



Reinforcing Green Participative Actions: Insight from MRC Hotel Ubud

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Employee Participation, Green Practices, Sustainable Hotels, Housekeeping, 3R Concep

Received : 01, October

Revised : 02, November

Accepted: 29, December

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the participation strategies of Housekeeping Department employees in implementing green practices at MRC Hotel in Ubud. The green practices implemented include the 3R concept (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) as well as the use of environmentally friendly materials and reduction of plastic waste. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques through interviews and observations. The results of the study indicate that employees have a good understanding of green practices and regularly attend training, but there is still inconsistency in their implementation, particularly in terms of frequency. Barriers include high workloads and infrastructure limitations. The proposed strategies to enhance employee participation include gamification-based training, reward programs, green suggestion boxes, and expanded partnerships with environmental communities. This study provides strategic recommendations to increase employee engagement as agents of change in supporting environmental sustainability in the hospitality sector.

INTRODUCTION

Green practices are strategic approaches adopted by the hospitality and tourism industry to minimize negative environmental impacts while simultaneously enhancing business image and competitiveness. According to Kim et al. (2017), green practices not only generate financial benefits but also contribute to environmental protection through three key dimensions proposed by the Green Restaurant Association (GRA): green action, which encompasses environmental conservation activities; green food, which emphasizes the use of organic food ingredients; and green donation, which involves participation in social initiatives supporting environmental issues (Khalil et al., 2024; Leonardo et al., 2014). The implementation of this concept in hotels can reduce long-term operational costs by lowering energy, water, and other resource consumption, as well as attracting guest segments that are increasingly concerned about sustainability issues. Within the application of green practices, the 3R concept (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) serves as a fundamental principle. Reduce emphasizes minimizing resource use and waste generation at the source, Reuse promotes the extended life cycle of items or materials through repeated use, and Recycle transforms waste into new raw materials through recycling processes.

In the hotel context, the Housekeeping Department plays a pivotal role in implementing green practices, as it is directly responsible for cleanliness, comfort, and resource utilization in daily operations. Through initiatives such as energy-saving programs using LED lighting, solar water heating systems, efficient temperature regulation, and waste management via the separation of organic and non-organic waste, hotels can significantly reduce their ecological footprint (Moise et al., 2021). The application of the 3R concept within housekeeping can be achieved through reducing excessive use of cleaning chemicals (Reduce), reusing refillable soap or shampoo bottles (Reuse), and recycling used linen or towels into cleaning cloths (Recycle).

MRC Hotel, a luxury property in Ubud, Bali, has initiated various green practice programs aimed not only at supporting environmental conservation but also at providing benefits for the surrounding community. Based on observations conducted between December and January, the housekeeping department implemented several green practices, including the use of paper-based amenities, recycling of used coffee capsules, paperless assignments through the FCS application, the use of glass bottles, and natural bar soap. The latter is also collected and retrieved by a vendor for recycling. These practices contribute to reducing pollution, conserving resources, and enhancing community well-being through the minimization of single-use plastics and responsible waste management (Raza & Khan, 2022).

Preliminary observations conducted in January revealed significant inconsistencies in the implementation of these green practices. Such inconsistencies were concretely identified through several suboptimal practices, including the frequent collection of excessive linen that was ultimately discarded without being used – when in fact, unused linen should have been returned to the pantry (Reduce). Furthermore, glass water bottles, which should have been

returned to suppliers, were often mixed with waste, thereby increasing the volume of hotel waste (Reuse). Similarly, hand soap removed from check-out rooms was supposed to be collected in designated pantry containers for recycling (Recycle), yet was frequently observed being discarded. This phenomenon highlights a gap between the conceptual policy and actual practices on the ground.

The above findings indicate that while the 3R program has been introduced, employee discipline in carrying out green practices remains insufficient. Referring to Jones et al. (2016), the success of sustainable practice implementation is highly dependent on the active involvement of all stakeholders, particularly employees directly engaged in operational tasks. Employee education on the importance of sustainable practices is therefore a vital aspect of successful green practice implementation, as their understanding and commitment fundamentally determine the consistency of these programs in daily operations.

The objectives of this study are strategically significant. First, it seeks to identify the gap between the conceptual framework of green practices and their field implementation. Second, it aims to examine the factors hindering consistent implementation of sustainability programs. Third, it intends to provide strategic recommendations to optimize human resource engagement in supporting environmental practices. Thus, this study does not merely highlight inconsistencies but also strives to enhance employee participation, enabling them to become agents of sustainable change within the hospitality ecosystem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

State of The Art

One relevant study is that of Prakash et al. (2023) and Triartha et al. (2023), which aimed to evaluate the implementation of green practices in the housekeeping department and to identify areas requiring improvement. Through interviews and participatory observation, the study found that green practices had been implemented effectively, although several indicators still needed enhancement, such as the use of environmentally friendly cleaning agents and community education on sustainable reforestation. This study highlights the importance of regular evaluations of green practice implementation to ensure their effectiveness.

Another significant study is by Migdadi (2023) and Irawan and Vianney (2017), which explored the impact of green practices on consumer behavior. Using a quantitative method with multiple linear regression analysis, the authors found that the implementation of green practices – including green action, green food, and green donation – positively influenced consumer behavior toward greater environmental concern. These findings underscore that consumers are increasingly attentive to environmentally friendly practices adopted by businesses, including restaurants and hotels.

Furthermore, Dang-Van et al. (2023) and Apryanti (2021) examined the application of green practices in supporting sustainable tourism. Using qualitative data, the study identified that green practices contribute to waste reduction, efficient use of resources, and heightened awareness of environmental importance among restaurant visitors. The findings suggest that green practices not only benefit the environment but also enhance the positive image of businesses in the eyes of consumers.

A comparison of these previous studies with the present research indicates a distinct focus. While earlier research largely emphasized the general implementation of green practices and their impact on consumers, the current study specifically concentrates on hotel employee participation in the execution of green practices. This focus is critical, as Barakagira & Paapa (2023) and Kasim and Lee (2016) argue that the success of green hotel initiatives depends on the commitment and participation of all stakeholders, including employees, managers, and guests. Hotels need to foster a sustainability-oriented culture in which everyone recognizes their role in reducing environmental impacts. Accordingly, this study is expected to contribute significantly to the understanding of employee roles in the successful implementation of green practices in the hospitality industry.

Green Hotels

The concept of green hotels emerged as a response to the growing awareness of environmental sustainability within the hospitality industry. According to Alonso-Almeida et al. (2017) and Mensah (2019), a green hotel is defined as an accommodation facility that operates its business based on environmentally friendly principles. This includes the adoption of various programs to conserve natural resources such as water and energy, as well as efforts to reduce waste and pollution. Similarly, Deng (2011) explains that green hotels actively seek to minimize negative environmental impacts through operational practices such as reducing energy and water consumption, minimizing waste production, and protecting natural resources. Thus, green hotels not only provide accommodation but also contribute to environmental conservation. This concept emphasizes the importance of sustainable operational practices that are not only beneficial for the environment but also enhance the hotel's positive image among environmentally conscious guests.

Green Practices

Based on Zhang and Chen (2021) and Li and Zhang (2020), green practices are defined as a series of organizational actions and initiatives designed to reduce environmental footprints and promote sustainability. Their scope ranges from simple recycling to sustainable supply chains and environmentally friendly products. The essence of green practices lies in minimizing negative impacts through energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, pollution prevention, and the use of renewable resources.

In the hospitality context, implementing green practices is crucial, given the sector's responsibility to preserve environmental sustainability. Green practices in hotels are applied in various ways, including effective waste management such as waste segregation, single-use plastic reduction, and recycling (Zhang & Chen, 2021). Energy efficiency is achieved through the use of LED lighting, solar panels, and energy-saving appliances (Li & Zhang, 2020). Water conservation is promoted through water-saving devices, greywater reuse, and rainwater management. Environmentally friendly products are used for cleaning and guest amenities. Local community engagement includes supporting local businesses and providing education for guests and employees.

Through comprehensive green practices, hotels contribute to environmental preservation while enhancing their reputation among guests and the broader community. Examples of such practices include renewable energy adoption through solar panels and solar water heating systems, water efficiency measures via low-flow faucets and toilets along with towel and linen reuse programs, waste management through segregated bins and recycling initiatives, the use of eco-friendly cleaning and toiletry products, and community engagement via support for local products and environmental preservation activities. Thus, green practice adoption in hotels not only benefits the environment but also improves brand image and attracts environmentally conscious guests.

Employee Participation

Employee participation is a critical factor in the successful implementation of green practices within organizations, including the hospitality sector, where active employee involvement not only enhances the effectiveness of environmental programs but also fosters a sustainable organizational culture. Employee participation extends beyond mere physical involvement in work activities. More importantly, it reflects the degree of mental and emotional engagement employees have with organizational activities and the extent to which they feel a sense of ownership in the organization's success (Robbins & Judge, 2017). It involves granting employees opportunities to influence decisions related to their work, their teams, and, more broadly, the direction of the organization (Indrayani et al., 2023; Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005). The essence of participation lies in empowering employees to voice ideas, provide suggestions, and actively contribute to decision-making processes, rather than serving solely as task executors.

Drawing on the employee participation measurement frameworks developed by Kim et al. (2019) and Lee & Park (2020), this study employs six key indicators to assess the level of housekeeping employee participation in green practices:

1. Knowledge Level: measuring the depth of employees' understanding of green practices and their environmental significance.

2. Environmental Awareness: assessing personal awareness of waste impacts and sustainable practices.
3. Intrinsic Motivation : analyzing internal commitment to green practice implementation.
4. Frequency of Implementation: calculating the consistency of applying green practices in daily activities.
5. Personal Initiative: identifying employee efforts beyond standard operating procedures.
6. Training Engagement: evaluating active participation in sustainability development programs.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method using in-depth interviews to explore the implementation of green practices at MRC Hotel. Through a series of systematic observations, the researcher identified several inconsistencies in the execution of green practices within the housekeeping department. Referring to the employee participation measurement frameworks developed by Kim et al. (2019) and Lee & Park (2020), this study adopts six key indicators to assess the level of housekeeping employees' participation in green practices.

The data collection technique used in this study was interviews. According to Yusuf (2014:372), an interview is an event or process of interaction between the interviewer and the source of information, or the interviewee, through direct or indirect communication. The researcher conducted interviews with the Executive Housekeeper, the Housekeeping Supervisor, and two employees directly in the Housekeeping Department. The purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of employee participation in the implementation of green practices.

These data provide a realistic depiction of the background and characteristics of the research object and support a more comprehensive analysis of employee participation in implementing green practices in the housekeeping department. Through qualitative data, the researcher was able to explore important aspects of the study that could not be measured numerically but are highly relevant for a holistic understanding of the research. The qualitative data in this study were obtained from interviews with the Executive Housekeeper, Housekeeping Supervisor, and two employees at MRC Hotel Ubud.

RESEARCH RESULT

The data for this study were obtained from interviews with four key informants: the Executive Housekeeper, the Housekeeping Supervisor, and two housekeeping employees. The aim was to gain insights into employee participation in green practices within the housekeeping department of MRC Hotel. The information collected from these sources enabled the researcher to deepen the understanding of employee participation and identify issues that require optimization to enhance participation levels.

An interview with the Executive Housekeeper, conducted on 20 May 2025, sought to examine the planning of employee participation in green practices at MRC Hotel. The findings revealed that the housekeeping department provides initial training for newly hired employees to ensure they have an adequate understanding of green practices. In addition, training sessions are conducted once a month to maintain employee awareness. The structure of the green practice training program in the housekeeping department includes the introduction of the 3R concept (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and practical training on resource reduction. The effectiveness of training is assessed through direct observation. Current programs include the use of paper wrapping instead of plastic wrapping for flower deliveries from suppliers to the hotel, as well as a linen and towel replacement program aligned with green practice initiatives.

An interview with the Housekeeping Supervisor, conducted on 19 May 2025, aimed to understand the supervision of employee participation in green practices. The findings revealed that, based on direct observation and interaction, housekeeping staff have developed an understanding of green practices over the past seven months. Although employees recognize the importance of green practices, their application has not been fully consistent due to the absence of designated waste segregation facilities. Another major challenge lies in time pressure and workload. During periods of high occupancy or peak hours, employees may prioritize task efficiency over proper implementation of green practices, such as waste sorting or ensuring all lights are turned off. Moreover, the interview indicated a lack of initiative among employees, as they tend to adhere strictly to established procedures rather than going beyond them.

Further interviews with two housekeeping employees, conducted on 14 May 2025, were intended to examine the direct implementation of green practices. The findings showed that the employees were knowledgeable about green practices and the 3R concept. Their involvement in green practices has shifted their mindset, making them more attentive to energy efficiency and more aware of environmental issues in their surroundings.

DISCUSSION

Based on the interview results above, this study measures the level of employee participation using six indicators developed by Kim et al. (2019) and Lee & Park (2020).

Knowledge Level

Housekeeping employees at MRC Hotel demonstrate a consistent understanding of green practices and the 3R concept (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), in line with the hotel's sustainability program. According to the Executive Housekeeper, MRC Hotel ensures that every new employee receives initial training to build a strong knowledge foundation, followed by regular monthly training sessions. The consistency of this training is crucial, not only to guarantee

adequate theoretical understanding and practical knowledge of green practices but also to ensure that such knowledge remains relevant and well-retained. The training content includes in-depth introductions to the 3R concept and hands-on practices in resource reduction, equipping employees with practical skills. This was confirmed through interviews with two housekeeping employees regarding their understanding of green practices and the 3R concept. This knowledge is vital because it enables employees to understand what needs to be done and why it is important – an essential first step in transforming knowledge into concrete actions that support the hotel's sustainability initiatives. The continuity of training programs and their ability to enhance employee understanding align with practical applications, demonstrating that training is a key driver of sustainability awareness and practices in the hospitality industry (Pham et al., 2022; Setyawati et al., 2023; Setiadi & Nur'ainy, 2022).

Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness among housekeeping employees has shown a notable increase, largely driven by the regular monthly training programs implemented by MRC Hotel. These training sessions not only provide knowledge but also instill a deeper understanding of the importance of green practices. Direct interviews with employees revealed that their active involvement in these programs has transformed their mindset. This shift is reflected in their growing awareness of environmental issues in their surroundings and their enhanced understanding of the importance of energy efficiency. Such findings indicate that continuous training is effective in internalizing sustainability values, turning practices into personal awareness rather than merely procedures to be followed. This is consistent with previous studies, which highlight that structured training and education programs play a crucial role in enhancing environmental awareness and promoting eco-friendly behavior in the workplace (Karatepe et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2021; Setiadi & Nur'ainy, 2022).

Intrinsic Motivation

Employees' intrinsic motivation to actively engage in green practices appears to be particularly strong, primarily because of their direct involvement in sustainability programs. Their participation goes beyond merely following instructions, reflecting an internal drive shaped by real-life experiences. For instance, participation in initiatives such as Sungai Watch exemplifies how direct engagement influences their sense of responsibility. When employees are physically involved in cleaning or protecting the environment, they develop a profound personal responsibility toward the preservation of their surroundings (Putri et al., 2021). Such experiences transcend theoretical training and foster an emotional connection, transforming environmental awareness from a mere concept into something they tangibly experience. This sense of personal responsibility ultimately enhances their motivation in performing daily tasks at the hotel, as they perceive their work as an integral contribution to a broader

effort to safeguard the environment they deeply care about. Previous studies have confirmed that employees' involvement in environmental programs can strengthen their intrinsic motivation and foster pro-environmental behavior (Aboramadan & Karatepe, 2021; Lülfs & Hahn, 2013).

Frequency of Implementation

Although housekeeping employees possess a solid understanding and awareness of environmental issues, consistency in the application of green practices remains a challenge. According to the Housekeeping Supervisor, implementation has not yet reached an optimal level of consistency, particularly in waste segregation. This is largely due to the absence of designated facilities for waste separation in the work areas, as limited space within the hotel makes it difficult for employees to sort waste accurately. In addition, time pressure and heavy workloads during periods of high hotel occupancy often lead employees to prioritize efficiency over detail-oriented green practices, such as waste sorting or ensuring that all lights are turned off. Hahn et al. (2018) argue that intense performance pressure can lead to "environmental myopia," where organizations and individuals set aside sustainability goals in order to meet short-term operational targets, and under high-stress situations, practices not directly tied to core performance outcomes tend to be neglected. Challenges also arise in replacing plastic-based amenities due to the unavailability of suppliers, as well as instances where excessive linen is used by certain employees and subsequently discarded without utilization. These challenges indicate that infrastructural, operational, and at times individual behavioral factors must be addressed in order to achieve full consistency in green practices (Rehman et al., 2023).

Personal Initiative

The personal initiative of housekeeping employees in implementing green practices tends to be less prominent in direct practice, largely due to the perception that all tasks and responsibilities are clearly regulated by established procedures, leaving little room for innovation or actions outside existing guidelines. Nevertheless, some employees have demonstrated proactive initiative by proposing new ideas, such as replacing plastic-based amenities with natural products. Such proposals reflect Service Value number nine: "I am involved in the planning of the work that affects me". Their deep understanding of environmental issues, combined with the courage to voice ideas that extend beyond routine tasks, has received positive responses. The favorable reception of these ideas by both colleagues and supervisors is an important indicator that a supportive environment for initiatives does exist, although it may not yet be fully explored (Setyawati et al., 2023). This highlights the considerable potential of personal initiatives, which can be further encouraged by creating more open channels for employee input and by providing clear appreciation and support for innovative ideas emerging from staff (Filimonau et al., 2023).

A strategy to foster personal initiatives among employees in green practices involves providing accessible and transparent channels for submitting innovative ideas (Ahmed et al., 2021). MRC Hotel could implement a “Green Suggestion Box,” either in physical form placed in strategic staff areas or through a dedicated digital platform accessible via devices provided by the hotel or employees’ personal smartphones. Importantly, these channels should allow employees to submit their green practice ideas anonymously if desired. The option of anonymity is crucial in alleviating concerns or hesitation employees may feel when voicing their ideas.

Training Engagement

Employee engagement in training within the Housekeeping Department at MRC Hotel has been highly active in embedding green practices. This is supported by a comprehensive training approach. In addition to routine internal training, which serves as the foundation, the hotel also actively organizes external training, such as the session delivered by ECOLAB in January 2025. This training specifically focused on the use of environmentally friendly cleaning agents, which was deemed highly relevant and useful in assisting employees with daily operational tasks. This indicates that the hotel does not solely rely on internal resources but also invests in external expertise to enrich employees’ practical knowledge (Osolase et al., 2023; Setyawati et al., 2023).

Employees have expressed that hands-on practice has a greater impact than theoretical training alone. They specifically highlighted that participation in initiatives such as Sungai Watch proved to be more effective in enhancing their involvement in green practices. Such direct experiences instill a profound sense of responsibility, transforming theoretical concepts into tangible experiences that drive motivation. Consequently, MRC Hotel has successfully developed a balanced training program that combines formal knowledge with field experiences, empowering employees to not only understand but also be motivated to implement green practices.

To further enhance and sustain employee engagement in green practices, MRC Hotel could expand its partnerships with local communities. While current participation in activities such as Sungai Watch has proven effective, broadening the scope to include collaborations with other local environmental organizations could provide employees with more diverse opportunities for involvement. Potential initiatives may include coral reef restoration projects along Bali’s coastal areas, regular beach clean-ups beyond hotel activities, or active participation in nearby conservation efforts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the participation of housekeeping employees in implementing green practices at MRC Hotel demonstrates satisfactory results in five out of the six examined aspects, namely knowledge level, environmental awareness, intrinsic motivation, personal initiative, and involvement in training. This is reflected in the provision of regular training, engagement in

environmental activities, and the emergence of initiatives from several employees. However, the frequency of implementation remains relatively weak due to heavy workloads and limited infrastructure, such as the lack of segregated waste bins. Therefore, concrete strategies are required, including the addition of supporting facilities and monitoring linen usage, to ensure that green practices can be consistently and comprehensively applied.

To enhance employee participation in green practices within the housekeeping department at MRC Hotel, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Provision of segregated waste bins and data-based linen management. Additional or newly constructed waste bins will facilitate employees in properly separating waste. Moreover, a linen management system based on data should be applied in each pantry by introducing a monitoring form containing linen stock, employee names, and the quantity of linen taken. This will allow better tracking and evaluation of linen usage across different pantries.
2. Implementation of the "Best Green Employee of the Month/Year" reward program. This recognition should be granted to employees who demonstrate the highest level of active participation in green practices, assessed through their level of engagement in providing innovative ideas/suggestions and their active involvement in environmentally related activities.
3. Introduction of the "Green Suggestion Box." This initiative aims to collect employee suggestions, which could be further developed into a digital format accessible via employees' smartphones. Anonymity could also be maintained if desired, thereby encouraging more contributions.
4. Expansion of partnerships with environmental communities. Beyond the current collaboration with Sungai Watch, partnerships could also be developed with communities such as Zero Waste Indonesia, which promotes a "zero waste" lifestyle through the 6R Movement (Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot), and Earth Hour Indonesia, which campaigns for energy conservation through the symbolic act of turning off lights for one hour. In addition, joint environmental activities such as communal clean-up programs could be undertaken.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This research employs a mixed-method approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to explore how green participative actions at MRC Hotel Ubud influence employee environmental commitment, operational sustainability, and guest engagement, investigating the mechanisms through which organizational support, environmental training, and participatory decision-making foster measurable improvements in eco-friendly behaviors and hotel performance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the management and staff of MRC Hotel Ubud for their invaluable cooperation and support throughout this research.

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