effects of tourism do not significantly influence CSR attitudes.

[Jeong and Xu \(2019\)](#) in the third paper, using experimental design and testing the proposed hypotheses, tried to identify an effective communication strategy for promoting restaurants' green efforts to customers by using different types of green advertisement messages. [Farmaki \(2019\)](#) in the next paper via conducting 54 semi-structured interviews with managers from several sectors of the Cyprus tourism industry examined the stakeholder interests and influence on CSR implementation in hotels through an instrumental stakeholder theory lens. Her findings show that there is a dominance of supply-chain stakeholder interests, which in turn outline the CSR orientation of hotels, whereas stakeholder influence largely shaped by the interdependent multifaceted nature of the tourism industry, conditions the implementation of CSR in hotels.

In the fifth paper, [Guix *et al.* \(2019\)](#) based on the findings of semi-structured interviews with eight sustainability managers and eight industry sustainability experts explained the choices made by the hotel industry about what to include, and who to be accountable to, in their sustainability reports; a process defined as materiality assessment. Coming to the sixth paper, [Gursoy *et al.* \(2019\)](#) via using quantitative approaching and structural equation modelling (SEM) investigated the antecedents of local residents' heritage resource protection and conservation responsibility behaviours. The findings provide further insights into the impact of residents' identity on their responsibility behaviours. In the seventh paper, [Hatipoglu *et al.* \(2019\)](#) analysed corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs in tourism as a tool for sustainable development in the CSR program of a multinational enterprise in Turkey. The study is based on the qualitative approach in a single company, via content analysis of company-originated documents, participant observations, questionnaires for tourism project coordinators and follow-up interviews with company directors and project managers.

The next paper by [Iyer and Jarvis \(2019\)](#) reviews several domains of CSR and takes stock of some exemplar research from hospitality management pertaining tried to CSR issues in the context of the hospitality industry. The findings suggest four CSR domains as instrumental, social/legal/political, ethical and environmental. In the ninth paper, [Khatter *et al.* \(2019\)](#) aim to ascertain the engagement of hotels with ESPPs and provide tentative evidence of their commitment towards meeting the expectations of environmentally conscious stakeholders. Via using secondary data and content analysis to examine the ESPPs of a sample of 220 hotels in Australia, the authors found that while environmentally friendly business practices are prominently displayed by the hotels sampled; however, independent non-chain affiliated hotels are yet to adopt ESPPs in any visible way.

[MacKenzie and Gannon \(2019\)](#) in the tenth paper of this issue use two historical case studies (UK and Costa Rica). This paper explores the antecedents and legitimization of sustainable development in hospitality and tourism. It demonstrates the value of historical analysis through careful consideration of motivations, context and development type under different circumstances. This study is conducted based on using government and private archival materials, oral history testimonies, industry report and secondary literature and the findings showcased that the private-sector is critical in legitimizing tourism and hospitality development through addressing

sustainability aims. The next paper by [Martin-Rios and Raub \(2019\)](#) proposes a theoretically driven conceptual framework for how hospitality firms can overcome the broad vs narrow dilemma by breaking down the 17 SDGs into actionable and context-specific subsets and by selecting individual sustainability initiatives with maximum impact within the chosen set of SDGs. [Hussain et al. \(2019\)](#) in the next study empirically assesses the impact of integrated lean and green practices on the sustainable (environmental, economic and social) performance of a hotel supply chain. Study results show that three major lean techniques (Kaizen, quality and productive maintenance) and three green techniques (health and safety, waste disposal and green certifications) have substantial impact on the sustainable performance of hotel supply chains.

Paper 13 by [McCabe et al. \(2019\)](#) via conducting qualitative interviews with 22 Malaysian senior hotel managers together with ethnographic observations, explore how senior managers of independent hotels perceive the notion of CSR through a holistic analysis of motivations of undertaking both social and environmental initiatives. In Paper 14, [Novacka et al. \(2019\)](#) assess how a hotel geographical location in different parts of Central and Eastern Europe influences the complexity of perception of pro-environmental behaviour. The study is based on two closely connected multivariate statistical techniques analysing gradients: Principal components analysis and partial redundancy analysis. The findings revealed significant differences between hotels in Central Europe and Eastern Europe in the perception of the complexity in implementation of the environmental practices by hotel managers. [Olya et al. \(2019\)](#) in the next paper based on a quantitative approach presents a unique perspective on the application of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) in the context of the green lodging industry via configurational modelling of three TPB dimensions in formulating hotel visitors' behavioural responses. Attitudes towards behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are the three indicators of TPB used to predict guests' continued intention to use and recommend green hotels on Cyprus, a Mediterranean island with a fragile ecological system.

In Paper 16, [Volgger and Huang \(2019\)](#) broaden the understanding of social responsibility in hospitality and tourism by positioning it in the wider context of responsibilities for deviant behaviour. The paper presents a critical literature review that scopes responsible and irresponsible behaviour of different stakeholders in hospitality and tourism and tackles some of the often unquestioned assumptions of CSR, including who should be held accountable for ensuring responsibility ("the onus of responsibility"). Next paper by [Wynn and Jones \(2019\)](#) offers an exploratory review of some of the academic literature on the circular economy, natural capital and resilience and examines how a number of companies and industry bodies within the tourism and hospitality industry have used these concepts in their business operations and development planning.

Paper 18 by [Yamak et al. \(2019\)](#) identifies the prevailing institutional orders and logics that bring about CSR and sustainability discourse in the tourism industry in Turkey. It also investigates how and to what extent the CSR and sustainability practices align with the local institutional logics and necessities. In the final paper by [Zhang et al. \(2019\)](#), the authors via using quantitative approach propose a conceptual model based on social identity theory to uncover how CSR impacts employee attitudes (organizational identification) towards behaviour (OCB) leading to task performance.

Concluding remarks

This special issue attracted a large number of high-quality submissions from scholars within tourism and hospitality, as well as related disciplines, including marketing, entrepreneurship, history and management information systems. The 19 articles in this special issue speak on the variety of sustainability and CSR approaches that can be used to answer sustainability related questions. There are also several innovative methodological techniques used to deliver insightful outcomes in this special issue, including SEM, subject experimental design, semi-structured interviews, content analysis of company-originated documents, participant observations, secondary data and content analysis, historical analysis, fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), necessary condition analysis (NCA) and case study design. We believe each of these methods point towards significant contributions to contemporary issues in sustainability and CSR.

There are many people to thank for their efforts on this issue. We would like to thank all the authors who responded to the call for articles in this special issue. We are particularly grateful to the authors of the papers in the special issue and to the many anonymous reviewers who provided constructive suggestions and feedbacks. So, big, heartfelt thanks to you all. We would like to apologise to those we could not accommodate in this special issue. We also very much appreciate that the authors put in extra effort to make procedural details and interpretation accessible to *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* readers. Last but not the least, the empirical studies presented in this special issue underline the importance to continue with sustainability and CSR research. We hope that the papers in this special issue have taken a step towards recognising this potential and will encourage more researchers to join this exciting research area.

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