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Bachelor of Commerce: Honours in Management
13 October 2020

(Word count: 14504 abstract to conclusion)

**An investigation of practices taken by corporations in the
hospitality industry toward creating a more
sustainable future**

Declaration

I, Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut, hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Commerce: Honours in Management degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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13 October 2020

Abstract

The study aimed to gain insight on what employees at The OBH Group understand environmentally friendly practices to be and how they are carried out in order to be considered a green hotel; and to work toward achieving their sustainable development goals by 2030. It also aims to discover the effects, if any, that COVID-19 has had on implementing these practices.

Following a qualitative approach to explore, understand, describe and obtain deeper insight from employees at the chosen hotel, semi-structured interviews were conducted on four participants.

As described by all four participants, implementation of green practices is important to the hotel in order to reduce the overall carbon footprint and to be cost-effective in the long run. It is also important for the hotel to implement these practices as guests are becoming more eco-conscious and look for that when traveling. As interpreted from the findings, COVID-19 has delayed the implementation of some practices and has resulted in the need to utilize single-use plastics for health and safety reasons, and has also resulted in seeking alternate and new suppliers. However, there are green practices that are in place that makes the hotel on that is environmentally-friendly.

Key words: Sustainability, SDG 2030, green practice, carbon footprint, cost-effective, eco-conscious, COVID-19.

Contents

Abstract	3
1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH	6
1.1 Introduction.....	6
1.2 Background.....	6
1.3 Rationale.....	7
1.4 Problem Statement.....	8
1.5 Purpose of the study.....	9
1.6 Research question	9
1.7 Research objectives.....	9
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Theoretical foundation	10
2.2 The United Nations (UN) Global Compact Management Model	10
2.3 Literature Review	12
Sustainability and Sustainable Development	12
Green Hotelier	15
Guest education and response to sustainable practices.....	19
The effects of COVID-19 on the hospitality industry	21
2.4 Conceptualisation	22
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	24
3.2 Research Design	24
3.3 Population	25
3.4 Sampling.....	26
3.5 Data collection methods.....	27
3.6 Data analysis techniques	29
3.8 Trustworthiness.....	30
4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	31
4.1 Presentation of the findings	31
4.2 Interpretation of findings.....	35
Resource management	35
Responsible/ green practices	40
COVID-19.....	45

5. RESEARCH QUESTION, PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED	47
5.1 Research question.....	47
5.2 Research problem.....	47
5.3 Research objectives.....	48
6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	50
6.1 Ethical considerations.....	50
6.2 Limitations of the study.....	51
6.3 Recommendations for further research.....	51
6.4 Conclusion	52
References	54
Appendix A – Concept document table.....	65
Appendix B – Interview schedule.....	66
Appendix C – Ethics clearance letter.....	68
Appendix D – Ethics checklist.....	70
Appendix E – Gatekeepers letters.....	72
Appendix F – Consent form template	74
Appendix G – Participant consent form	77
Appendix H – Audio / video consent form	78
Appendix I – Gatekeepers Approval.....	79

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: The United Nations Global Compact Management Model	12
Table 1: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by participant 1 (OBHP1).....	32
Table 2: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by Participant 2 (OBHP2)	33
Table 3: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by Participant 3	33
Table 4: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by Participant 4 (OBHP4)	34
Table 5: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by all participants	34

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

“It always seems impossible until it is done” – Nelson Mandela. Sustainability is a concept that has been around for decades and deals with the conservation of resources for the future (WorldEnergy, 2014), further it is seen as a survival guide and something that organisations require to succeed beyond 2030. The concept originates back to 1645 when it was applied to managing the regeneration of forest (WorldEnergy, 2014). History proves that the criteria for future success are dependent on responsible business and individual practices that reduces negative impacts (Melissen, Cavagnaro, Dames & Düweke, 2016: 231). In the 1970s, human being’s ecological footprint was greater than what the planet could accommodate for which resulted in an unsustainable future for the environments (Lin, Hanscom, Murthy, Galli, Evans, Neill, Serena-Mancini, Martindill, Medouer, Huang & Wackernagel, 2018: 58). Thus, The Brundtland Report in Our Common Future (1987) introduces the importance of sustainable business practices for future development.

For sustainable development to be successful, and to continue performing business into the future, 2030 and beyond, all stakeholders need to equally contribute to performing their roles. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (2020) outlines that organisations need to provide their stakeholders with efficient education practices to gain knowledge and understanding of the importance of sustainability and how following the framework to incorporate strategies is important for a future and to see growth.

1.2 Background

In order to ensure the anonymity of the organisation used in the study, a fictitious name has been used. “The OBH Group” is used to identify the hotel being interviewed for data collection.

Background of the OBH Group and sustainability at the hotel

The OBH Group is one of the twenty hotels that are part of the RCH. The group has hotels around the world, but The OBH Group is situated in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Briefly, the group is known for their generous hospitality and passionate service (Red Carnation Hotels, 2014). They are one of South Africa's hotels that is most desired, as they offer an ambiance of going back to the past, but with all the latest comfort and amenities.

The whole group is committed to protecting both the natural and cultural heritage surrounding the respective locations. In addition, they are determined to build a future that is sustainable for the surrounding communities as well as wildlife to maintain the surrounding space for many years to come. Furthermore, as explained by the Red Carnation Hotel Collection (2014), the hotels work together with a foundation called TreadRight which is a non-profit organisation that focuses on making travel better through practices like conservation, leadership and supporting of communities. They are committed to eliminating all single-use plastics within the hotels around the world by December 2022.

Background on environmental sustainability

The main goal of sustainability is to raise awareness and implement innovative practices in order for it to grow and develop. Environmental sustainability aims to make human welfare and social sustainability better by protecting the resources and limiting waste (Van Schalkwyk, 2012: 17). In order to achieve environmental sustainability, one needs to adapt to change and incorporate green practices in their daily lives (Goodland and Daly, 1996: 1003, as referenced by Van Schalkwyk, 2012: 17).

1.3 Rationale

As described by the WorldEnergy (2014), the concept of sustainability is related to the future of the environment. As stated on the IISD (2020), sustainability is defined in the

Our Common Future, Brundtland Report (1987) as meeting the present generations needs without jeopardizing the potential of the future generations to meet the needs of their own. This concept as individuals are familiar with today, originated just over thirty years ago, 1987 to be specific (Sustainability For All, 2006).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to be carried out in all countries and all stakeholders who work in partnership towards achieving the same goal (Brundtland, 1987). Within the hotel industry, sustainability is an issue that holds great value (Brackett & Carr II, 2015: 33). The hotel industry around the globe has gained more knowledge of the impacts caused on both the environmental and economic environment, according to Goldstein and Primlani (2012) as cited by Sajjad, Jillani and Raziq (2018: 717).

Further, Melissen *et al.* (2016: 231) states that the effect that the industry has on society, the environment and economy is high, thus the practices and initiatives of sustainability within the hotel industry can have a great impact on the sustainable development in that it minimizes the negative outcomes that are associated with the operation.

Thus, the study is relevant as it highlights the importance of the sustainable practices in the hospitality industry in order to ensure the foreseeable future of the environment.

The researcher therefore finds relevance in this topic, as in order to ensure that there is a planet for posterity to benefit off of, measures need to be followed by those in business currently, and in turn, society as well as the economy are all positively affected. Further, in order for all to benefit, all environments – economic, social and environmental – need to be satisfied.

1.4 Problem Statement

Sustainability has become a topic that is no longer just a fad, but rather a reality (Balfaquee, 2014). In order to ensure the survival of the planet for the future,

precautionary measures need to be introduced and practiced at all levels of an organisation.

The research problem is therefore to investigate the green practices implemented in the hospitality industry on order to work toward a more sustainable future and to achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030. With theory based on academic sources and practical research on The OBH Group, this research study will highlight the need for green initiatives within the industry and the way in which these are being carried out.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The aim of this paper is to gain insight on what hotels understand environmentally friendly practices to be and how they are carried out in order to be considered a green hotel and to work toward achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030.

1.6 Research question

- Primary question

What green practices have been implemented to work toward being an environmentally friendly hotel?

1.7 Research objectives

- To determine how the hotel is working toward a more sustainable future;
- To understand how guests and employees are educated and the way they respond to being eco-conscious;
- To determine whether or not implementing sustainable practices are beneficial in the long run;
- To gain knowledge on how the local community is involved; and
- To determine the effects COVID19 has had on environmentally friendly practices.

1.8 Summary

For the purpose of this study, only one hotel was interviewed due to time and accessibility. A fictitious name is used throughout the study to refer to the hotel that has been studied to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The problem, purpose, question and objectives highlights the importance of conducting this research, and will be portrayed through the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical foundation

2.2 The United Nations (UN) Global Compact Management Model

This model provides the basics of the tools and guidelines that relate to sustainability and sustainable development. The UN Global Compact Management Model published by Deloitte (2000) states that the framework sets out a number of steps that directs organisations to conduct business practice, namely: committing to sustainable development practices; assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; defining values, vision and mission; implementing policies and procedures; measuring the impacts of the goals; and lastly communicating practices to stakeholders (Louw & Venter, 2013: 77).

Commit

Louw and Venter (2013:78) outline this step as organisations committing to incorporating the UN principles into their business model in a transparent manner.

Assess

Following committing the Global Compact, and in order to promote the goals, risks, opportunities and impacts on all levels are identified and policies and procedures are continuously modified (United Nations Global Compact, 2012, as cited by Louw & Venter, 2013).

Define

According to outcomes from the previous step, organisations redefine the goals in order to adapt to the way in which they operate, developing a direction to deliver responsible practice (UN Global Management Model, as cited by Deloitte, 2000).

Implement

According to the UN Global Compact (2012), as cited by Louw and Venter (2013), organisations ensure the continuous improvement of goals by training and developing employees, generating resources and working together with necessary personal to implement desired procedures.

Measure

Based on systems and procedures assessed and defined, organisations monitor the performance and improve on areas that they find could be enhanced (Louw & Venter, 2013).

Report/ communicate

In this step, the overall progress is reported by organisations, and together with key role players, and thus, communication as to where organisations can improve is addressed.

UN Sustainable Development Goals aim to be achieved by 2030. In order to do this, business policies and procedures require changes. Therefore, this framework is relevant to the study, as the hospitality industry needs to implement changes to business strategies in order to successfully achieve sustainable development goals by 2030.



Figure 1: The United Nations Global Compact Management Model

2.3 Literature Review

Sustainability and Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainability is derived from the Latin words' *sus* meaning up and *terne*, which means to bear (The IIE, 2019: 72), and as stipulated by Rishi, Jauhari and Joshi (2015: 376), it includes all the aspects of sustainable development. In addition, sustainability guides the manner in which the use of resources is controlled in order to ensure that economic, environmental and social needs are achieved (The World Trade Organisation (WTO), 1955). Swink, Melnyk, Cooper and Hartley (2014: 552), explain

sustainability as the aim to enhance ones' standard of living by focusing on equality, better health and greater opportunities.

The United Nations Brundtland Commission Report (1987) explains sustainable development as the existing generation being able to meet their needs without compromising the individuals of the future to obtain theirs. The critical aspects of sustainability include people, profit and planet – or better known as The Triple-Bottom-Line (TBL) (Rishi *et al.*, 2015: 376). In other words, business conducted to generate profits while causing no harm to national or international environment, society and/or the surrounding communities (News24, 2011).

Economic development refers to issues that are considered problematic. As explained by Mason (2014), economic development is about incentivising individuals who comply with green practices and guidelines. In addition, it aims to encourage people to do the best that they can. Economic goals include promoting effective and efficient corporate governance; building sound and sufficient environmental policies; motivating both entrepreneurship and innovative ideas; increasing investments on both a local and global platforms; implementing systems of great standards for regulation of industries; and further, separating the usage of resources and reduced waste management from economic growth (SDG's: Country report, 2019: 4). Previous reports state that the holistic focus on economic sustainability is seen as integrated reporting and corporate citizenship (King III, as cited by Brevis & Vrba, 2014).

Social development, as described by Mason (2014), protects the health and safety of individuals from pollution and/ or other dangerous business practices. It aims to educate the people as well as encourage them to take part in sustainability and inform them about the importance of protecting the environment and what the outcome will be if the goals are not able to be reached. According to Traver (2019), corporate culture is considered an important aspect of social development. Corporate culture increases the way in which organisations perform by twenty to thirty per cent (Heskett, as cited by Coleman, 2013), and all organisations have their own specific cultures that set them apart from

competitors, for example, each organisation has their own specific values, vision, individuals and practise that are essential to for their success, (Coleman, 2013).

Environmental sustainability refers to effectively protecting natural resources for future generations, and in doing so the natural resources are thus protected for the current generation (Crane & Matten, 2004: 24). Industrialisation, and the use of harmful substances and materials that are non-renewable are individuals' actions that result in negative outcomes on the environment and therefore, incorporating environmentally sustainable business practices is crucial, especially in SA (Brevis & Vrba, 2014: 178). According to former Minister of Tourism in SA, failure to implement sustainable practices will result in 2050 seeing emissions of greenhouse gases rise by more than double (as cited in King III, Brevis & Vrba, 2014).

The damage caused by previous generations is concerning for the future generations, therefore meeting the needs of the triple bottom line in the way business in organisations is done today is imperative for the years to come (WBCSD, 2002), as cited by (Sloan, Legrand & Chen, 2009: 4). Thus, environmental protection is vital and the implementation of practices is mandatory (Mason, 2014).

According to the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (2017), the foundation of sustainable tourism development can be summarised as:

- Sustainable economic growth;
- Environmental protection, resource efficiency and climate change;
- Inclusion of local community, reducing poverty and employment;
- Peace, security and universal understanding; and
- Cultural values, heritage as well as diversity.

Organisations aim to achieve sustainability in various ways by 2030, the Hilton is an example. They are committed to increasing their investments relating to impacts on society while decreasing their carbon footprint by at least half through responsible practices throughout the chain.

Green Hotelier

Sustainable development within the hospitality industry is taken from the original concept as defined in the Brundtland Report. Thus, practices in place that will ensure current triple bottom lines opportunities are enhanced without impacting the ability of those of the future to require their needs (Sloan *et al.*, 2009: 4). As highlighted by Arulappan (2016: 22), the simple definition of sustainable tourism is tourism that aims at successfully reaching the global vision of sustainability. Therefore, ensuring that as a result of practices done, the local community's culture, heritage and/or history is always protected. In other words, developed and developing countries alike, successfully prolonging the natural environment and uplifting the local community as well as the economy. To implement sustainable practices the hotels, continuous management is required, and where needed, certain practices should be corrected so that maximum benefits are achieved and maintained (Rigall-I-Torrent, 2008: 885, as cited by Arulappan, 2016: 24).

In the recent years, more and more individuals are gaining knowledge of eco- products and services and adapting the way in which they spend their money – aiming to make us of more products and/or services that are environmentally friendly. The Red Carnation Hotel Collection (2014) states that before considering investing in something, one first does research into the economic, environmental and social effects of these spending's. The focus areas for achieving eco practices include management potential risks, water, energy, waste, as well as environmental or green initiatives (Wiastuti, 2015).

According to previous studies, implementing sustainable practices within the hotel industry is finically beneficial (Sakshi, Shashi, Cerchione & Bansal, 2019: 1111). These include decreasing the total costs of running, increased demand in bookings, guest's satisfaction and loyalty, compliance and further, competitive implications (Berezan, Raab, Yoo & Love, 2013, as cited by Sakshi *et al.*, 2019). In addition, the essence of the environmental policies and procedures in place, is to satisfy and enhance stakeholders' needs, which is reached by identifying and enhancing the amount of energy used and reduction in emissions. To successfully attain sustainability, reduce greenhouse gases,

and to save energy, organisations should focus on educating and involve their employees' and also provide support to stakeholders (Cingoski & Petrevska, 2018, as cited by Sakshi *et al.*, 2019).

In order to be recognised as a hotel that follows sustainability, Silenaite-Enyed (2019) briefly highlights the types of practices that can be implemented and incorporated. These include support local, installing LED light bulbs, reducing the unemployment rate by employing locals, encouraging reforestation if land close by allows, installing systems that can purify ocean water which will make it drinkable, elimination of all single-use plastics, reducing the amount of plastic bottles used by encouraging recycling of glass bottles, solar systems, organic gardens and/or greenhouses, making use of environmentally-friendly detergents, making use of rainwater, recycling of used toiletries, becoming part of green certificate programmes like Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) and making it public knowledge that hotels aim to protect the environment by joining the TripAdvisor awards – Green Leaders Badge programme.

LEED is a certification system that concentrates on efficient use of water and energy, sustainable buildings, resources used and recycled, the standard of the controlled air conditioners as well as ways to develop infrastructure that overall performance is achieved by delivering responsible practices. This system was created by the Green Building Council based in United States of America, to encourage and assist with planning and developing sustainable or green buildings (Virgin Hotels, 2016). Virgin Hotels (2016) further states that the Chicago hotels have obtained the LEED Gold Certification.

Environmental issues relate to reducing an organisations and individuals carbon footprint by implementing systems to control change in climate, conserving water and energy, protecting natural resources, responsible waste management and recycling (Jones, Hillier & Comfort, 2014: 9). According to Hendricks (2020), environmental sustainability is an important factor that alters travellers, from Generation X to Baby-Boomers to Millennials, choices. Research conducted indicates that InterContinental, Marriott and Hyatt are examples of hotels that achieve environmental sustainability.

At InterContinental, controls introduced to manage water include water-efficient appliances and fixtures, collecting water, treating and reusing it and irrigation - by using blackwater. These practices conserve ten to twenty per cent of water (InterContinental Hotels Group, 2012, as cited by Jones *et al.*, 2014:9). It is reported that Marriot aims to enhance the quality of energy, develop green buildings/ hotels, save water and be involved with communities that focus attention on decreasing emissions of greenhouse gases (Jones *et al.*, 2014).

Marriott Hotels worldwide have implemented systems to reduce environmental footprint, they have also outlined conditions for the Hospitality Sustainable Purchasing Consortium for eco building designs, and further, work alongside both government and non-government organisations, local communities and identified interest groups to prevent the misuse of resources (Marriott, 2012: 32, as cited by Jones *et al.*, 2014: 10). Further, they aim to responsibly seek and buy products that are organic, and form sound relationships with the local farmers, therefore promoting sustainability in the kitchens.

Reports indicate that Hyatt commits to responsible sustainability by using one hundred per cent recycled plastic for cosmetics, installation of LED lights across their hotels, sustainably sourced catering options and use of one hundred per cent carpets (Jones *et al.*, 2014: 10).

On the economic side, important aspects include increasing capital, job creation and developing shareholder values and loyalty. Economic sustainability is also the responsible delegation of financial resources (Jones *et al.*, 2014). According to the Host Hotels and Resorts (2020), they are committed to economic sustainability by identifying opportunities and risks of climate control, by investing into systems and technologies that have proven successful and lastly, increasing their value while bettering the way in which they operate while protecting the environment.

When addressing corporate citizenship, concepts identified include equal opportunities, balancing personal and professional life, training and development programmes,

supporting local communities, charitable donations, individual's health, safety and security and human rights. Host Hotels and Resorts (2020) commits to being socially responsible and aims at uplifting their local communities by engaging with them, providing financial resources and volunteer work. It is documented that Jumeirah addresses social issues by establishing a working place with no discrimination, and where employees' are respected and treated with courtesy and dignity (cited in Jones *et al.*, 2014 by Jumeirah, 2008: 32); another example is Hilton, they primarily focus their efforts on developing culture that is in the best interest of their staff, business partners and local communities (Hilton, 2020). The Hilton positively impacts the social environment from creating equal opportunities for all their communities to encouraging growth in staff members. Further, their knowledge, resources and time is dedicated to creating a sustainable, foreseeable future, which all with benefit from.

Host Hotels and Resorts is one of the world's biggest lodging investments funds, and owner of large hotel chains. Their partners include Marriott, Hyatt and Hilton. According to the Host Hotels and Resorts Corporate Responsibility Report (2019), around the world there are more or less ninety-three hotel chains that positively impact the environment. From an economic view, they have invested close to three billion rand on sustainable water and energy systems, that have generated returns on investments on projects for over four years; annual savings of around half a billion rand from combined investments; more than six hundred and fifty green buildings have been developed in over four years; eight hotels are accredited with LEED and ninety seven per cent of their portfolios are achieved through the Energy Star program. On an environmental level, they have decreased their greenhouse gas emissions by thirty-five per cent; energy savings of fifteen per cent; twenty-two per cent of the water per room has been conserved and all of their properties have efficient energy and water technologies. On a social level, seven hundred odd hours have been contributed to volunteer work; over one hundred and thirty charities have been supported; they are running close to their seventh year of empowering employees and almost eight years of volunteering with an identified group that helps with providing housing to families of their community who are in need (Host Hotel & Resorts, 2019).

Hotel Verde is the world's best green hotel and lies in the heart of South Africa – Cape Town. They are the first to offer one hundred per cent green accommodation and conferencing from launching (Verde Hotels, 2020). Their sustainable features include energy efficiency, eco design and development, water and waste savings, green conferences, priority parking and sustainable operations. It has proven that eco-business practices can be incorporated while offering luxury, profitability and most importantly sustainability. According to Walker (2018), sustainability makes sense to the hotel, as implementing practices are cost effective in the long run. They follow a holistic sustainability approach – meaning treating all aspects the same, from the way in which buildings are designed and developed to the way it carries out its operations.

Green practices in design and development of buildings have resulted in thirty-five per cent savings on running costs and water, seventy per cent energy efficient hotels and eighty-five per cent decrease in resources wasted. They also have a reward system for guests who contribute to the hotel's sustainability, for example, reusing of towels, not making use of the aircon, opting for the stairs over the lift, correct use of recycling bins, going for a brisk walk or jog around the property or choosing to use only one set of pillow cases will earn you a 'Verdinos', which is the hotels own currency, equivalent to five rand, that can be spent at the bar or spa or bill. Finally, they also consider their environment a great asset and thus aim to protect it for future and make the most use of it in the time being (Hotel Verde, 2020).

Guest education and response to sustainable practices

Educating guests on sustainable practices that an organisation performs is important so that they can act responsibly (News24, 2011). As researched by O'Neill (2014), almost all hotels worldwide have already incorporated sustainable development, such as having local communities with whom they work with and support, they recycle responsibly, support new and improved ways of environmental management, support local with regards to purchases of food, involved in training initiatives that aim at achieving environmental and economic sustainability for the benefit of society, and too, gather

rainwater to be reused, therefore, for these to be proven successful, guests are encouraged shift the way they think, and be more responsible in their activities. There is a misunderstanding to the term eco, in that many have the impression that the standard or quality of a product or service will decrease, however, the opposite may be proven true majority of the time, and therefore, educating guests, and all stakeholders, is an important step in the process (Silenaite-Enyed, 2019). Tuppen (2015) contributes that this process includes sharing the vision, mission and values of the hotel with guests', in order for them to know how to both help to reach sustainability and too, to increase their satisfaction

There are countless efforts undergone in organisations to ensure their overall success, and in order to attract and retain potential customers/ guests, their expectations need to be exceeded beyond their belief (Kierczak, 2020). Shen and Ball (2011: 72) define customer or guest feedback as the way one reacts to the product and/or service provided. It is important to assess how satisfied or not guests are, and if implementation of sustainable practices provides a better overall experience, as feedback will add value for the future.

Furthermore, Ecotourism Society of Kenya (ESOK) (2020) touches on reasons as to why these responses are necessary, namely: it promotes a positive word-of-mouth. Previous studies highlight that when one gets bad service, the chances of word getting around is high, the same applies with good service, and in the long run ultimately results in an overall positive outcome for the future of sustainable development (WishDesk Official, 2018). Secondly, it improves loyalty – Dodhshon (2016) states that loyalty increases the overall value of the brand, and according to research, satisfied customers contribute to business growth and annual turnover, therefore responsible practices generates overall brand loyalty and satisfaction; third, enhancing the image of the organisation. Working hand-in-hand with customer loyalty, the way in which organisations treat their people is important to establish and maintain a good image (Patel, 2020). An organisations vision, mission and values are represented in how they react to situation and how they treat their people, and in the long-term, will have a positive and/or negative effect on sustainability.

Lastly, customer feedback leaves room for improvement (ESOK, 2020). Thus, organisations can respond feedback by improving where guests are unfulfilled.

The effects of COVID-19 on the hospitality industry

December 31, 2019 the World Health Organisation (WHO) recorded a number of severe pneumonia cases in the city of Wuhan, China (WHO, 2020). The conclusion of the outbreak was reported to be Coronavirus Disease 2019 or better known as COVID-19 and in a matter of just three months spread to all countries around the world. The effects lead to a global pandemic, making the country go into lockdown, resulting in an enormous amount of unemployment and negative effects on the economy in general due to loss of income (Mensah, 2020). South Africa reported its first case of the virus in March 2020 (News24, 2020), resulting in a nationwide shutdown (Department of Health, RSA, 2020).

The tourism industry is one that suffers most when such pandemics arise and has seen yet overcome five major outbreaks. History backdates to 1346 with the Black Death that lasted seven years, the Spanish Flu between 1918 and 1920, SARS for two years in 2002, 2009 saw H1N1 Swine Flu until 2010 and then the Ebola Virus from 2014 to 2016 (Mensah, 2020). These types of natural disasters have negative impacts on the tourism industry and economy as a whole. The primary focus during these trying times is for governments and organisations to ensure the health and safety of their people (van Manen, Mijinke & Hamers, 2020). The impacts that this virus has on the future are great and one that has not been recorded in history and therefore, mutual efforts of stakeholders are in place in order to reduce the financial losses and economic issues. van Manen *et al.* (2020) stipulates that organisations are working together with their people to provide support as and where they can; such as offering beds to hospitals who are in need. Furthermore, although there is a lot of disruption around the world due to COVID-19, the initiatives that organisations have started implementing in order overcome this crisis allows for a foreseeable future (Deloitte, 2020, as cited by van Manen *et al.*, 2020). The outlook to adapt one's mindset to is to stay positive and see the light in the

dark, to stay determined and focused and further to protect the financial resources of the industry to achieve future success.

COVID-19 will be a lesson to each and every individual as it will install great development and thinking on how to adapt to change and create greater opportunities for the future (Acker, 2020). In addition, he states that the true ethics of an organisation will be displayed in the ways in which they respond to the crises.

Although the South Africa only went into lockdown in March, it was documented in February 2020 that in order for the tourism industry to increase the economic environment, it requires assistance with direction towards reaching their future goals (Smith, 2020). Due to the economic issues, impacts caused by a number of factors, such as COVID-19. These are highlighted by Smith (2020) on Fin24 as decrease in growth, obstacles that pertain to water problems, challenges with achieving sustainability and as identified by Moodley (2020), the virus will negatively affect the demand for the product and/or service.

As this is a recent pandemic, some information is unclear and therefore the researcher aims to identify such impacts during interviews with the relevant personals.

2.4 Conceptualisation

Conceptualisation is inventing an idea and mentally formulating it. du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014: 120) refers to conceptualisation as the refinement and specification of an abstract concept in order to create a specific meaning for the purpose of a particular research topic.

- Environmental protection

This is both supporting as creating a space with the intention of protecting the natural environment. As described by Megan (2016), environmental protection examines how

humans are damaging the environment, and therefore sets out how to minimise the negative effects while and maximise behaviours and practices that have a positive effect on the environment.

- Social development

In order to get people on board with sustainability, they need to be educated. Therefore, clear and concise communication is vital (Megan, 2016). The well-being of individuals and society is the heart of sustainability, and so, it is crucial to ensure that the people have access to basic resources, to ensure the health and safety of individuals and enabling a good standard of living.

- Economic development

Sustainability would not be successful without economic development as individuals, communities and organisations alike need to be convinced that investing their resources into sustainability will be beneficial in the long-term (Megan, 2016). In addition, economic development increases both welfare values and growth.

- Workforce of the future

to achieve a sustainable future, it is imperative for organisations to consider green practices. This is described as having a strong social conscience, focusing on human rights and diversity, having a sense of being caring toward the environment and identifying the impact that the organisation has on the environment that is far beyond financial (PWC, 2020). To ensure a positive outcome, organisations need to understand that employees and stakeholders are the centre of the strategy.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is described as a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be conducted, and the manner in which results should be interpreted (Bryman, 2012).

Interpretivism refers to the understanding and describing of social actions and experiences that are meaningful (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2015:34). The main idea that this paradigm rest upon, is that individuals differ greatly from objects.

Therefore, this was the chosen paradigm, as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how The OBH Group is implementing sustainable practices in order to reduce their carbon emissions.

3.2 Research Design

The research study followed a qualitative design and aimed at exploring, understanding and describing data rather than measuring, quantifying, predicting and generalizing that is used in quantitative studies (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014: 175). In-depth interview questions were formed in order for the researcher to gain understanding on what green practices are being implemented to work toward a more sustainable future.

Explanatory qualitative research aims to find an explanation with regard to observing a specific situation (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Meaning is created through the knowledge gained by the data collected through the in-depth interviews. Four employees from The OBH Group were interviewed and asked the same set of questions with the aim of determining how environmentally friendly practices are implemented in the hotel. The responses of the four participants, who had knowledge on sustainability and were willing and able to take part in the study, is seen as the unit of analysis for the study.

3.3 Population

By definition, a population is regarded as either an object or individual that share certain characteristics as defined by the sampling criteria that the researcher has set out (University of Missouri, 2020). There are two groups associated with population, namely: target group – the group as a whole that the researcher has identified to get findings of the data, and accessible population – the actual individuals that the researcher has the ability to interview (University of Missouri, 2020).

The population refers to all individuals that the researcher focuses on in order to obtain the necessary data to complete the study. In order to collect information from individuals, the researcher needs to consider the parameters of the study, which is considered to be the nature, size as well as unique characteristics of the population (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

The target population of the study was The Red Carnation Hotel Collection within South Africa.

The accessible population was The OBH Group in Kwa-Zulu Natal with four of the employees who had adequate understanding of sustainability and the green practices implemented in the hotel. The OBH Group was the most accessible for the researcher to get information from.

A target population involves the group in which the researcher is studying (Mack, 2014); whereas an accessible population is described as the actual group that the researcher whom is conducting the research can actually study.

The population parameters include:

- Employees with knowledge on sustainability and sustainable development;
- Respondents must reside in South Africa;
- Those aged between 18 and 45; and

- Participants must be employees at The OBH Group.

3.4 Sampling

Probability sampling is defined as whether or not each variable within the population has a fair and equal chance of being in the sample (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014: 136). Probability sampling is the most preferred method in a study that is quantitative, as it eliminates biasness from individuals within the sampling process by making use of random and systematic methods. In addition, systematic methods are those that follow a strict step-by-step procedure.

Non-probability sampling on the otherhand is used when it is not possible to make out who the exact population is or when it becomes difficult for the researcher to gain access to the whole population (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014: 137). Non-probability sampling differs from probability sampling in that variables within the population do not have an equal opportunity to be a part of the sample. In addition, non-probability sampling is mostly used in studies that are qualitative, as the aim of the study is not generalised.

The researcher used non-probability sampling methods. This type of method is generally used when: time is of essence; there are financial constraints; it is not easy to access the population; and when measuring instruments need to be carried out (Maree, 2020: 219).

The sampling method was convenience sampling. This is when the elements of the population revolve around data being easy and convenient to get access to (Maree, 2020). This method is cost-effective and relatively quick in terms of getting the desired information especially because the sample size is small, and the researcher can easily reach out to the respondents.

The sample size of the study included four of the hotels' employees. The sample size was small and allowed researcher to draw clear and concise results and not get carried away and off topic.

Furthermore, the unit of analysis for the study was employees across various departments who are familiar with sustainability. The findings from these individuals was interpreted and analysed and the researcher gained in-depth understanding to interpret the results.

3.5 Data collection methods

The aim of collecting data helps to gather and organise data according to a targeted scale. furthermore, it will help the researcher gain an in-depth understanding of the sustainable practices carried out in the hotel industry, and how these practices will create a better workforce for the future. This understanding will be portrayed through the respondent's responses.

Face-to-face interviews were initially intended, but due to unforeseen circumstances, the researcher made use of other - technological - alternatives. Data was collected through semi-structured interview questions that were intended for the employees of The OBH Group who have understanding and knowledge on the topic, and that are also willing to participate in the interviews.

Due to the current pandemic, Coronavirus (COVID-19), and the certain travel bans that were in place, the researcher was not be able to physically go and do the interviews face-to-face, and therefore made use of online platforms for the purpose of the study. The researcher used WhatsApp video and audio, as per the participants comfort, in order to conduct the interviews. This platform gave the researcher the chance to still conduct interviews that are real-time and face-to-face, allowing for the participants to still get the feel of body language, tone of voice, etcetera. The researcher scheduled a date and time with the relative participants once the ethical clearance had been granted from the institution. In addition, the researcher recorded all the interviews in order for the evidence to be reliable and transparent.

The main objective of doing these interviews was to gather data concerning the sustainable practices that are in place and how these will be beneficial for the future.

Prior to conducting any interviews, the researcher made contact with all the participants and provided them with a short briefing on the proceedings of the interview, so that all those being interviewed were aware of what is expected of them. They were also sent a copy of the interview questions so that they were not caught off guard.

On the day of the interviews, participants were thanked for their willingness to participate and their meaningful contributions to the study. The researcher adhered to ethical considerations and ensured the participants that their privacy is protected and that interviews remain anonymous. They were also informed that no information shall be fabricated. All data collected was word-for-word and nothing was made up by the researcher. The researcher adhered to ethical considerations and ensured the participants that their privacy is protected and that interviews remain anonymous.

When it came time to conduct the interviews, the participants started to get a lot busier with work due to the ease of lockdown regulations. For this reason, it was a little bit difficult to get a time and date that suited the participants. Therefore, the researcher sent the interview schedule (Appendix B) to each participant so that they could have an idea of what was expected and so that they could provide valuable information and not be pressed for time during the interview. The interviews all lasted for an average of about 15 minutes, which gave the researcher enough time to communicate the reason for conducting the interviews. The comfort of the participants was main priority and therefore, they had the choice to do a video or audio call. The participants were also given the choice to do the interview over Zoom, WhatsApp or GoogleMeet, to which each opted for WhatsApp. By the time ethical clearance was granted, the hospitality industry had started opening up following lockdown regulations and therefore it was a challenge for the participants to agree to a specific date. Thus, OBHP4's interview was done in a voice note. In addition, the participants were all aware that the interviews were being recorded. These recordings helped the researcher to transcribe the data accurately and ensure that all data is trustworthy.

The interviews were scheduled according to the participants availability and the dates were as follows: OBHP1 – 13 August 2020; OBHP2 – 08 September 2020; OBHP3 – 15 September 2020; and OBHP4 – 21 September 2020 (a voice note was sent to the researcher).

3.6 Data analysis techniques

This is the way in which data is collected and understood in order to respond to the research question. This process includes having an in-depth understanding of the data and how it ties in with the findings in order to reach an outcome (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012).

Data was prepared by making sure that the recordings of the interviews has been backed up and saved. The researcher assigned each participant a code in order to identify each one and protect their privacy. Much time was spent on transcribing the data to ensure that no information from the interviews is missing.

In order to analyse the data, the researcher used a software called QDA Miner. This is a computer-based software programme that retrieves, analyses and organizes data. It is timesaving and also decreases the chances of making mistakes.

The interviews were done making use of technological platforms and each were recorded. Therefore, once they were completed the researcher relistened to each recording and transcribed the findings into a word document, so that the word document could be uploaded to QDA to visually represent the chosen themes and sub-themes.

Themes and sub-themes were identified using a colour coding system which made it easier for the researcher to set each theme apart. Due to only four interviews being conducted, it made the process of transcription a bit easier in that the researcher was able to manually code the text to make sure that QDA Miner was correct. Based on the themes, results were presented in a table and the researcher rearranged it from most-to-

least mentioned. Finally, the researcher was able to draw a conclusion based on the presentation of the findings and conduct the research report.

Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014) defines coding as a way of grouping data into a set of categories to help make the process of analysis more manageable. The coding system identified for the study is: OBHP1 (The OBH Group participant 1), OBHP2 (The OBH Group participant 2), OBHP3 (The OBH Group participant 3) and OBHP4 (The OBH Group participant 4).

3.7 Data Saturation

Faulkner and Trotter (2017) identify data saturation as the stage in research where the researcher gathers no new information when analysing the data. It is a fundamental principle in qualitative research to ensure that the data is valid (Hennink & Kaiser, 2019). In addition, saturation can give the researcher peace in knowing that conducting further research will produce findings that are alike.

As this paper interviewed four participants from the same hotel, saturation for the specific hotel can be likely. However, considering more than just the accessible population, saturation may be deemed relatively unlikely.

3.8 Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, trustworthiness is the validity and reliability (StatisticsSolutions, 2020). As highlighted by du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014: 258), trustworthiness is about determining the findings of research conducted and is divided into credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility is how accurate the data from the participants has been interpreted. Through semi-structured interviews, the researcher interpreted the data as accurately as possible, despite the limitations that were proved to be problematic. As described by M.K. (2020), the purpose of qualitative research is to understand concepts through the eyes of the

participants, and therefore, the participants are responsible for the credibility of the results.

Transferability refers to the degree to which research can be generalised or transferred to another context or study. When writing up results, the researcher provided the specific information such as study, location, and so forth, therefore, transferability is a thick description (Colorado State University, 2020).

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which results are recorded/ documented (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams and Blackman, 2016: 2). The steps taken to ensure dependability were: ensuring interview questions were tested prior to conducting interviews; setting up interviews with participants at their convenience and ensuring their protection and privacy, recording of interviews and transcribing into word; double and triple checking that recordings were transcribed word-for-word to ensure that no information was missed; making use of QDA miner to code themes and sub-themes by colour; interpreting data with reference to the literature.

Confirmability supports how data has been collected and interpreted (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014). In addition, confirmability aims to eliminate biasness and ensure that research is perceived through the eyes of the participant (Statistics Solution, 2020).

All recordings and valuable information have been safely kept by the researcher and been used to ensure that the study is accurate.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Presentation of the findings

The study is a qualitative one, and therefore did not study the relationship of anything but rather aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of what green practices are being implemented to work towards being more sustainable. The main theme was therefore

sustainability, to which the researcher identified themes of this, that were brought through in the interviews and tied in with the previous literature.

Resource management – how resources are managed and how practices are implemented in order to reduce carbon emissions, reuse water for cost benefits and recycling resources wherever possible to create less waste and lessen the overall carbon footprint.

Responsible/ green practices – this theme was drawn based on how the organisation responsibly implements green practices. The sub-themes that are associated include educating guests and employees and what motivates them to participate, to support local, that it is cost-effective and the certification that shows that the hotel is recognised for having a green building design.

COVID-19 – this theme relates to how COVID has had an impact in implementing green practices. Through the data collection process, it was highlighted that above all the negative impacts of the virus, the ones that have been most mentioned is that the hotel is having to seek alternative suppliers and also that it has delayed practices - in that systems have not been able to be installed and also that single-use plastics have had to be reintroduced.

Table 1: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by Participant 1 (OBHP1)

Main theme	Sub theme	Sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by participant 1
Resource management	Reduce	12
Responsible/ green practice	Guest and employee training and response	5
Resource management	Reuse	4
Responsible/ green practice	Support local	4
Resource management	Recycle	3
COVID	Seek alternative suppliers	3

Responsible/ green practice	Cost-effective	2
COVID	Delay in practices	1
Responsible/ green practice	Certification	0

Table 2: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by Participant 2 (OBHP2)

Main theme	Sub theme	Sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by participant 2
Resource management	Reduce	11
Responsible/ green practice	Guest and employee training and response	9
Resource management	Reuse	6
Responsible/ green practice	Support local	6
Responsible/ green practice	Cost-effective	5
Resource management	Recycle	4
COVID	Delay in practices	3
COVID	Seek alternative suppliers	1
Responsible/ green practice	Certification	1

Table 3: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by Participant 3

Main theme	Sub theme	Sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by participant 3
Resource management	Reduce	9
Responsible/ green practice	Guest and employee training and response	7
Resource management	Reuse	6
Resource management	Recycle	6
Responsible/ green practice	Support local	3

Responsible/ green practice	Cost-effective	3
COVID	Delay in practices	2
COVID	Seek alternative suppliers	1
Responsible/ green practice	Certification	0

Table 4: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by Participant 4 (OBHP4)

Main theme	Sub theme	Sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by participant 4
Resource management	Reduce	6
Resource management	Reuse	4
Responsible/ green practice	Cost-effective	4
Resource management	Recycle	2
Responsible/ green practice	Support local	2
Responsible/ green practice	Guest and employee training and response	1
Responsible/ green practice	Certification	1
COVID	Delay in practices	0
COVID	Seek alternative suppliers	0

Table 5: Results of sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by all participants

Main theme	Sub theme	Sub-themes mentioned most-to-least by all participants
Resource management	Reduce	38
Responsible/ green practice	Guest and employee training and response	22
Resource management	Reuse	20
Resource management	Recycle	15

Responsible/ green practice	Support local	14
Responsible/ green practice	Cost-effective	14
COVID	Delay in practices	6
COVID	Seek alternative suppliers	5
Responsible/ green practice	Certification	2

The above tables are presentations of the data collected from the participants. As this is a qualitative study, no statistics are given. The numbers are just a visual representation of what was mentioned most-to-least by the four participants that took part in the study. Tables 1 to 4 are the findings of the individual participants and table 5 represents the combined findings. The tables have been rearranged in order of what was mentioned most-to-least, giving the researcher insight of what the participants consider to be important.

4.2 Interpretation of findings

As mentioned above, the themes were derived from the main theme of the study. The interview questions were formed with the intention of answering the research question which is what green practices are implemented to work toward being an environmentally-friendly hotel. The researcher was able to interpret the data based on what was collected through the interviews, as highlighted below, the interpretations reflect the following:

Resource management

According to the responses of the participants, management of resources (such as water, waste, energy and food and beverage) is controlled and monitored in order to encourage sustainability and practices that are friendly to the environment,

Resource management refers to how effectively resources, either tangible or intangible, are managed. Effective resource management is vital in business as it concentrates on doing more with less (Hansen, 2010). Gantt (2020), highlights the reasons as to why

resource management is beneficial. These are: using resources efficiently; having an overview of the whole project; being clear and transparent to avoid mistakes; having the ability to predict future outcomes, therefore avoiding disruptions; and lastly, taking control. In addition, resource management is important when keeping the future of the environment in mind, especially in the hotel industry, because, as mentioned by OBHP2, *“...the nature of buildings and hotels is actually quite wasteful...”*

In terms of reducing, the participants brought it to the researcher's attention that the hotel does not make use of any single-use plastics, so there is a big drive on that to reduce it.

OBHP1: *“...no one-use plastics throughout the whole hotel at all..” “...no plastic bottles at all for beverages, so all mineral waters, ice-tea and such only comes in glass bottles so we only source suppliers who can accommodate that, so we only use Valpré cause they only use glass.”*

OBHP2: *“We don't use anymore single-use plastics, you know they have a huge drive now trying to save the environment, being very animal friendly, so no more single-use plastics...”*

OBHP3: *“we have a reduction of plastic, so no single-use plastic - we have a big drive on that...”*

OBHP4: *“We have no use of any single-use plastics...”*

As mentioned by participant two and four, portions are controlled, this is therefore another way in which the hotel manages resources in order to reduce waste.

OBHP2: *“...The portions are also quite controlled in the kitchen, so it does reduce wastage of food quite a lot when we do cook like that...” “We have just gotten this new thing... new system that we were just about to start rolling out but COVID actually blocked us from doing it until ... it's called WINNO and it is this technical system that they are attaching to our rubbish area and our rubbish bins. It is a technology that can read inside the dustbins it can read inside everywhere and picks up exactly what is inside how much waste is being used. It's quite a bad*

thing when it comes to our chefs – in that will pick up if the chefs are wasting too much in one thing, so it helps us to save on costs as well as reduce unnecessary kinds of waste inside the dustbins.”

OBHP4: *“...also portions controlled as to reduce wastage of food.” “We are also currently looking at implementing a waste management system, which is WINNO.”*

Participant two also mentioned that the hotel is starting to go more digital, so they are no longer printing the daily newspapers, their menus for the restaurant and room service is now displayed on the TV’s and they are also encouraging their waiters to go more electronic. Thus, contributing toward reducing their carbon footprint.

OBHP2: *“we have started putting our information electronically, we printing less paper... So now what we have done is started to go more electronic, so all our menus are now on the TV, obviously we have been using a lot less paper... With the waiters and stuff, we have tried to let them use less paper and go more electronic...”*

As mentioned by the participants, the hotel has energy conservation practices in place which is a measure of reducing the carbon footprint.

OBHP1: *“...We have sensory lights all around the hotel, so these lights enable that when there is nobody in the rooms, mostly in the bathrooms, the lights switch off by themselves and when someone enters, they go on...”*

OBHP2: *“Our hotel also has timers right throughout, so certain parts of the hotel the lights go off at certain times, we don’t run lights during the day, or we don’t miss tricks when it comes to keeping lights on – so we won’t put lights on when the sun is out...”*

OBHP3: *“We currently have energy saving lights. The aircons that we have only activate when the key card is used – so when you go into the room, you have to activate the electricity with the key card, other than that the lights stay off and that saves a lot of energy...”*

When it comes to reusing resources, business do it to prevent wastage as well as to save costs. There are a number of ways in which resources are managed to be reused at The OBH Group. Outlined below is how the participants portrayed reusing of resources:

OBHP1: *The hotel has a “smart water management system, so the pool run off water, run off water from the sprinkles and things like that is collected and reused in the sprinkler systems and to refill the pool.” “Also, for all of our non-human use water needs, we have a borehole system – so for the sprinkles and outside taps there are signs up saying “do not drink, this is borehole water”. Borehole water is used to save obviously from using water from the municipality”*

OBHP2: *“we reuse a lot of our water - I think it is called gray water - to maintain the gardens...” “...also, for example, all the swimming pools in the hotel are heated. So all the hot water that we use to heat the pools is run through our geyser or runs over the geyser so it heats up automatically so we don't really have to use additional elements and stuff to heat the water cause it takes absolute whack of electricity heating the swimming pool.”*

OBHP3: *“Also, the aircons, the water is used for cooling aircons and then it heats the pool – so the water from the aircon is used to heat the pool..” “So, our water purification is mostly taken form the borehole water, which is purified on site from the pools, that is then used for the gardens and so forth to re-use, and then we also have jojo storage tanks for irrigation.” “...we have reuse water bottles...”*

OBHP4: *“...We re-use water to maintain our gardens and guests staying more than two nights reuse linen to limit washing multiple times which saves water and*

energy.” “...we reuse paper for internal reports, all products or items used also have a shorter decomposition time.”

By encouraging guests to reuse their linen and towels, the hotel is not only educating guests on how to practice being green, but they are also managing resources and saving on water and electricity.

OBHP2: *“We put out little tags on the beds to remind guests to only use their towels sparingly, so we encourage them not to use a new towel every day or that we don't change the linen every day. We have got five-star policies in place, we're leading hotel, where we do watch these things or where we would just automatically have to do it, but they get the option in almost every guest takes the option up of limiting their washing”*

OBHP3: *“We have cards in the room, so if you don't want us to have your towels washed and your linen changed every day, you can put your card on and they can do it every second day or however you want during your stay...”*

Recycling is something that is extremely important. Recycling aims to be environmentally friendly, it reduces the consumption of energy, it decreases pollution, it slows down the rate of resources being depleted, it helps fight against global warming and lastly, it minimizes the amount of waste on land (Ecavo, 2016).

The sustainability drive within the hotel is taken very seriously, and recycling is practiced in a number of ways as stated by the participants.

OBHP1: *“...We have paper shredders in all the offices – so we have a company that delivers the paper shredders and then all the paper goes through the shredders and they come back and collect the shredded paper and recycle it for us. We also have the three recycling bins in most areas for paper, plastic and food which are used quite well and there is a company that comes and collects it*

and recycles it correctly.” “...There are procedures such as beach clean ups. We offer the guests a red bucket that they can collect from front desk and go to Umhlanga beaches and clean up the beaches...”

OBHP2: *“...We have got recycle bins everywhere in the hotel, our receiving area has got a whole waste area in it and everything is divided up. We’ve got people that we employ just to divide our rubbish up into all your recyclable plastics and all those sorts of things...” “We also encourage guests to go and pick up litter on the beach...”*

OBHP3: *“Recycling (we have been recycling as much as we can)...” “Our suppliers are encouraged to use recyclable crates.” “All of our garbage, it’s crazy, but it is separated – we have a contract with the people who collect the garbage, and they actually separate all the garbage. So, all the bottles that we have we separate and put them in and that and then every piece of garbage is separated on-site and then taken off-site where the recycling happens.”*

OBHP4: *“...hotel recycles used water...” “...We also recycle everything that is used wherever applicable...”*

Responsible/ green practices

Responsible practice refers to incorporating environmentally friendly practices and responsible decisions that will be beneficial for the people, planet and profits. These practices, as mentioned in the literature, aim at protecting the environment so that the needs of the current generations can be met while ensuring future generations too meet their needs.

As mentioned by Nawaz and Koç (2019: 27), employees are the centre of the organisation as they are responsible for ensuring that business practices are carried out. The success of sustainability is therefore directly shown in employees through to successfully carrying

out green practices and promoting guest satisfaction. Hence the importance of staff education and training programmes.

As mentioned by participant 3 and 4, the hotel considers training of employees as something important:

OBHP3: *“Sustainability is a very big thing in the hotel. All the staff when they start (new staff members), have to go through an induction, and during this induction staff are made aware of company policies on induction and as a whole, there is a whole sustainability part they talk about during induction. Also, staff are rewarded in incentives when they suggest environmental green initiatives. So what we do, with COVID it has been a bit more difficult but we are slowly getting back into that, but we have a green team and they have little green awards and staff get them if suggest something or do something, they get a little reward that they can redeem.”*

OBHP4: *“Training on going green practices are in place for staff so that they can see the importance of reducing one’s carbon footprint. They are valuable because staff can take them home and practice being green at home.”*

Educating guests on sustainable practices that an organisation performs is important so that they can act responsibly (News24, 2011). Based on the findings, guests are informed on green practices, and they are incentivised for participating, therefore, they are encouraged to think green!

OBHP1: *“At the hotel we pride ourselves with the fact that we are an environmentally friendly hotel, so as soon as guest come, they are informed, and a lot of the products have tags on them stating that it is biodegradable or reusable. There are procedures such as beach clean ups. We offer the guests a red bucket that they can collect from front desk and go to Umhlanga beaches and clean up the beaches. For every bucket full of litter that they bring back, we give them a*

voucher for a free cocktail or a free milkshake which they can use. It actually does very well, a lot of guests do this/ participate. They are informed to try and save energy as much as possible, but the hotel does not have any signs up like that, but it is on the check-in document that guests' sign upon arrival."

OBHP3: *"So in the room itself we have a whole write-up about us and the sustainability. But some other things we do to encourage guests is one; we have cards in the room, so if you don't want us to have your towels washed and your linen changed every day, you can put your card on and they can do it every second day or however you want during your stay, so that is encouraged; then we have got the beach clean-up bucket, so we have a bucket and if you clean/ pick-up the litter or dirt, from the hotel you will get a cocktail or a milkshake, and that is a big drive - guests love that; and then also Rhino4Africa with our keycards, so if you have seen the back of our keycards, every keycard that a guest returns we donate R1,00 to the Rhinos, and that adds up to quite a lot that we actually donate to them." "...guests get a newsletter every Friday, Saturday and Sunday..."*

Supporting local communities is beneficial in a number of ways. Such as uplifting the local community, creating jobs by supporting local farms and getting involved in charity work. According to the participants the local community is important to the hotel and they aim - as identified by the researcher through the tone and manner in which participants answered - to support and uplift the local community as much as they can.

OBHP1: *"We only source local producers. Anything and everything that we use, especially in the food and beverage department, if we can't get it locally then we will source it through an external company, maybe a bit further, but they have to meet our standards of environmentally friendly practices. We do a lot of charity work with Umhlanga when it comes to the beaches and surrounding areas with regards to litter and waste management."*

OBHP2: *“...Because we are situated in Umhlanga, we have got the UIP which is called ‘Umhlanga Improvement Precinct’, and our hotel works so close to this group, we are just up the road, and their job is to secure and protect the citizens of Umhlanga, of course, and also to watch the environments - all the flora and fauna. They police the beaches to make sure that people are collecting and picking up all their towline and fishing line. There are quite a few of them, they are a group that is employed by the community of Umhlanga which include the hotels and also all the residents... We basically hired our own police department to watch and patrol the area. If people get found littering, they get fined. No illegal things, no destroying of the plants, no picking muscles, no doing anything on the beaches or you will get into trouble. So, we involve the local community in that sort of way, and we do incentive them and give out buckets for beach clean ups.”*

OBHP4: *“The hotel gets involved in keeping the local community clean and has special events to involve the community in this programme.”*

Through the implementation of green management practices, it has been pointed out by all four participants that such practices are cost-effective and beneficial in the long run:

OBHP1: *“Yes, it is beneficial in the long run because a lot of the practices we use actually do save us money, interesting enough. Although a lot of it is costly, we make up for it in another sense. So yes, the take-away containers and cups and straws are all higher priced than your plastic, we save money on power by using solar panels. We also save a lot of money on water by using borehole water for our outside operations. We save money on fertiliser because we make our own fertiliser from the offcuts from fruit and veg. And of course, the surrounding environment stays pristine and beautiful throughout practices of beach clean-ups.”*

OBHP2: *“... Our head office allocated millions for eco initiatives, for changing our hotels and encouraging environmentally friendly practices. I think it's highly*

beneficial and in fact it is considered throughout the whole property at absolute necessity that we do this urgently, the owners are extremely eco-conscious... So, it is more beneficial - it is the up-start costs that is actually the most expensive part so as long as we are prepared to invest it, in the long term without a shadow of a doubt it's going to pay off. So, is it worth it? Absolutely yes! Is it expensive? Absolutely yes! But it's worth us reducing our carbon footprints which as you can imagine, would be quite big."

OBHP3: *"It is beneficial in the long-run, and we have found that although it is expensive to initially implement these practices, we see savings in the long-run with waste (less wastage), repairs are often less, like the light bulbs and less consumption of electricity and water."*

OBHP4: *"Yes, it is beneficial, being green will be beneficial as time goes by, the hotel becomes more sustainable and the environment is less at risk because the carbon footprint has been drastically reduced."*

Having a green building design, according to the World Green Building Council (2016), means a building that aims to reduce or even eliminate the negative impacts caused by either the operations or construction. A green building is referred to as one that improves the quality of life as well as one that preserves the available natural resources.

A green building is one that includes aspects such as using water, energy and other resources efficiently; making use of renewable or solar energy; having measures in place for waste management; making use of materials that are non-toxic and ethical; and keeping the environment in mind during designing, construction as well as operation (WGBC, 2016).

All buildings, be it business or residential, can be green. However, depending on each country and region, the characteristics needed in order to be considered a green building, these vary.

The OBH Group is a member LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), as pointed out by participant 2 and 4.

OBHP2: *“... we have got what we call an LEED certification, we are given points for satisfying certain green requirements. One of the things that I realized very quickly because I didn't know this, when they renovated and mostly rebuilt the hotel from the old OB, they rebuilt it with all of these eco-friendly sentiments in mind, so the way in which the building has been designed allows for pipelines to go through to heat the swimming pools over the geysers, and the maintenance being quite efficient.. However, the way in which the building has been built has been done in the most environmentally friendly way using the most environmentally friendly materials and in a way that would save a lot on energy throughout the hotel. It really does make a difference.”*

OBHP4: *“The hotel has a LEED certification...”*

COVID-19

As mentioned in the literature, COVID has had a great effect on many businesses and the carrying out of practices.

Through the responses of the participants, the sub-themes that were highlighted is one: the delay of carrying out green practices, in that they have had to reintroduce plastic products for instance and in that they have had to delay the introduction of the waste management system – WINNO - that they were in the process of bringing in, or even that they are not able to perform usual clean ups due to limited guests; and second, having to seek alternative suppliers due to local suppliers going out of business or not being able to supply products of standard.

OBHP1: *“...So a lot of our local suppliers were closed, a lot of the organic farms were closed, a lot of the recycling plants were closed. A lot of our glass collectors did not come through and collect the glass bottles. The hotel has limited guests,*

so a lot of the beach clean-up procedures and beach clean-up plans have not been done. Unfortunately we have had to try and source other plastics for hand sanitizer bottles and are yet to find somebody, so we have had to use plastic bottles and other materials... Suppliers are the biggest problem for hotel so far during COVID19, it is getting better since opening up but they have not been supplying as we would like them to."

OBHP2: *"COVID has really really knocked us, it has made a difference and also in some ways not so much of a difference. it's obviously because of COVID a lot of our practices have had to be delayed, we've noticed a lot of businesses that we were sourcing a lot of our eco-friendly products from have gone out of business so we have scrambled to try and come to a Plan B which kind of breaks our rules a lots." "delaying the implementation of all these sorts of things like that WINNO system that we just bought, so that has been delayed a little bit otherwise a lot of things could even have gotten a little bit more, what could I say, you know everything now because of COVID needs specific chemicals. We using a lot more plastic, but you know I suppose the plastic visors are not single-use so it's ok..."*

OBHP3: *"it has had a negative impact as we are having to reintroduce some plastic products, for instance with keeping guests' rooms sanitized but we are constantly striving on improving this and removing these, but it is still in the early stages. Where prior we would never have anything with single-use plastics but now every guest checking-in gets a masks, but unfortunately every mask is in a plastic packet and normally we would tell our suppliers that we don't want any plastic but because of COVID it has to be in a plastic so that nobody touches it and that it is clean and also all the sanitizers that we are using, the tea and coffee station – things are in a plastic packet whereas we would never ever – in the past all plastic would have had to be removed. So, it has had a negative impact on the hotel, but we are always looking at ways we can improve, so hopefully it will start to get better now, and we can look at doing away with all single-use plastic."*

5. RESEARCH QUESTION, PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

5.1 Research question

- Primary question

What green practices have been implemented to work toward being an environmentally-friendly hotel?

As interpreted through the data collected, the green practices implemented are energy conservation measures through having LED lightbulbs and sensory lights, having timers, and encouraging guests to reuse towels and linen in order to limit the amount of washing – thus saving energy. Then there is water management in place where they reuse grey water from the pools for the garden and using the aircons run-off to heat the pools, there is also jojo tanks that store and reuse water. There is also waste controls, such as recycling wherever possible – reusing paper and also printing less – therefore going digital and eliminating unnecessary paper. Also, portions are controlled so that food waste decreases and finally, there is a system that is being rolled out – WINNO – that is going to be attached to the dustbins that reads all the waste. Food and beverage is sourced locally and they ensure that no single-use plastics are used.

5.2 Research problem

To ensure current generations meet their needs without compromising future generations to meet theirs, change is a necessary. The hospitality industry is definitely one that needs to introduce green practices to meet the sustainable development goals by 2030. The problem, as explained, the effect COVID has had on green business practices.

The way in which the problem was therefore addressed was by asking employees at The OBH Group, who have knowledge on sustainability, all about green practices – such as what the hotel follows, how they involve the local community as well as guests and employees, the benefits of the practices as well as the way in which COVID has affected such practices.

Through the use of semi-structured interview questions, the researcher was able to investigate the problem at hand.

5.3 Research objectives

- To determine how the hotel is working toward a more sustainable future.

The discovery here was that the hotel is working toward a more sustainable future through energy conservation – like having energy saving lightbulbs throughout the hotel, having timers, having the key-card activation for the lights and aircon in the rooms, or encouraging guests to reuse towels and linens on stays longer than two nights; there are also water conservation practices like reusing the grey water in the gardens; then there are waste management controls in place, for example encouraging beach-clean ups by offering a free cocktail or milkshake for every full bucket returned or promoting recycling by having signs up and bins in place to do so. Finally, food and beverage management is another practice that has been portrayed for creating a greener future.

- To understand how guests and employees are educated and the way they respond to practices.

It was made clear that staff are informed and trained on an ongoing basis on environmentally friendly practices. The involvement of employees creates a positive outcome, and those who are actively involved and contribute towards green initiatives are incentivised, therefore, this encourages employees to hop on board. Guests are informed about green practices upon check-in, on the forms that they sign. They also receive newsletters every Friday, Saturday and Sunday; where things like sustainability is discussed as well as what the hotel has going for them. Further, the hotel is big on sustainability and therefore encourages guests to practice being eco-conscious. This is done by leaving cards in the room that promote the reuse of towels and linens. As determined by the data collected, guests are becoming more environmentally-friendly, and therefore they respond positively to carrying out green practices as it benefits not only them but the environment too. They are incentivised when they practice green stays, for example, if they take part in the beach clean-up, they get either a free milkshake or

cocktail for every full bucket of litter, which is a win-win. Another incentive that was highlighted, even though not to the individual directly, but for every key-card returned, R1,00 is donated to the Rhino for Africa foundation, which goes towards saving the Rhinos.

- To determine whether or not implementing sustainable practices are cost-effective. It was determined that implementing green practices are costly, however in the long run it is beneficial and saves a lot of money. For example, biodegradable products are much more expensive than what plastic products are, but having smart water management systems in place has measures to save on water and therefore not having to pay the municipality, which makes up for alternative products being pricier, as the overall savings in the long-term is greater.

- To gain understanding on how the hotel supports the local community. Through the implementation of sustainable practices, the hotel supports the local community firstly by supporting local and organic farmers when sourcing for food supplies like meat, chicken and vegetables. They also involve the local community by paying towards the UIP who are involved in keeping the surrounding area and beaches neat and clean of litter that can be harmful to the environment. The local community, The Rhino for African Foundation to be specific, is another way in which the local community is supported – for every key card returned, R1,00 gets donated to help save the Rhinos.

- To determine the effects COVID19 has had on sustainable practices. With regards to this objective, it was determined that the biggest effect of COVID19 on the hotel was that they had to reintroduce some single-use plastics. This is due to health and safety reasons, and all guests that check in receive a face mask which is in a plastic packet for precaution. Also, there is sanitiser throughout the hotel that is packaged in plastic. This however is beyond the control of the hotel as these are measures that are mandatory. In addition, the pandemic has resulted in a lot of businesses going out of business, and therefore, the hotel has had to source alternative suppliers for goods. There has also been a delay in practices due to COVID, such as the introduction of the new

waste management system, WINNO. It has to be delayed as the system came from abroad and lockdown regulations resulted in a delay in receiving the system.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations is defined as the ethics of the researchers planning, conducting and reporting of the research process (Education, 2010).

The researcher followed all the steps to gain ethical approval, such as sending each participant consent forms (as attached under appendices) for them to sign to indicate that they have been explained what is expected of them and that they are willing to participate. From there, these were sent in to the ethics committee of the Institution for approval. Once approval was granted, the participants who had agreed to take part were contacted individually to set up an appropriate date and time for the interviews.

Ethics is concerned with what is right and wrong or good and bad (Singer, 2020). It relates to the moral principles that deals with one's behaviour (Oxford dictionary, 2010). Honesty, integrity, anonymity, confidentiality, and not fabricating any information perceived by participants are all important aspects of ethical consideration when conducting research.

During the data collection process, the researcher assured the participants that their identity will remain confidential and that all information that they provide will not be altered and will be portrayed in their own words.

Due to the current global situation, the way in which the data was collected was slightly different in that the researcher could not physically meet up with the participants due to social distancing regulations. Therefore, the researcher made use of technology, namely WhatsApp, as it was the most convenient for those taking part. However, the researcher was sure to be in a quiet space so that the voice recordings could be as clear as possible to translate to text and keep participants words true.

6.2 Limitations of the study

Labaree (2009) explains limitations of a study to be characteristics that the researcher cannot control. Furthermore, they are the shortcomings or influences that put a restriction on the methodology and conclusions of the research study. These factors include time constraints, limitations of financial resources as well as limitations on accessing information needed for the study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Furthermore, unforeseen circumstances can result in limiting the researcher from gaining information.

The researcher has identified the pandemic such a circumstance. Due to the pandemic, the researcher is limited in terms of the sample group and getting access to them in order to conduct interviews. In addition, due to travel bans in place by the President of South Africa, the researcher restricted from doing face-to-face interviews, and had to take to online platforms. The participants therefore had the choice of having video and audio or audio only, to which all but one chose audio only. The researcher was therefore unable to read the body language of the participants.

WiFi and data were seen as limitations as WhatsApp was used to communicate with the participants and therefore the researcher had to make sure that the WiFi connection was strong or that the device had enough data to support the call. Another limitation was load-shedding, as interviews had to be rescheduled which resulted in a delay of data collection. Furthermore, by doing the interviews online, the recordings were not as clear as what they would have been if it was face-to-face, therefore making transcription a bit challenging and more time-consuming as recordings had to be played more than usual.

6.3 Recommendations for further research

As explained, sustainability is not a fad, and to ensure the conservation of earth for many more decades, all individuals and businesses should be, if they do not already, practicing green living. In addition, organisations should consider implementing these to contribute toward the 2030 sustainable development goals. The importance of achieving these, is to ensure that the natural environment is preserved in order to meet not only the needs

of the present generations but the future generations too. In order to positively achieve sustainable development, education and training programmes are extremely important.

This is especially true in a hotel environment as they produce a lot of waste by nature and in order to reduce this the involvement of their employees and guests is vital. COVID-19 has been a learning experience for many, especially businesses. This should be an eye opener for all individuals to enforce environmentally-friendly practices and ensure the preservation of our land for the future. The main importance of implementing green practices is to reduce the overall carbon footprint that individuals and/or businesses have on the planet.

As sir David Attenborough puts it, by the year 2050 the oceans will be filled with more plastic than fish, and in order to not fail the future generations, we have to do better now.

6.4 Conclusion

According to sir David Attenborough, “The best motto to think about is not to waste things. Don’t waste electricity, don’t waste paper, don’t waste food. Live the way you want to live but just don’t waste. Look after the natural world, and the animals in it, and the plants too. This is their planet as well as ours. Don’t waste them.”

With this motto in mind, it can be concluded that implementing green practices is highly important. This research set out to understand what organisations within the hospitality industry are doing in order to promote green practices and work toward creating a future that is more sustainable. The theoretical foundation that the researcher identified for this study is the UN Global Compact Management Model as in order to successfully carry out practices to enhance organisations, thorough plan and communication is required, and a lot of work is necessary. The full commitment of all stakeholders, ranging from the very top to the very bottom, is expected. The reason for this model relating to the literature is because it requires commitment, assessment – so assessing what you want to implement and seeing if it will be efficient and effective, defining the problems and need for new

procedures and processes, implementing, measuring – so trial and testing of what is being introduced, and finally, reporting or communicating the results.

In order to interpret the literature, The OBH Group was the chosen organisation for the study, as they are a five-star hotel, and because hotels are wasteful by nature the need for green practices is important, as they have a rather high ecological footprint as it is. As interpreted by the data collected, the hotel has implemented practices to reduce their carbon footprint. Practices include waste management, water management, energy conservation as well as food and beverage management, as seen by the interpretation of the findings. Through the environmentally friendly practices in place, the local community is supported which uplifts the community and wildlife. Further, both guests and employees are educated on green practices and they are motivated to participate by being incentivized and seeing the benefits – for example, R1,00 is donated to the Rhino foundation for every key-card returned, therefore as this is helping the rhinos, more often than not guests do return their cards. Although implementing green practices is costly, it has been identified that it's beneficial for savings in the long run.

In conclusion, the research question was answered, there are practices implemented in hotels to work toward a sustainable future. According to primary (interviews conducted) and secondary (search engines) research, many hotels around the world are succeeding at implementing green practices and creating positive change – for example reducing their carbon footprint. There are many ways in which guests are motivated to participate and there are controls in place to encourage guests to think green and be eco during their stays. Furthermore, employees as mentioned, are the heart of the organisation, and through data collected, employees are trained on sustainable practices. Although COVID-19 has affected many industries, hospitality especially, the aftermath as a whole has not had as much an impact on still implementing green practices. There may be a delay in implementing some, or seeking local and organic suppliers may be a challenge, but they are still being done.

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Appendices

An Investigation of practices taken by corporations in the hospitality industry toward creating a more sustainable future.

Appendix A – Concept document table

Research Purpose	Primary and secondary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Anticipated Findings	References
The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of sustainability, especially within the hospitality industry, and further, identify the sustainable practices being carried out in order to prepare for a better future.	Primary question: What green practices have been implemented to work toward being an environmentally friendly hotel?	The study is relevant as it highlights the importance of the sustainable practices in the hospitality industry in order to ensure the foreseeable future of the environment.	Brundland, H. 1987. Our Common Future. Oxford University Press. Du Plooy-Cliffers, F., Davis, C. and Bezuidenhout, R.M. 2014. Research Matters. Cape Town: Juta & Company Ltd. Marée, K. 2020. First Steps in Research. 3 rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.	Theme 1: Sustainability and sustainable development Theme 2: Green hotelier Theme 3: Guests education and response to sustainable practices Theme 4: The effects of COVID-19 in hospitality industry	Interpretivism. The information will be used in order to determine practices of sustainability towards a better future.	Qualitative Population Employees of The OBH Group in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The population parameters include: - Individuals (with knowledge on sustainability); - Respondents must reside in South Africa; - Those aged between 18 and 45; and - Participants must have some affiliation with The Oyster Box.	Data will be collected by means of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources being face-to-face, semi-structured interviews (done and secondary data being academic resources.	The researcher applied for approval to The Independent Institute of Education. Once granted, interviews were set up with participants. The findings of the study are autonomous, confidential, integral, voluntary and finally, no information was fabricated.	The findings that the researcher aims to identify includes that specific implementations of sustainable practices that The Oyster Box Hotel incorporates into their business model in order to ensure a better future.	Brackett, L. and Carril, B.N. 2016. Sustainability marketing: US hotels vs. international hotel chains. <i>World Journal of Entrepreneurship Management and Sustainable Development</i> , 11(1): 32-36. Brugulio, L., G. Cordina, N. Farrugia and S. Vella. 2006. <i>Economic Vulnerability And Resilience: Concepts And Measurements</i> . United Nations University World Institute for Development. Brundland, H. 1987. <i>Our Common Future</i> . Oxford University Press. Du Plooy-Cliffers, F., Davis, C. and Bezuidenhout, R.M. 2014. <i>Research Matters</i> . Cape Town: Juta & Company Ltd. Marée, K. 2020. <i>First Steps in Research</i> . 3 rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. Melissen, F., Cavignaro, E., Damen, M. and Düweke, A. 2016. Is the hotel industry prepared to face the challenge of sustainable development? <i>Journal of Vacation Marketing</i> , 22(3): 227-236. International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2020. Sustainable Development. [Online]. Available at: https://www.issd.org/tools/sustainable-development/ [Accessed on 10 March 2020]. International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2020. Sustainable by 2045: Three ways the mining industry can make it happen. [Online]. Available at: https://www.issd.org/branch/sustainable-mining-by-2045/ [Accessed on 02 March 2020]. Institute of Directors in Southern Africa (IoDSA). 2016. <i>King Report on Corporate Governance in SA: Institute of Directors in Southern Africa (IoDSA)</i> . [Online]. Available at: https://www.iodesa.co.za/page/king11/ Sajjad, A., Jilani, A. and Raziq, M. M. 2018. Sustainability in the Pakistani hotel industry: an empirical study. <i>Journal of Corporate Governance</i> , 18(4): 714-727.
Research Problem	Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Anticipated Contribution	
The research problem is based on the need for organisations to incorporate sustainable practices in order to ensure a future for generations to come. Therefore, this research studies the sustainable practices in the hotel industry in South Africa.	- To determine how the hotel is working toward a more sustainable future; - To understand how guests and employees are educated and the way they respond to being eco-conscious; - To determine whether or not implementing sustainable practices are beneficial in the long run; - To gain knowledge on how the local community is involved; and - To determine the effects COVID19 has had on environmentally-friendly practices.	- Economic development - Social development - Environmental protection - Workforce of the future	United Nations Global Compact Model			Nonprobability Sampling method: Convenience sampling Size: 4 employees of The OBH Group	Data was analysed using QDA Miner, which is a qualitative software programme for coding themes.	- Time; - Access to sample; - COVID19.	The study contributed by giving the researcher a better understanding on how five-star hotels, The OBH Group in particular, implement sustainable practices to work toward a more sustainable future.	Sustainable development. 2020. [Online]. Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2162030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf [Accessed 2 March 2020]. University Of Wollongong. 2020. Current Students - University Of Wollongong – UOW. [Online]. Available at: https://www.uow.edu.au/students/ [Accessed 7 March 2020]. Wagner, C., Kawulich, B. and Garner, M. 2012. <i>Sage Journals</i> . World Energy Council. 2014. <i>World Energy Council World Energy Council</i> . [Online]. Available at: https://www.worldenergy.org/ [Accessed 5 March 2020].

Appendix B – Interview schedule

1. What five words can you use to best describe a hotel that is environmentally friendly?

2. Please provide a detailed explanation on what practices the hotel has in place to conserve energy?

3. Does the hotel consider water conservation as something important, and what measures, if any, are in place that has a positive outcome on this?

4. In order to reduce ones carbon footprint, waste needs to be managed. Reduce, reuse, recycle – a motto that has been embedded into all individuals for decades. Please can you elaborate on how the hotel creates less waste?

5. How is food and beverages sustainably sourced and managed?

6. Are guests informed about how to be eco-conscious during their visits, and what motivates them to participate in such environmentally friendly practices?

7. Which sustainable practices carried out in the hotel satisfy guests the most?

8. Implementing environmentally friendly practices in the hotel can be costly. In your opinion, is it beneficial in the long run, and why?

9. What are the education and training programmes in place for staff members to gain understanding on sustainable practices, and how are they valuable?

10. How does the hotel get the local community involved and give back through the implementation of environmentally friendly practices?

11. What certification does the hotel hold that shows that you are internationally recognised for having a green building design?

12. How has COVID19 had an impact on the way in which the hotel implements sustainable practices?

END

Appendix C – Ethics clearance letter



28 JULY 2020

Student name: Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut Student number: 14000955
Campus: IIE Varsity College Pretoria

Re: Approval of Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) Honours in Management Proposal and
Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor:

Ruan van den Berg

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC): Janus Snyders

Appendix D – Ethics checklist



HONOURS RESE, RESM and RMET ETHICS CHECKLIST

Dear student

Please complete this checklist and include this in your proposals as an appendix:

Student name: Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut

Title of the research: An investigation of practices taken by corporations in the hospitality industry toward creating a more sustainable future

	Yes	No	Comment: Supervisor
Are you using human subjects in your research?	√		
I intend to use human subjects • I understand that I will not conduct research with human subjects under the age of 18 and other vulnerable groups. • I understand I can only proceed once I receive an ethical clearance letter.			
Interviews/ Focus groups An example of the <i>written consent form</i> I intend to use is attached. <i>(Part 5)</i>	√		
I will record the interview/focus groups and the sample of the letter where I ask for permission to do so is attached. <i>(Part 7)</i>	√		

I plan to use an interview schedule: The example of my research instrument is attached.	√		
I plan to use a questionnaire: The example of my research instrument is attached.	√		
I plan to use a gate-keepers letter: The example of my letter is attached. <i>(Part 3)</i>	√		
I plan to do research on an IIE site/with IIE students/staff/artefacts and I filled in the application for permission to do so. The application is attached. I understand I can only proceed once I receive IIE Approval for this. <i>(Annexure E)</i>		√	

Signed: student.....

Appendix E – Gatekeepers letters



Gatekeepers letter/ Request to conduct research

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to ask your permission to conduct research at your company, [REDACTED]

My name is Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut, a BCom Honours in Management student at Varsity College a brand of the Independent Institute of Education (IIE). The research I wish to conduct for my Honours project/research report titled 'An investigation of practices taken by corporations in the hospitality industry toward creating a more sustainable future'.

The aim of this study is to investigate how [REDACTED] is working toward a better future and the sustainable practices in place that contribute towards the triple bottom line. The project will consist of interviews that will be done over online platforms due to COVID19. The nature of your firm's participation will be to answer a set of questions over an online meeting on a chosen date that is suitable. The total time required of you will be more or less 10 minutes. The collected data will be for the purpose of the research paper, and therefore, it will remain autonomous, confidential and consent will be obtained prior to conducting interviews. Further, no information will be fabricated.

Yours sincerely

Student: Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut

Supervisor: Ruan Van den Berg

My contact details are as follows:

Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Ruan Van den Berg

Appendix F – Consent form template



CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut and I am a student at Varsity College Pretoria. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Ruan Van Den Berg, in my chosen study about the practices undertaken in the hospitality industry towards creating a more sustainable future. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of sustainability and its importance towards a better future. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because I believe your company understands the concept of sustainability, and can contribute towards validating the secondary data obtained through previous research. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to invite you to please take part in an interview that will be done on online platforms (face-to-face would be preferred, however COVID19 does not allow for such). I will ask a few questions to which you may or may not choose to respond to. The total time will be more or less 10 minutes

on a day that will be suitable for you. This interview will remain autonomous, confidential and reliable. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your understanding and experience of the concept on sustainability and how it contributes toward creating a better future. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study?
• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected?
I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College Pretoria, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.
What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my BCom Honours in Management degree. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Ruan Van den Berg

Appendix G – Participant consent form



Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut about an Investigation of practices taken by corporations in the hospitality industry toward creating a more sustainable future. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:	
• I agree to be interviewed for this research.	
• My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.	
• My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.	
• I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.	
• I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.	
Signature	Date

Appendix H – Audio / video consent form



CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut to audio record my interviews as part of the research about an investigation of practices taken by corporations in the hospitality industry toward creating a more sustainable future. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

Appendix I – Gatekeepers Approval



Gatekeepers Approval

Consent form to conduct research at my company	
I,	
Representative of [REDACTED]	
My capacity:	
Give my permission that Nicolette Vaidarlis Raffaut may conduct research at my company.	
This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time. I also understand that research reports are available in the library and IIE Repository unless I indicate below that I would not	
Select below:	
• I request that my company's identity be kept confidential.	
• My company can be identified in the study	
• The study may never be available on the repository.	
• The study may be made available on the repository.	
• The study may be made available on the repository after months.	
Signature	Date