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## ABSTRACT

This systematic review paper aims to enhance knowledge of corporate sustainability initiatives in the hospitality industry as it has been researched by earlier researchers. Corporate sustainability has gained more attention in academics and the corporate world since the 1990s. There is still a shortage of literature in corporate sustainability. This review study analyzes 28 papers from online indexed journals published between the years 2003 and 2022.

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# Corporate Sustainability Practices of Hotel Industry: A Systematic Literature Review

C.N.R. Wijesundara<sup>a</sup>, Ali Khatibi<sup>o</sup> & S.M. Ferdous Azam<sup>o</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*This systematic review paper aims to enhance knowledge of corporate sustainability initiatives in the hospitality industry as it has been researched by earlier researchers. Corporate sustainability has gained more attention in academics and the corporate world since the 1990s. There is still a shortage of literature in corporate sustainability. This review study analyzes 28 papers from online indexed journals published between the years 2003 and 2022.*

*The purpose of this study is to give hoteliers a feeling of a road map towards corporate sustainability practices within the hospitality industry, to offer a variety of possibilities for new, creative sustainability activities, and to take a closer look at the corporate sustainability initiatives that are currently being made in the sector. The research paper has compiled the corporate sustainability definitions and surviving sustainability practices by analyzing the prevailing literature. The results show that corporate sustainability is a domain that is currently developing. Many definitional strategies have been utilized, and various corporate sustainable best practices have been adopted by hoteliers worldwide. The findings demonstrate the importance of sustainability in the hospitality sector and the variety of inventive ways in which hoteliers are integrating sustainability into their business plans. This is shown by the expansion of their clientele and high levels of customer satisfaction, the decline of their carbon footprint, and the improvement of their corporate reputation among hotels worldwide. The review's findings also revealed a vacuum in the body of knowledge about corporate sustainability in hotels.*

**Keywords:** corporate sustainability, best practices, hotel industry.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Businesses' sustainability concerns & efforts are significant to the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of the world (Runtuk et al. 2023; Kaftan et al. 2023; Avinash & Rahman, 2021; Pranugrahaning et Al. 2021). It is noticed that more and more environmentally conscious consumers are factoring sustainability concerns into their purchasing decisions (Hull, 2022; Paloma et al. 2021). Even in the tourism industry, this has become a trend now. This new class of customers wants the value created by businesses to benefit society and the environment in addition to shareholder profits. From the business perspective, investors are seeking companies that have been incorporating sustainable practices into their processes and policies as a result of this changing customer behavior (Ottaviani et al. 2023; Wu & Jin, 2022; Hull, 2022; Swarnapali, 2017). The more organizations that embrace sustainability initiatives, the better for the environment, their long-term consumer retention rates, and their profitability (Grant, 2020).

Practices that promote sustainability are justifiable when they help an organization, and its stakeholders achieve their requirements today without harming the needs of future generations (Kaftan et al. 2023; Wu & Jin, 2022; Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002). Sustainability initiatives also cover a business's obligations to society and the environment. Many businesses have recently improved their operation by adhering to best

practices that guarantee sustainability to attain sustainability (Ottaviani et al. 2023; Pranugrahaning et al. 2021; Kaftan et al. 2023).

The subject of sustainability is vital for hotels since the lodging industry contributes significantly to environmental issues by using up resources like water and energy (Kaftan et al. 2023; Hull, 2022; Verma & Chandra, 2018). The damaging effects of hotels on the environment are a growing concern. The vast and rapid expansion of the hotel business makes it essential for hotels to embrace ecologically sustainable practices (Paloma et al. 2021). As per Hepper et al. (2017) depicted, corporate sustainability entails putting systematic efforts into the organizations' strategy to reduce adverse effects on the environment and society brought on by its processes. As Runtuk et al. (2023) mentioned, the volume of references to corporate sustainability and sustainable strategy has significantly increased during the last few decades. Over time, investors' understanding of sustainability as a workable corporate strategy has grown. In keeping with this development, academic writers have increasingly focused on corporate sustainability initiatives. The Brundtland Report, published in 1987, served as the primary inspiration for the notion of corporate sustainability (Wu & Jin, 2022; Hull, 2022; Bhatia & Tuli, 2015).

It is believed that an organization can perform at different levels in terms of corporate sustainability depending on the semantic value that is considered (Pranugrahaning et al. 2021).

It has been noted that the notion of corporate sustainability can have varied meanings depending on the context in which it is employed (Runtuk et al. 2023; Swarnapali, 2017). It is crucial to comprehend the motivations behind a firm's sustainability initiatives and how trustworthy this data appears to be. In this regard, the purpose of this research is to conduct a comprehensive literature review on the corporate sustainability practices of the hotel industry that have been published in online indexed journals over the last two decades, to identify the corporate sustainability practices of hotels used for assessing corporate sustainability. The article is

divided into five sections: Section 1- Introduction; Section 2 describes the Methodology; Section 3 displays the Analysis of the papers; Section 4 Discussion & conclusion; and Section 5 Implications.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This particular study has used a literature search strategy based on earlier review articles to examine studies on corporate sustainability in the hospitality sector and other related topics that had been produced by academics. The terms corporate sustainability and sustainability practices were used in an electronic search of publications in tourism, hospitality, business, and management.

It restricted the search to articles written in the most recent 20 years, or from 2003 to 2022. 41 papers were found in the initial results of the search. Each report underwent a screening process to determine whether or not its essential relevance to corporate sustainability could be determined. As Seuring and Müller (2008), revealed, the review follows the four-step iterative process: (i) material collection; (ii) descriptive analysis; (iii) category selection; and (iv) material analysis. The systematic examination of the literature analysis aids in providing a comprehensive knowledge of corporate sustainability in hotel literature that has been the subject of previous studies. The conclusion would point out the overlooked areas and offer suggestions for further research.

### 2.1 Material Collection

The process of gathering the material begins with the definition of the search terms and other criteria. As Creswell & Creswell (2017) mentioned, it is advisable to start the search in computerized databases that contain peer-reviewed papers. The reputed online research journals were chosen for this investigation since they are the top platforms for scientific inquiry and analytical information worldwide (Runtuk et al. 2023; Yan Li, et al. 2017). Forty-one papers that were subjected to a preliminary examination based on the title, keywords and abstract were found by the search.

Following that, 13 papers were eliminated, leaving 28 articles that were fully read. Then, the procedure was established for the inclusion or exclusion of documents: they should assess the existing corporate sustainability practices of hospitality businesses.

## 2.2 Category Selection

This step defines the main determinants and analytical categories that will be utilized to assess the articles. As Seuring and Müller (2008) depicted, the primary subjects of analysis are fundamental dimensions, which are made up of analytical categories. NVivo was the program the researcher utilized to help this phase. Parameters and their associated analytical categories were discovered as the researcher studied the papers.

Then, these categories were encoded and put into a hierarchy structure using NVivo. NVivo produces a nod, which is a construct to hold data collected from the papers, for each text fragment that has been decoded. This approach enables the identification of the dimensions and key metrics used in the models for evaluating corporate sustainability practices, as well as the sources used to assess the metrics and the industries for which the indicators were suggested.

## III. ANALYSIS

Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of the study, as well as spotting any research gaps that need additional attention, are the three main objectives of the analysis (Leonidou et al. 2020).

The distribution of articles over time, corporate sustainability dimensions, and corporate

sustainability practices are all features of interest that we extract from each study during the descriptive analysis stage. Hospitality as an industry is a sector that has an expanding presence in the dynamics of the global economy, as it contributes around 10.5% to the world GDP.

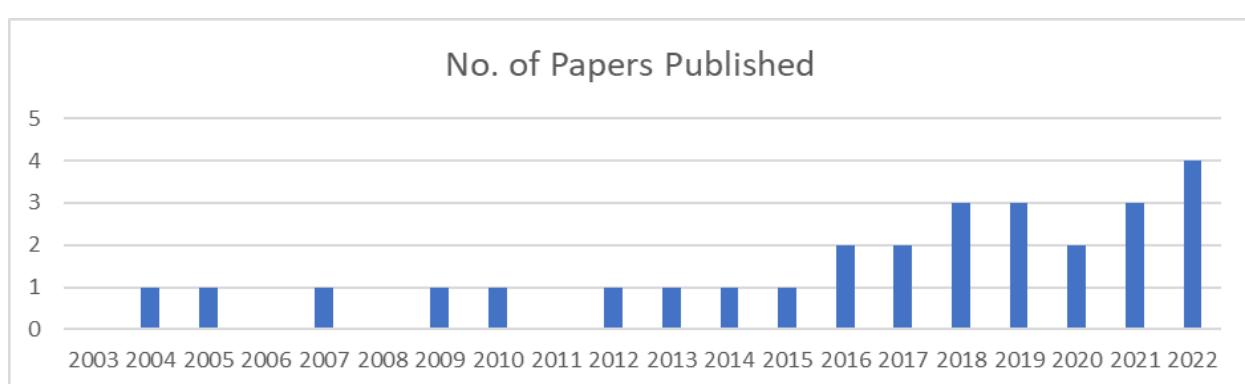
Moreover, its expansion can be a way to improve the economic and social wellbeing of any country where it operates (Pereira et al. 2021; Robin et al. 2017). It is a vital source of wealth, employment, and advancement for many countries and regions.

A portion of this industry is still hesitant to support sustainable initiatives (Hossein et. al, 2020). Research works & investigations on the sustainability of the tourism & hospitality industry have gained far less attention than manufacturing activities, still the expanding number of sustainability concerns and developing market pressures have enhanced its sustainability awareness (Pereira et al. 2021). Moreover, as the biggest sub-sector of the tourism industry, the hospitality sector unquestionably has the widest range of environmental effects (Paloma et al. 2021). Sustainability thus becomes a significant and essential component, not only for enhancing the natural environment but also for sustaining this industry's competitive performance (Hossein et al. 2020).

### 3.1 Distribution of papers over the period

Even though our review covers the period 2003–2022, there are only a few papers were published during the first 12 years period. Figure 1 presents the evolution of the documents over the years, from 2003 to 2022.

*Chart 1:* Distribution of the papers over the period



As per the chart depicted, there were only 09 published papers during the first 12 years (2003-2015). As a percentage, it is around 32% of the total of 28 articles. The rest of 68% of the papers (19 papers) were published during the last 07 years. In the year 2015, the world confirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is an action program for people, the planet, and prosperity to improve the quality of life (Pereira et al. 2021). This explains why there have been more publications in the last seven years: between 2015 and 2022, around 70% of papers on corporate sustainability practices of the hotel industry, were published during that period.

### 3.2 Corporate Sustainability Dimensions

In around 65% of the cases (18 papers), corporate sustainability practices were assessed considering the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concepts, that is, environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

Although the Triple Bottom Line of sustainability has been taken into consideration by certain researchers, the social dimension was modeled using a viewpoint that is centered on the health and safety of persons.

They chose the label "employee safety" for the third dimension rather than the term "social," which covered topics like education and training programs, the usage of personal safety equipment, etc. Madan et al. (2017), have discussed the above-mentioned aspect. Other than that, Ajmal et al. (2017) has been concerned about the health and safety aspect of corporate customers. Some studies take into account an extra component in addition to TBL, which includes concerns with corporate ethics, strategies, and stakeholder interactions. The scholars (Hogrefe & Bohnet, 2022; Hull, 2022; Aras et al. 2017; Schrippe and Ribeiro, 2019; Wang and Dai, 2018) who have written about this fourth dimension of corporate sustainability have been called authors of governance, corporate governance. Gurumurthy (2018) has introduced an additional dimension for conflict management and organizational image. Alcívar et al. (2020) presented a fourth dimension mentioned as the corporate identity, which concerns the company's vision and mission.

Though some scholars have talked about the fourth component, the majority have focused on the main three dimensions (economic, environment, social) of corporate sustainability.

*Table 1:* Dimensions of corporate sustainability

Environmental Dimension	Nagendrakumar et. Al., (2022); Smith and Grosbois, (2011); Esteban et. al, (2017); Nikolaou et. al, (2019); Montilla et al. (2020); Nallusamy et al. (2015); Silva et. al, (2014); Ulrike, (2020); Danijela et. al, (2016); Kularathne, (2018); Bresjin, (2019); Gavilanes et. al., (2019); Huang et. al., (2015); Kanchan, (2019).
Economic Dimension	Nagendrakumar et. Al., (2022); Hussain et.al, (2017); Hristov & Chirico (2019); Hossein, (2020); Chindu & Bhattacharya, (2019); Kim & Barber, (2015); Rupert & Ebner, (2010)
Social Dimension	Hogrefe & Bohnet (2022); Madan et. al, (2017); Smith and Grosbois, (2011); Esteban et. al, (2017); Nikolaou et. al, (2019); Ajmal et al. (2018); Hutchins et al. (2019); Paredes et. al, (2016); Batista & Francisco, (2018); Hossein et. al., (2021); Chindu & Bhattacharya, (2019); Kim & Barber, (2015); Modica et. al., (2020); Jones et. al., (2016).

Only environmental and social factors were considered simultaneously in several research (Smith and Grosbois 2011; Esteban et. al, 2017; Nikolaou et. al, 2019). Some other research works looked at sustainability from just one angle, on the environmental aspects (Montilla et al. 2020; Nallusamy et al. 2015; Silva et al. 2014).

Moreover, some of the other researchers have only been concerned with the social dimension (Ajmal et al. 2018; Hutchins et al. 2019; Paredes et al. 2016). Since the majority of researchers (over 65%) have assessed corporate sustainability by considering the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concepts, this paper has paid attention only to these three dimensions (environmental,

economic, and social dimensions) when compiling the prevailing corporate sustainability practices.

### 3.3 Corporate Sustainability Practices

Corporate sustainability considers ethical principles and standards while supporting responsible behaviors that combine environmental, societal, and economic interests.

Sustainability employs a long-term perspective on the future. The environmental aspect of sustainability seeks to reduce the adverse environmental impacts caused by hotel operations through proper monitoring mechanisms and, or collaborative efforts like environment-friendly product development and greening of production processes (Siddique et al., 2022; Hogrefe & Bohnet, 2022; Vachon, 2007; Tsai et al. 2011).

The social aspect or dimension attempts to improve the wellbeing of the staff, other suppliers, the visitor, and the surrounding community at large by offering proper training, creating a safe workplace, fair trade, building long-term collaborations, and more (Hull, 2022; Gopalakrishnan et al. 2012; Vachon, 2007; Schwartz et al. 2008). Finally, the economic aspect of sustainability is making money and expanding a firms' market share while having as few adverse social and environmental effects as possible (Siddique et. al. 2022; Wu & Jin, 2022; Kassinis & Soteriou, 2009). Accomplishing sustainability requires businesses to ensure long-term viability, the social welfare of their partners, such as consumers, suppliers, and staff members, as well as the minimization of the adverse effects of their operations on the environment (Pereira et al. 2021). Sustainability now concerns a fundamental goal, enhancing the promote legislation from regulatory entities and the liable actions by organizations and individuals.

#### 3.3.1 Environmental Practices

The process of creating value depends on taking a proactive approach toward the environment and implementing suitable environmental methods and technologies (Hosseini et al. 2020) The hotel sector or lodging industry shift to "going green" is

characterized by a rising focus on limiting its environmental effect by implementing environmentally preferable waste-reduction methods and by using sustainable techniques and suppliers (Nagendrakumar et al. 2022; Boley and Uysal, 2013). As Suluo (2020) mentioned, authorities in several nations have imposed more substantial environmental restrictions and urged businesses to take action to safeguard the environment due to increasingly significant environmental issues, such as global warming.

Many lodging establishments understand that implementing green practices is not only morally right but also advantageous in terms of cost savings, image improvement, market positioning, and increased CSR (Hosseini et al. 2020). As Kularathne et al. (2019) depicted, the co-management of any lodging establishment not only contributes to its revenue and ability to retain guests but also shows better social commitment and enhances its reputation.

Environmental practices are being developed to improve creative business strategies that rethink the business model by investigating alternatives and developing new methods (Pereira et al. 2021).

The use of ecologically friendly cleaning solutions, energy and water-saving techniques, and the careful disposal of solid waste are only a few examples of environmental measures utilized in the hotel business (Modica et al. 2020; Rodriguez et al. 2012; Alonso et al. 2014). The following practices were summarized by analyzing the 28 selected research papers.

#### 3.3.2 Social Practices

The social dimension of corporate sustainability attempts to improve the happiness of the staff, other suppliers, the visitor, and the local community at large by, among other things, offering proper training, a safe workplace, fair deals, building long-term collaborations, and more (Siddique et al. 2022; Hogrefe & Bohnet, 2022; Vachon, 2007; Schwartz et al. 2008; Farmaki, 2015). In essence, the social element of corporate sustainability incorporates the activities of the business that they use to improve the ordinary lives and wellbeing of either their

surrounding community or their existing consumers. It enhances social capital via empowerment, which in turn reduces potential danger and sustains the safety of cultural and social systems (Siddique et al. 2022; Webster & Courtnell, 2019). The following social practices were summarized by analyzing the 28 selected research papers.

### 3.3.3 Economic Practices

The "economic aspect" of business sustainability is frequently called the generic dimension. In addition to environmental and social considerations, economic sustainability includes general organizational characteristics that must be upheld for a business to last a long time (Nagendrakumar et al. 2022; Pereira et al. 2021).

Moreover, the economic aspect of corporate sustainability involves the creation of profits and the enhance the business market share while creating a deficient level of social and environmental impacts (Kassinis & Soteriou, 2009). The economic aspect of corporate sustainability encourages increased consumption of products and services, which eventually raises the standard of living for people. This is about the profit-driven mindset of large corporations and offers hoteliers the chance to establish a win-win scenario through the deployment of effective, sustainable initiatives that would benefit the environment and yield them a more significant profit over the long term (Kim, Barber, & Kim, 2019; Kasemsap, 2018; Petri & Mikuli, 2012).

Following economic practices were summarized by analyzing the 28 selected research papers

No	Economic practices	Author / Author of the paper and the year of the publication
1	Whenever possible recruit locals to the staff.	Nagendrakumar et. Al., (2022); Garay & Font, (2013); Kim, Barber, & Kim, (2019); Petri & Mikuli, (2012); Hossein et. al, (2020); Hussain et.al, (2017)
2	Pay staff above the industry average.	Hristov & Chirico (2019); Garay & Font, (2013); Kim, Barber, & Kim, (2019); Petri & Mikuli, (2012); Chindu & Bhattacharya, (2019); Rupert & Ebner, (2010)
3	Provision of additional benefits for employees.	Hussain et.al, (2017); Garay & Font, (2013); Kim, Barber, & Kim, (2019); Chindu & Bhattacharya, (2019)
4	Encourage guests to consume/use locally made/purchased products.	Nagendrakumar et. Al., (2022); Kim, Barber, & Kim, (2019); Pereira et. al,(2021); Hossein et. al, (2020); Hristov & Chirico (2019); Rupert & Ebner, (2010)
5	Encourage guests to contribute to charitable activities.	Garay & Font, (2013); Kim, Barber, & Kim, (2019); Petri & Mikuli, (2012); Hristov & Chirico (2019)
6	Select suppliers who contribute to local development.	Hussain et.al, (2017);Garay & Font, (2013); Kim, Barber, & Kim, (2019); Hossein et. al, (2020)
7	Assess the company's economic impact	Garay & Font, (2013); Kim, Barber, & Kim, (2019); Petri & Mikuli, (2012); Chindu & Bhattacharya, (2019)
8	Provide training programs for staff	Nagendrakumar et. Al., (2022); Garay & Font, (2013); Kim, Barber, & Kim, (2019); Petri & Mikuli, (2012); Rupert & Ebner, (2010)

## IV. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The topic of corporate sustainability in hospitality sparked a lot of attention globally. Numerous articles featuring the phrase "sustainable in hotels" in the title were published between 2003 and 2022. It is a tendency that has global implications for the pursuit of justice, equity, and development for all populations within and between generations. To enhance the credibility

of the research, present a wide range of viewpoints and practices in corporate sustainability across the globe, and give hoteliers and viewers of this research a well-rounded information foundation on such initiatives, several research bases were used in this study.

As Harmon (2017) depicted, in the previous ten years, sustainability has been increasingly

important in the hotel sector. The topic of sustainability has increasingly taken center stage in discussions of both societal and political importance. Starting in 2015, academics have begun to pay more attention to corporate sustainability assessment. It is believed that the majority of publications have been focused on in the previous five years is a result of the agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which was introduced in 2015. The several interpretations of the meaning of "corporate sustainability" were used in the literature we analyzed; typically, this notion is based on the tripod of economic-social-environmental factors.

According to the prevailing literature, sustainability is based on three dimensions; social, economic, and environmental. In terms of the environment, the hotel sector must use environmentally friendly products, control prevailing water wastage, fix alternative energy sources, use technology for power saving, use natural light, recycling of plastics and glass, creation of internal policies to reduce the wastage, keep ecosystems viable and healthy by taking into account the carbon footprint of food, building development, transportation of staff and visitors to and from the facility. As the social aspect, the hospitality sector requires to enhance the daily lives and wellbeing of either their community or their customers by participating in taking actions to alleviate education and poverty, offering donations to the locals, and voluntary activities for the wellbeing of the local community, creating long-term partnerships with suppliers, providing high-quality services and products and a safe environment for consumers, create a safe and healthy work environment, comply with labor legislation and employee contracts, treating all consumers fairly. Economic perspective, the hotel sector must maintain the profit-driven mindset of entrepreneurs and offers hoteliers the chance to establish a win-win situation by utilizing practical sustainable efforts such as recruiting locals to the staff, additional benefits for employees, paying staff above the industry average, encouraging guests to use locally made products, contribute to charitable activities, select suppliers who contribute to local development, assess the

company's economic impact. Moreover, the corporate sustainability practices of each dimension are constructed using various sources of information through the selected papers: we counted the number of corporate sustainability practices. In the systematic literature survey, many authors have concluded from their systematic study that the literature had primarily addressed the environmental element of sustainability, leaving out the economic and social dimensions of sustainability in hotels.

## V. IMPLICATIONS

This study's primary objective was to examine sustainable corporate practices in the hospitality industry by looking through a wide range of article variations publicly available online. This article can be utilized as a fundamental overview of corporate sustainability practices made in the hospitality sector between 2003 and 2022 from around the world by addressing various cultures that are engaged effectively in adopting sustainability initiatives in the hospitality sector.

This scientific report is a helpful resource for hotels, organizations, and even students looking for ideas for fresh initiatives they may also adopt in their hospitality establishments. Moreover, this research work is significant for hotel management because it identifies different corporate sustainability dimensions and practices that can be adopted to lower energy and water usage and improve economic outcomes through incorporation as a collection of practices that can be used as benchmarks. Additionally, this study demonstrates how vital the eco-friendly operation & service delivery discussed in the literature is to the long-term sustainability of lodging sector.

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