

Employee engagement factors in Corporate Social Responsibility

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| <p>Employee engagement in corporate social responsibility is studied in order to find methods for successful CSR implementation in the context of the tourism industry. The high CSR performance of the company is depended in part on a company's employees, who have various attitudes towards sustainability matters. Therefore, this thesis investigates which factors could improve future CSR interest and participation and explains what has contributed to current level of employee engagement in sustainability matters. In doing so, the current level of employees' awareness and involvement in CSR is assessed through analysis of current CSR initiatives in employees' workplaces.</p> <p>The main research question is "which factors will contribute to employees' high engagement in organizational CSR?" The main research focus is "how to make employees excited about CSR?" Further, the thesis explains the importance of employees to be engaged in work and understand the value of CSR activities. Briefly, as employees' understanding and engagement in CSR grow, so may grow the efforts towards it. As a result, the contribution to becoming more sustainable will be ensured by doing measurable actions.</p> <p>In the end, the study aims to ensure CSR implementation and responsible conduct in a hotel by way of engaging its employees in sustainability topics. The results will contribute to the identification of engagement factors in CSR and measures of improving CSR implementation. In total, 7 interviews were conducted with hotel employees and analyzed using NVivo computer software for qualitative data analysis.</p> | |
| Keywords Corporate social responsibility, engagement, sustainability, sustainable hospitality, hotels | |

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1 Introduction

Being a part of the tourism industry, lodging operations make up the largest sector of tourism. As commercial buildings, hotels, hostels, and Airbnb properties may have a negative influence on the environment, economics, cultures, and societies where they operate. For this reason, sustainable performance in the tourism industry and in the accommodation sector is of great importance. (Gardetti, & Torres, 2016, 1-21) To illustrate, hotels require many resources as energy, water, furniture, food, and employees to operate daily. As a result, there is a need for daily maintenance of rooms and public areas, provision of fresh food and shower water, electricity, new furniture, and waste management. For these reasons, sustainable operation in hotels is as relevant as in any other business. (Gardetti & Torres, 2016, 1-21)

This thesis focuses on the accommodation sector and will study how *employee engagement* positively influences the responsible performance in chain owned and individual hotels. The study subjects include a few employees working in hotels on the property level. A qualitative study finds how engagement occurs in respective employees, and what motivates them to engage in CSR actions. Hence, the study aims to “find measures of increasing employee engagement in CSR” and “enhancing staff’s awareness of CSR and motivation to participate enthusiastically.

The main research question “How to ensure high employee engagement into work and related CSR activities of an organization? has formed the following sub-questions:

1. What is high work and employee engagement and how it occurs in employees in relation to CSR?
 - What do employees think of sustainability issues?
 - What are their engagement factors?
 - How do these factors need to align?
2. What are the existing CSR initiatives in the employee’s workplace?
3. Are employees aware of these initiatives and do they participate?
4. What would motivate employees to take even more active participation in responsible initiatives?

Next, the study uses documentary analysis and interviews with employees as research methods to answer the above-mentioned questions. The goal is to identify the level of aware

ness of CSR policies and find the engagement factors in CSR activities. IHG or the Inter Continental hotel group was chosen for the study purposes since this hotel group follows a responsible operation strategy well. A few other hotels will provide a comparison to the IHG brand to see how sustainability matters are addressed there. The thesis next continues with the review of IHG's approach to sustainability topics and individual interviews with hotel employees. In total, 7 interviews were arranged, and data collected from 3 IHG hotels in Finland and 4 hotels in Spain. The choice was dictated in part of the author's ability to reach study participants and in part to provide a comparison to the IHG brand.

Many authors have empathized the importance for businesses to adopt sustainable development initiatives and CSR programs in businesses' core operations. (Raub & Blunschi 2014; Prudhomme & Raymond 2016; Park & Levy 2011; Cherapanukorn & Focken 2014; Gardetti & Torres, 2016) Likewise, current popularity and presence of sustainability challenges and the need for sustainable development of societies incline businesses to operate more sustainably and to consider bigger environmental impacts of their operations. (Chouinard, Ellison, & Ridgeway, 2011) More, responsible conduct ensures the long-term survival of the company and the cooperation of key stakeholders and shareholders.

The thesis adopts the prevalent notion that successful CSR implementation begins with *motivated and engaged employees*, who perform daily tasks and follow responsible initiatives advised from above levels of hierarchy. Eventually, attitudes to CSR, knowledge, and perceptions, desire to engage or disengage will influence how employees engage in CSR activities (Hejjas, Miller & Scarles 2018, 1-3; Raub & Blunschi 2014, 6-7) Therefore, it is crucial to understand what motivates employees to participate in responsible initiatives. In addition to CSR engagement, work engagement is also important to consider since CSR initiatives will ultimately be done in the context of one's work.

To justify the research, it is good to mention that although the tourism industry is a large industry, creating many benefits for its consumers, it as well may cause downside effects, one of which is over-tourism. For similar reasons, tourism service providers must consider their operations and ways to contribute to global sustainable development. (Yilmaz & Gunel 2008, 8). Likewise, global challenges in both developed and developing countries have contributed to the heightened awareness of global sustainability. Issues of poverty and hunger, access to clean water and affordable energy, quality education, health and well-being, gender inequalities, stable economic growth, constructing sustainable cities, responsible business production, climate change, and overcrowding are still present in many countries. (United Nations)

As a result, businesses, including the tourism industry, have started to pay close attention to adhering to corporate social responsibility principles in their operations. The tourism industry is a big part of global businesses and its responsible operation is crucial. Sustainable operation of the aviation industry, hotel operations and management of destinations all will support wider sustainable development initiatives and contribute to global wellbeing. (Gardetti, & Torres, 2016, 25-32)

However, when a business decides to adopt CRS practices, a few inhibiting factors may influence the implementation process and the extent to which sustainable initiatives will be successful. (Prud'homme & Raymond 2016,16; Hejjas, Miller & Scarles 2018; Zizka 2017). *Employee engagement* is one of such factors, that may determine if CSR initiatives will be successfully implemented. Certainly, *it is important to study what creates engagement in employees and how to facilitate it*. In summary, this thesis will study employee engagement and how it affects work behaviours and CSR implementation.

In conclusion, the study aims to find factors contributing to the successful implementation of CSR activities into a hotel daily environment by understanding its employees and ways to enhance their responsible behaviour. To do so, CSR engagement factors are important to study and is conducted as a qualitative study using several qualitative methods to enhance findings.

The thesis is split into 8 chapters. First, chapter 2 introduces the example of a hotel group that exhibits sustainable orientation. Then, chapters 3 and 4 introduces concepts of corporate social responsibility, employee engagement, and related theories. Next, chapter 5 presents the research methods and justifies a qualitative research approach chosen for this study. Finally, chapter 6 presents this study results and suggests recommendations, chapter 7 discusses the findings and chapter 8 concludes the study.

2 InterContinental Hotel Group

This chapter introduces one of the hotel group that prioritizes sustainable conduct in its operations. Specifically, it discusses the group’s responsible strategy which includes managing resources and working with employees.

2.1 Overview of the hotel group

InterContinental Hotel Groups, or shortly, IHG is a global company franchising and managing 15 hotel brands with over than 5600 hotels in more than 100 countries on behalf of third-party hotel owners. The hotel brands are grouped into mainstream, upscale and luxury hotels. Mainstream hotels include full-service hotels and extended stay hotels, including Holiday Inn Hotels & Resorts, Holiday Inn Express, Candlewood Suites to name a few. Upscale hotels are represented by Crowne Plaza Hotels, Hotel Indigo, Even Hotels, and others. Luxury hotels include Regent and Kimpton brands. (IHG 2018, 3) All brands are shown in figure 1 below.

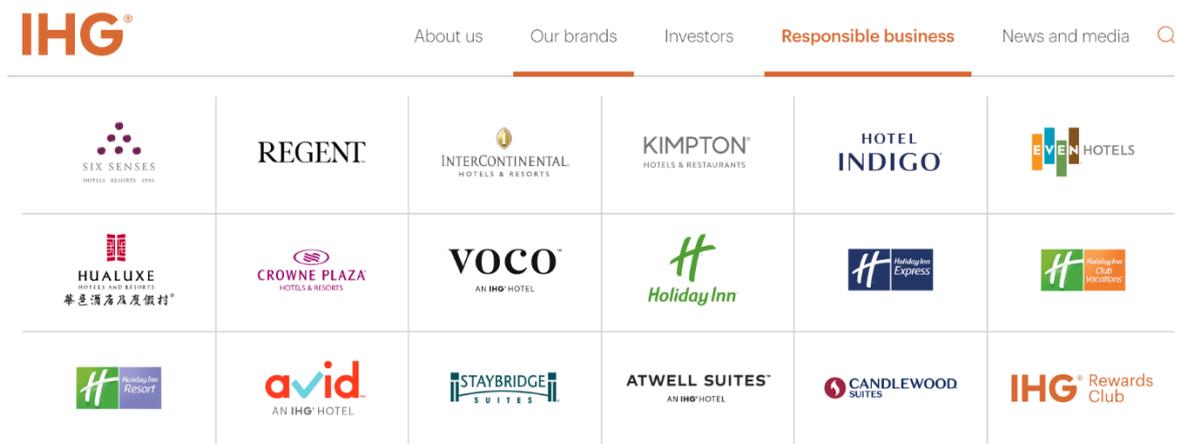


Figure 1. IHG branded hotels (Our brands, InterContinental Hotels Group 2019)

Doing business responsibly is a part of IHG’s business strategy. The hotel group recognizes that the ways in which it does business, starting from daily operations, managing and growing brands to taking actions to protect the environment, all affect stakeholders’ perceptions and IHG’s appeal for new employees, quests, and investors. For these reasons IHG works on maintaining a diverse, healthy and inclusive culture, strong business ethics, keeps respect for society and monitors the effect on communities. IHG has set goals in environmental sustainability, making community impact, care for people and responsible procurement. (IHG 2018, 5). Similarly, IHG actively involves stakeholders in its responsible strategy. Figure 2 summarises them. (IHG 2018, 10)



Figure 2. IHG' stakeholder engagement in CSR (IHG 2018, 10)

As seen in Figure 2, IHG's stakeholders include industry associations, colleagues, guests, owners, shareholders, NGOs, academic institutions and suppliers. In contrast, this thesis will study only hotels' colleagues, which IHG engages in responsible conduct using conferences, intranet, and in-house publications. Specifically, this thesis focuses on hotels' colleagues, whom IHG involves in responsible conduct via conferences, intranet, in-house publications, and blogs, to the topics of well-being, workplace diversity, and inclusion. (IHG 2018, 10)

IHG's environmental sustainability goals include reducing carbon footprint by 6-7% and launching 6 water stewardship projects by 2020. Community impact goals include educating 40000 employees with hospitality skills via IHG Academy, donating 3 M dollars to community impact projects around the world and engaging 100 000 employees in IHG's global community impact activities by 2020. (IHG Our hotels, 2018)

Finally, IHG increases diversity within employees in terms of gender, nationality, the ethnicity of IHG Leaders and women representation. Besides, IHG tracks and measures employee engagement. Responsible procurement includes working with suppliers in a way to increase supplier risk profile, supplier audits and the presence of ethical suppliers meeting IHG Green Criteria. (IHG, 2018)

2.2 Responsible strategy

IHG's responsible business approach across the hotel lifecycle starts from the hotel design and development, procurement, operations, marketing, sales and distribution and then the cycle repeats.



Figure 3. IHG's responsible business approach (IHG 2018, 8-10)

Next, IHG has a wide selection of responsible initiatives and policies related to the environment and human rights. Vendor Code of Conduct, which is a summary of minimum standards that all IHG's suppliers are expected to follow. IHG Human Rights policy or its equivalent is a requirement for all IHG hotels. Also, the International Tourism Partnership's Principles on Forced Labour are used in IHG hotels. (IHG 2019)

To illustrate, IHG's board and CEO have set the benchmarks and introduced several responsible initiatives supporting responsible business conduct. IHG' responsible initiatives (IHG 2018.) include:

- The Code of Conduct
- IHG Human Rights policy
- Commitment to the International Tourism Partnership's Principles on Forced Labour,
- Virtual seminars on corporate behaviour
- Anti-Bribery policy
- Secure information training
- IHG Green Engage

2.2.1 Educating employees

The Code of conduct is a set of global policies that IHG hotels must follow. The policies address anti-bribery, diversity and inclusion, environment, confidential reporting, and human rights guidelines. *“The Code helps us to act responsibly and set out the value we place on being trusted by our colleagues and guests, those who do business with us, and the communities we work in.”* IHG provides its employees with e-learning courses on the Code, Human rights, responsible procurement, and supply chain risk. (IHG 2018, 24)

Next, IHG Green engage system is a sustainability platform available for all IHG hotels that helps to choose and implement sustainable solutions related to the use of energy, carbon, water, waste, and overall environmental impact. In short, the online system allows hotels to choose action plans and set targets to decrease environmental impact, set and monitor hotel specific goals for cutting carbon, energy, water, and waste and see the real cost savings. Also, create customized sustainable solutions based on a hotel’s location and brand. (IHG 2019c) The system further allows tracking sustainable impact on four levels of sustainability, where 1 level is required for all IHG hotels and those achieving the third level or above reduce energy use by up to 25%. (IHG 2019b)

Following is the *Greener Stay initiative* which offers the guests the opportunity to skip the daily housekeeping services in return for bonus points to their IHG memberships. To participate, guests should stay over 2 nights, update room preferences before arrival, and hang a Greener Stay door hanger during their stay. (IHG 2018) The initiative encourages guests to make environmentally friendly decisions and hotels to take actions to reduce water and energy consumption, waste. (IHG 2018, 29) Likewise, IHG supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals for building a sustainable world.

2.2.2 Managing resources

IHG accepts the responsibility to minimize waste across all its hotels to contribute to the global goal of saving the environment for the future. Again, sustainable solutions can be found on the IHG’s Green Engage platform. One of the solutions is an opportunity to create a waste management plan. (IHG, 2018c) Next, Winnow System is an innovative approach to recording and measuring food waste, which IHG has adopted already in 7 of its hotels worldwide. The solution is “an intelligent camera, which is placed on top where food is thrown away. The technology identifies the food, assigns a cost to it, and shows the insight to the chef” (Tolentino 2019; Zornes in Tolentino, 2019)

Recently, IHG has introduced *larger size bathroom amenities* to reduce waste associated with single-use plastics from miniature amenities. Likewise, attention is put to eliminate *plastic straws* from hotels. (IHG 2018, 27) IHG supports responsible and efficient water consumption and has completed the hospitality industry's water risk assessment. As a result, IHG can identify risks associated with water quantity and quality and integrate the tailored water stewardship actions for each hotel. (IHG our hotels, 2018). IHG green engages system alone provides nearly 30 solutions to managing water.

IHG further empowers hotels to act at the property level to reduce carbon emissions. For instance, by the year 2020, it aims to reduce the carbon footprint per occupied room by 6-7%. To do so, IHG has set hotel specific carbon reduction goals, guidance, and practical solutions. (IHG, 2018c) Also, the installation of LED lighting is an effective solution since lighting accounts for up to 40% of total IHG hotels' energy usage. In IHG's supply chain, the highest producers of carbon were food and beverages, cleaning equipment, outsourcing, and consultancy. In summary, IHG is keen on reducing carbon emissions in its hotels. (IHG, 2018, 25)

3 Corporate social responsibility

This chapter introduces one of the most important concepts behind the study. CSR has gained a worldwide awareness and became a differentiating factor between businesses that want to make their operations both responsible and beneficial for society. Responsible business conduct has become a norm in the modern business while profit maximization stopped to be the only goal. (Chouinard, Ellison & Ridgeway 2011)

3.1 Defining CSR

CSR is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically, contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families, the local community, the environment and society at large. As such, it represents business operations based on ethical values that apply to all affected parties. (The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2010 in Cherapanukorn 2014; Dahlsrud 2016, 9) Social responsibilities of a firm can be summarised as “How can a firm create the most value for the broadest section of society?”

CSR is a process of integrating social, environmental, ethical and human rights concerns to business operations in collaborations with all firm's stakeholders. (European Union in Chandler & Werther 2017,7.) Equally, it addresses environmental, social, economic, stakeholder and voluntary dimensions of business operations. CSR's many definitions may be related to the natural environment, the relationship between a business and society, financial and socio-economic aspects, relationships with stakeholders and shareholders, and voluntary actions beyond legal obligations. (Dahlsrud, 2006) The latter is frequently summed up as social and environmental or as a triple bottom line approach: economic, social and environmental (Commission of the European Communities, 2002). Finally, Carroll (1979) has defined CSR as the social responsibility of business encompassing the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time.

Nowadays shareholders and stakeholders expect businesses to follow sustainability principles in all operations. Consumers, investors, governments and non-governmental organizations demand that companies fulfil their responsibilities to society at the same time as making a profit. Similarly, business leaders understand the benefits of adopting CSR such as cost reductions, improved brand image, stronger partner relationships, a bigger and loyal customer base, differentiation amongst competitors. To emphasize, different parities require a firm to operate in a specific manner that creates value for the stakeholder. While

consumers want to have safer products and governments require businesses to abide by the law. (Gardetti & Torres 2016, p 8-11; Chandler & Werther 2017, 41.)

Although firms do produce a lot of added value for a variety of groups such as customers, shareholders, and governments, these activities alone don't guarantee a company's responsible conduct and long-term survival. For this to happen, a company must have CSR policies that will ensure its long-term survival and good reputation. In summary, a responsible firm should be able to balance between its rights, self-interests, and social responsibilities. (Chandler & Werther 2017, 40-43.) When choosing CSR actions, the country of operation should be considered, since local factors may influence the meaning and the changing relevance of CSR initiatives. These factors consist of laws and policies, social expectations, cultural elements, specific social needs, and country issues. (Cherapanukorn 2014, 200.)

In turn, as the awareness of Corporate Social responsibility and its need has grown in various businesses, tourism businesses and the hospitality sector as well started to pay close attention to the topic and ways to make their operations more sustainable. (Yilmaz, Gunel 2008) In summary, value creation and positive impacts of operations on society and the minimization of negative impacts on the environment have become an etalon of a successful modern business. To do so, a long-term view of business operations and its impacts should be adopted instead of focusing only on profit in the short term. (Harvard Business review 2019)

3.2 CSR rationales and stakeholders

Initially, Carrol (1979) claimed that if a business plans to address successfully social responsibility issues, the business should think of how it will attend to economic, legal, ethical and discretionary categories of responsible business conduct. Figure 2. shows these responsibilities.

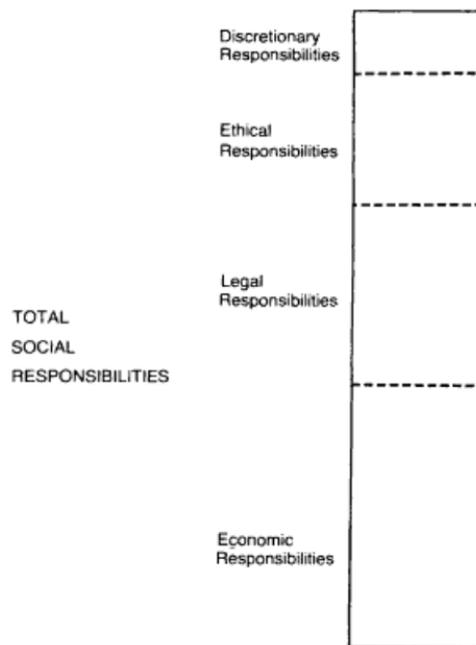


Figure 4. Social Responsibility Categories. (Carroll 1979, 499)

According to Carroll (1979, 499), a business exists to produce goods and services while abiding the law and considering ethical concerns and doing voluntary activities. (Carroll 1979, 497-505.) Below figure 5 shows a newer concept, where the responsibilities of business have equal importance and tend to coexist.

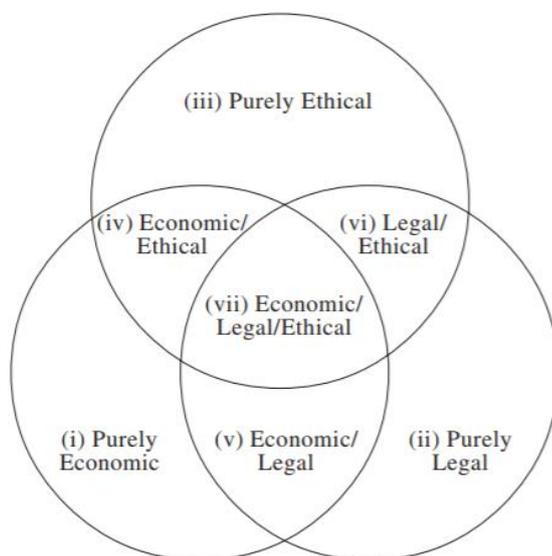


Figure 5. The Three-Domain Model of Corporate Social Responsibility. (Schwartz & Carroll 2003)

The three-Domain model above in figure 5 has been built on Carrolls (1991) Social Responsibility Categories model that is shown in figure 4. According to the model by (Schwartz & Carroll 2003) in figure 5, economic, legal and ethical elements of CSR are interconnected

and have *equal importance* in a business. The model makes seven possible business scenarios from which an ideal business situation is at the intersection of three factors (Schwartz & Carroll 2003, 7). To explain, a business cannot be focused only on profit maximization at the expense of legal and ethical factors and cannot exclude the economic factor because then it would lose its business strategy. As a result, CSR is about balancing between the needs of stakeholders and society and the business own needs. In doing so, balancing between economic, ethical and legal issues is vital to a business's long-term survival. (Chandler & Werther, 2017, 1-30.) More, social contract theory suggests that a firm should act in a responsible manner not because of its commercial interest but to its obligations to society at large. (Holcomb & Smith, 2015, 436.)

By nature, CSR is reliant on a company's stakeholders for the fact that businesses operate within society including other businesses, governments, for-profit, and not-for-profit organizations. Stakeholders of a business are all those entities that are related to a business in some way and may either benefit or lose because of its business activity. For example, consumers, employees, suppliers, regulators, media, and others. (Chandler & Werther, 2017, 2-5) According to stakeholder theory, a company may have both material and non-material interests considering its relationship with various entities. Since a company is integrated into relation with other companies it should view these as entities having own objectives. (Blowfield 2014, 201-210).

One main group of stakeholders of an organization is its employees, which all have various interests in the organization and as a sequence, may have a different attitude to their organization's corporate responsibility policies. Similarly, employees' perceptions of CSR forming from the organizational environment, and the leader, as well as personal attitude may influence the way employees will engage in a company's CSR actions. Here, the concept of employee engagement and perceptions play key roles. (Holcomb 2017) The management of stakeholders is a concept that requires a company to identify and address the needs of its various stakeholders including employees, customers, investors, suppliers, local communities. This process may bring certain benefits, as identifications of key partners, working together to solve issues, development of long-term relationships, and establishing a reputation. (Blowfield 2014, 201-210)

Closely related to stakeholders of a company is the concept of partnerships within organizations that may influence a business to be more sustainable. Partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, whereby all participants agree to work together to achieve a common goal, share risks, responsibilities, competencies, and

benefits. Companies need partnerships and help from the industry they work with to ensure the sustainable supply chain. (Blowfield 2014, 111)

This thesis nevertheless focuses only on employees as one of the important stakeholder groups because of the thesis scope and available resources. As discussed above, when implementing CSR solutions, employees' active involvement is of utmost importance. CSR's successful implementation will depend upon managing employees' perceptions and engagement levels. Therefore, current employee perceptions are studied in parallel with employee engagement factors and will be explained in further chapters.

3.3 Perceptions and engagement

Next will be discussed how employees' perceptions of their organizational CSR may influence how well CSR is done in the lodging sector of tourism. In chain or corporate-owned hotels, several players influence if and how a business will operate in a responsible manner. These range from decision-makers at the corporate level, to hotel general managers and the employees in charge of implementing CSR activities at the property level. As a result, the varying attitudes to CSR of these people may influence their attitudes to CRS and ascribe a different importance level to CRS and as a result, the final action taken. (Holcomb 2017)

Simply put, although the initiatives start from the higher management level, many actions of a hotel may depend on its ordinary employees, and if they do not understand or perceive the importance of CSR, the whole initiative may be undermined. Likewise, Bohdanowicz & Zientara (2008) concluded that when employees were personally involved in CSR initiatives, the long-term benefits were likely to result. Holcomb (2017) stated that since many CSR initiatives at the property level were carried out by employees, the study of their views of certain CSR initiatives would contribute significantly to the industry and the body of knowledge.

When employees are aware of the organization's involvement in CRS, they perceive that together with their organization they can make a positive difference for other people and for the environment (Raub & Blunschi 2014, 1-9). The awareness of CSR initiatives in hotel employees related positively to extra-helping behaviour and personal initiatives. As a result, employees' awareness of CSR activities was the main factor that drew positive results.

To conclude, amongst all, the author will study employees awareness as one of the components for it is crucial that employees of a business understand the rationales behind doing

CSR activities and as their awareness and understanding grow, so may grow their efforts they will put to their work and to CSR activities. As a result of increased efforts, the actual contribution to CSR of a firm will be ensured.

The study by De Roeck & Farooq (2018, 926-934) confirms that both employees' perceptions of their CSR- environment, and CSR-community will affect their CSR performance including green and societal behaviour. Here, the consistency of cues is crucial. Consistent positive cues from the environment regarding CSR and proactive ethical actions of the leader will foster employees' organizational identification and engagement in responsible behaviours. That is, employees seem to unconsciously make up their minds on what is important in an organization and adopt their attitudes and behaviour to fit their work environment. If CSR is valued and considered as an important factor, new employees will adopt valued behaviour.

As seen from the research, the successful implementation of CSR starts with motivated employees. This justifies the value of the current study which focuses on identifying the employee's motivations to engage in extra socially responsible behaviours in addition to engagement factors. These subjects are crucial and will be explained in further chapters. In this study, the employees are viewed as the driving force in determining the success of CSR efforts. The figure 6. below shows the relationship between employees' perceptions, occurring engagement and final CSR performance.

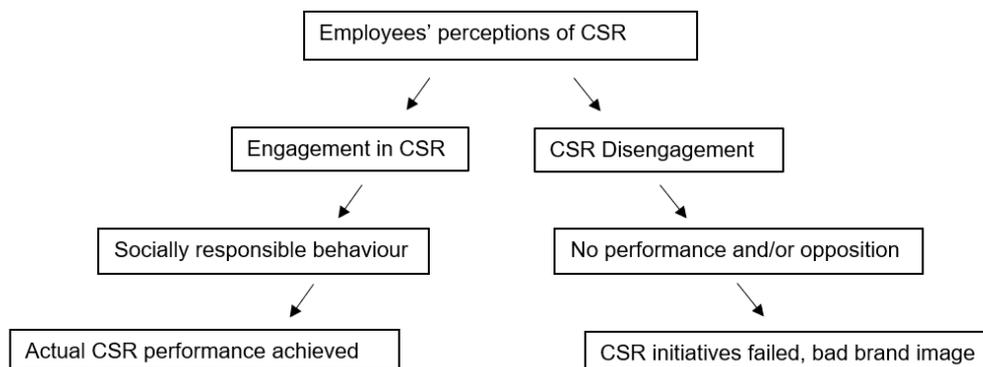


Figure 6. Influence of employees' perceptions of CSR success (Summarised of sources)

Figure 6. shows that employee engagement or disengagement may lead to the success or failure of CSR performance. Here engagement level can be predicted by both employees' perceptions of CSR summarised above and engagement factors discussed below.

3.4 Sustainable development and hotel sustainability

Sustainable development has been defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” To understand the importance of sustainable development one must consider that “The environment does not exist in isolation from human actions, ambitions, and needs. Instead, humans live near nature and affect it as well as are being affected by it.” (Imperatives, 1987, 7, 41)

United Nations had introduced 17 sustainable development goals to fight the world challenges in various spheres of people’s lives. These address topics of economic growth, access to education, clean water, reduction of inequalities and poverty, gender equality and well-being, zero hunger, sustainable cities, consumption patterns, climate change actions, restoration of ecosystems (UN 2015.) Figure 7 depicts a variety of sustainable development goals.



Figure 7. Sustainable development goals. The United Nations, 2015

As seen in the figure above, the variety of goals concern different spheres of human life and make up a holistic approach towards achieving a better world. “They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success,” (Ban, UN 2015) The goals will be worked until the year 2030, by which they need to be achieved. Three aspects of sustainable development are implemented through 17 goals: social, economic and environmental. Also, goals support issues of peace, justice, and effective institutions. (UN, 2015) Keeping this in mind, managers of tourism services need to become aware of the importance of the concept to the extent that they implement the concept in their daily activities of managing a business. To do so, they should learn of the variety of possible CSR strategies and take actions to integrate and monitor daily performance.

As such, sustainable development drives the need for the adoption of CSR in companies, and adequate means of monitoring its success to be able to operate to its full potential in the current world, driven by the awareness of sustainability issues. Humanity should take the concept of sustainable development as a guiding principle in all its activities to ensure good lives for the future generation. However, even though the CSR concept had been studied extensively, several studies found the gap in knowledge. For example, Melissen (2013) agrees that “we have, as-of-yet, little knowledge of the process by which a hotel establishment’s SD orientation is developed and implemented, and of the external and internal factors that influence this process.

Sustainable operations management is a well-known topic in the hotel industry. The sustainable hotel business should invest both in responsible and sustainable production, efficient use of electricity, water supply, employee’s wellbeing, long-term relationships with suppliers and clients. To do so, hotels gain eco-labels, choose and implement CSR programs, reduce energy and food waste, adhere to sustainable practices, work with communities and engage stakeholders. (Gardetti, & Torres, 2016, 1-21) Although the hotel industry does have various measurements of sustainability levels, as for example, eco-labels, GRI reporting, sustainability programs, it is a question to what extent the various CSR practices are implemented daily and what motivates managers and employees to perform the day to day responsible actions. (Gardetti, & Torres, 2016, 1-21; Holcomb 2017)

For example, various challenges related to the measurement of the day- to day performance in hotels were identified. Precisely, Cherapanukorn (2014) argued that although previous studies identified the awareness of the need and benefits of CSR to be important, it remained unclear how to *integrate* CSR activities and demonstrate actual impact and positive change. A shortcoming of CSR was a lack of conventionalization, monitoring, and measurement. Likewise, Sheldon & Park (2011) found CSR to be important in the US travel industry, yet its implementation as well lacked behind due to limited recourses and understanding, and expectation placed on the government to take lead in implementing CSR standards.

To conclude, hotels do adopt various CSR policies that are decided from the above level of the hierarchy and may even compete in sustainability performance. Yet, this thesis will argue that employees who work daily have various levels of engagement and attitudes towards their jobs and all that may influence work behaviour and CSR implementation. This ultimately will affect their performance levels including different behaviour to CSR.

4 Engagement

Recently, the world of work has changed from a traditional work environment characterized by life-long employment, experience and detailed job description to modern organizations that need employees who will invest in their jobs both psychologically and physically. Engagement as such is the psychological involvement of employees into their jobs.

(Truss, Delbridge, Alfes, Shantz & Soane, 2014) Engagement emerged due to the increasing importance of human capital and the psychological involvement of employees in their jobs and positive psychology trends. (Truss & al. 2014, 17) Work behaviours can be classified into task performance and contextual performance, including extra-role helping actions (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993).

Work engagement is a uniquely positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind which includes physical-energetic (vigour), emotional (dedication), and absorption components. (Truss & al 2014, 31.) Vigour is described as high levels of energy and efforts that one puts in his job and having resilience and persistence when faced with challenges. Dedication implies having pride and a strong connection to one's work and absorption empathizes the pleasant state of full immersion into one's work when an individual loses track of time and is unable to detach from work. (Truss & all. 2014; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter 2001, 417). Also, work engagement refers to the relationship of the employee with his or her work. Consultancy firms have conceptualized engagement by combining commitment, satisfaction, involvement, motivation, and extra-role performance.

Employee engagement, also called "commitment" or "motivation", refers to a psychological state where employees feel a vested interest in the company's success and perform to a high standard that may exceed the basic requirements of the job. (Truss & all. 2014; Mercer) It refers also the efforts on the part of the organization to involve employees in a variety of organizational activities including charitable and sustainability activities. (CSR Matters, 2017) Thus, employee engagement may as well include the relationship with the organization.

Khan (1990, in Truss & al 2014, 58) stated that people have dimensions of themselves that they tend to deploy in specific situations and roles they perform. Taking on a role requires an individual to put effort into physical, cognitive and emotional labors. Such individuals become physically involved, vigilant and empathetically connected to colleagues and others. To express oneself in a work role is showing real identity, thoughts, and feelings. Sharing opinions, creativity, and values, connections are inevitable. (Truss & al 2014, 57).

To summarise, engaged employees get personal satisfaction and a sense of inspiration and affirmation from work and being a part of the organization. In business, engagement consists of job satisfaction, commitment to the organization and extra-role behaviour. (Truss & al. 2014, 18.)

4.1 Engagement theories

Employee engagement does not have a united theoretical framework. Instead, it can be understood as a complex construct, that incorporates many components. As a result, the abundance of engagement definitions creates several approaches to studying engagement and forces affecting it. These include but are not limited to *the needs-satisfying approach*, *the job demands-resources model*, *social exchange* and *organizational identification theories*, role of positive emotions, and *communication practicalities*. (Truss et al. 2014, 25-29.)

4.1.1 The needs- satisfying approach

This approach states that employees will become engaged in their work if the specific conditions or three needs related to their work are met. These are psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. These three factors create a state of *psychological presence* whereby employees can fully deploy and express themselves in work situations (Truss & al 2014, 58, 25-29, 83, originally by Kahn 1992.)

Meaningfulness corresponds to the feeling of *return on investment* of efforts, safety to the ability to *express oneself freely* without fear of consequences and availability to *self-efficacy*, *available resources* and one's belief in being competent to perform one's work. (Truss et al. 2014, 25-29, 83) Employees ask themselves three simple, yet important questions when it comes to job tasks:

- "How meaningful is it for me to bring myself into this performance?"
- "How safe is it to do so?" and
- "How available am I to do so?" (Truss et al 2014, 83.)

Having asked these questions, employees may rate a job task based on the personal criteria which they consider important. In other words, their engagement level depends upon their perceived meaningfulness of the job, safety to engage in it and the number of resources like time, energy and efforts they possess.

Psychological meaningfulness involves a sense of return on investment of the self in work role performances (Truss & al 2014, 59 originally in Kahn 1990, 703-4). People experiencing meaningfulness feel worthwhile, useful, and valuable. Figure 8 reviews the factors responsible for psychological meaningfulness in one's job.

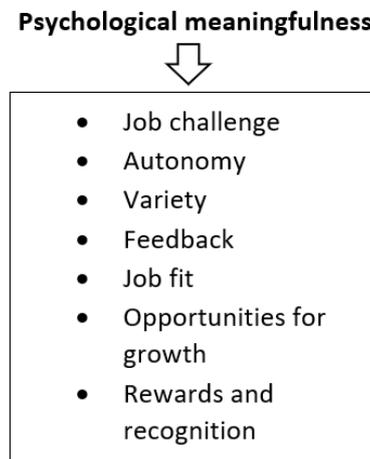


Figure 8. Psychological meaningfulness antecedents (Truss et al 2014, 59)

As seen in figure 8, a meaningful job for an employee will be challenging, varied, will provide feedback and growth opportunities, rewards and recognition, and will be flexible and autonomous to some degree. With the help of these factors, employees will express themselves in work situations and as a result will become more engaged in their work. (Truss 2014, 59 originally in Khan 1992) Here, job challenge referring to broad job scope and high responsibility is motivating since it offers space for accomplishment, mastery and personal growth and thus associates with engagement. (Truss 2014, 59 originally in Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

Having felt the *responsibility of performing well*, Individuals start to respond to higher expectations with higher engagement (Truss 2014, 59). Similarly, *autonomy* refers to the freedom of scheduling of the work and choosing procedures to carry it out. The satisfaction of autonomy motivates employees to be more proactive and engaged. (Truss 2014, 59 originally in Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Likewise, *feedback* aids in employees' feeling of meaningfulness because it helps to evaluate their progress towards goals and gives a *feeling of being valued, known and appreciated*.

Job fit refers to employees' ability to identify with the job that corresponds to their values. As such, fit is important for employees because it allows them to behave in accordance with *self-images* they have or want to project. Finally, *growth opportunities, rewards, and recognition* stimulate meaningfulness since they are the returns on a personal investment in one's

work. The effective rewards may be a mixture of financial rewards, promotions, praise from leaders, public recognition. (Truss & al 2014, 60-2, originally in Kahn, 1990)

Psychological safety refers to a sense of being able to invest oneself in work roles without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, and career. Employees feel safe when they experience a *system of strong support*. (Truss & al 2014, 62-66 originally in Khan 1990, 708). Truss & al (2014, 63) further found the psychological safety factors that satisfy those conditions described above. Figure 9 shows these factors which include a combination of social support, transformational leadership, leader-member exchange, workplace climate, organizational justice, and job security.

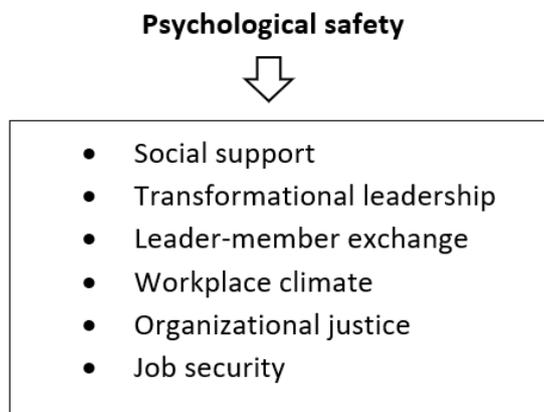


Figure 9. Psychological safety factors. (Truss et al 2014, 60-6)

The key factors promoting psychological safety are supporting, trusting, and open relationships, trusting, supportive and consistent leadership styles, groups' dynamics that minimize the distribution of power and positive work climate with clear expectations of desired behaviours. These factors are associated with engagement since they contribute to more *supportive, predictable and non-threatening situations* in which employees may engage and fall without consequences. (Truss & al 2014, 63 originally in Khan 1990.)

The last component, **psychological availability** refers to the employees' sense of being able to personally engage in a work task in a moment. This subjective feeling may depend upon the conditions of **one's work environment**, e.g. *role overload* when an employee has a sense of having too much work for time available, *work-role conflict* whereby one feels he cannot satisfy conflicting demands with any amount of efforts, *resources inadequacies* referring to a lack of equipment or data, and **own circumstances**, e.g. *family-work conflicts*, time urgency, insufficient time to recover from work, dispositions such as conscientiousness and positive and negative affectivity, personal resources. (Truss & al 2016, 66-71.) Figure 10 shows these factors.

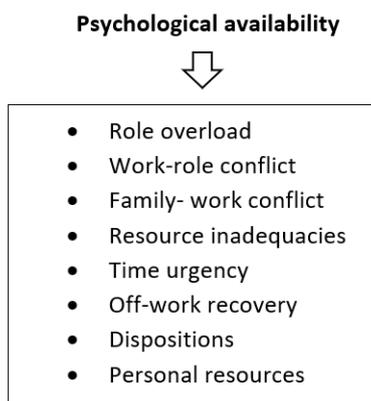


Figure 10. Psychological availability (Truss et al 2014, 63-6)

At the end, available individuals feel that they have the capacity to invest their physical, cognitive and emotional resources into work roles, unavailable individuals may either lack the resources or be worried about unrelated to work matters. Amongst these are workplace distractions and personal issues. (Truss & al 2014, 66, originally in Khan 1990, 714.)

4.1.2 The job demands-resources model

The model shows that engagement is likely to appear from the two motivating factors being *job resources*, and *personal resources*. Job resources are defined as aspects of the job that help to achieve work goals, reduce job demands and stimulate personal growth and development. For example, carrier progressing opportunities, coaching, autonomy and clear roles are job resources. Personal resources relate to employee’s ability to show resilience, ability to control and impact one’s environment successfully. In other words, self-efficacy, optimism and emotional stability. (Truss et al. 2014, 26-28.)

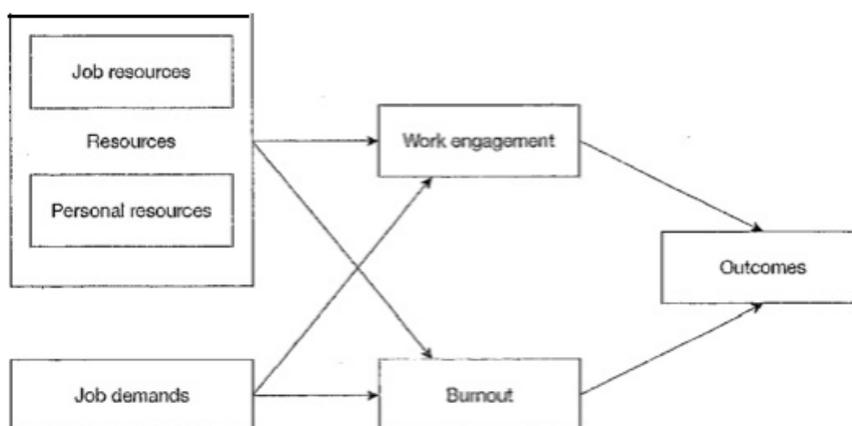


Figure 11. The job demands-resources model. (Truss et al. 2014, 26-28)

The upper part of the model shows the motivational process and positive influence of job and personal resources on work engagement and as a sequence on work outcomes. In contrast, the lower part shows that excessive **job demands** can have a different effect on an employee and can lead to *work engagement* or be the *cause of burnout*. Aspects of work requiring sustained physical or mental efforts as for instance, work overload, time pressure, role conflict, can all lead to burnout as opposed to engagement. (Schaufeli et al. 2014, 26-28) Following the JD-R model, resources boost employees' performance in terms of energy, persistence, and ability to focus efforts on work. (Truss et al. 2014, 26-28)

4.1.3 Social exchange theory

The theory suggests that when people start working together, they gradually may develop trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments in case both parties abide by reciprocity rules. As an example, if employees receive resources from the organizations, including decent salary, recognition, and opportunities to develop, they may start in return to feel the need to do something for their organization. (Shufeli, 2014, 29) Engagement can be one way they can repay their organization according to Shufeli (2014, 29; Saks 2016). Likewise, when employees are supported by the organization and have good work relationships with supervisors, they exhibit more citizenship behaviour and willingness to stay with their organization. (Truss 2014, 28-29; Alfes et al, 2013)

4.2 Additional engagement factors

Hejjas, Miller & Scarles (2018, 10-11) situate employees on the spectrum of engagement ranging from fully engaged to disengaged employees. The study found two different motivations to engage in CSR. The first was Corporate volunteering in which employees engaged due to schemes out of the office, opportunities for team building and socialization, time out of the office. An extra motivating factor was free participation in volunteer days.

In contrast, corporate fundraising was viewed negatively because employees felt pushy and pressed from organizations and peers to participate. On the other hand, the autonomy and choice of employees allowed to choose those CSR activities that corresponded to personal interests and thus contributed to CRS participation. While personal interest in some elements of CSR activity may influence both engaged and disengaged employees to take part, the external pressure led to disengagement of employees less

interested in CSR. (Hejjas et al, 2018, 10-11) As such, pressure may both lead to engagement and disengagement depending if an employee is interested or not in CSR.

Employees were driven to engage based on *perceived benefits of participation* such as professional skill development, social capital or opportunities to socialize and network. *“Employees are driven to engage and disengage in unique ways, depending on their current state of engagement. What drives some employees to engage, may drive others to disengage, as for instance, pressure”* (Hejjas et al, 2018, 13-15)

Indeed, “disengaged employees, in particular, felt very strongly that organizational initiatives needed to align with personal interests”. Thereof, if employees for some reason don’t identify with organizational values and goals, the organization may try to engage those employees in CSR via including the personal interests of disengaged employees to these CSR activities. (Hejjas et al, 2018, 11; Chua & Lyenger 2006)

In brief, flexibility, the autonomy of choice and personal interests may be the key factors driving employee engagement in CSR and the extra-role behavior implicit in the job description. (Bell & Menguc 2002, Hejjas et al, 2018, 13-19) By engaging employees in CSR dialogue, firms are better able to determine which social and environmental issues matter most to employees. (Hejjas et al, 2018, 1-19) Not least engagement depends on employees’ perceptions of CSR strategies and upon the way CSR strategies are led and communicated to them. To illustrate, if perceived as solely working to increase profits of the company, employees may be less motivated compared to perceived selfless motives of CSR actions, aimed and genially doing good, which employees prefer more. (Hejjas et al, 2018, 12-13)

Next, the participation of management who could clarify the importance of specific CRS action would motivate employees even further to engage voluntarily. Employees may as well perceive the involvement of management as a factor proving CSR value and enhancing employees’ engagement. In contrast,” a lack of senior management participation caused some employees to question the values of leadership and the reasons why the organization asked them to engage in CSR”. (Hejjas et al, 2018, 12-14)

4.2.1 Positivity and flow in engagement

Truss et al (2014, 42; Shaufeli et al., 2002) further argue that since engagement is both affective and cognitive, there is a higher probability for engagement to occur if employees feel positive emotions. In contrast to the negative, positive emotions create the space, emotional safety, mental energy and resources needed for employees to feel vigour, dedication and absorption elements of engagement. Also, the experiencing of flow can be further conducive to engagement. Truss & al (2014, 43) points out that challenging jobs and sufficient job resources can lead to flow and increase engagement.

4.2.2 Organizational Identification theory

Organizational identification is the perception of belonging to an organization, where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organizations in which he or she is a member. (Mael & Ashforth 1992, 104, De Roeck, 2018). Further, it represents the extent to which employees acquire desirable by organization behaviours, to their self-concepts. If well identified with the organizational culture, employees tend to act more in line with organizational goals thus supporting, for example, its Corporate Social responsibility agenda. The employees may adopt the cues as well from the organizational context. (De Roeck & Farog, 2018, Ashforth et al. 2008, De Roeck et al. 2016)

Further, since CSR is an assembly of the norms held by the organization, it sends the message to its employees which in turn start to appreciate their organization and want to identify more with it by supporting it. "Instead of viewing their organization as just a place to work, employees begin regarding it as an institution that shares their values, which in turn fosters their willingness to strengthen their identifications with the organization. (Rodrigo & Arenas 2008, De Roeck & Farog, 2018)

Employee organizational identification is positively related to employees' work attitudes and behaviours (Turker, 2008) as such identification results in "employee actions that reinforce the organization and one's status within it" (Upham, 2006, 83.)

5 Research Methods

The following subchapters describe the qualitative approach towards research used in this study. The subchapters describe the research procedures, including the choice of the research sample, the creation of the interview guide, data collection and analysis procedures, consideration of validity and reliability issues.

5.1 Qualitative research

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study since *qualitative research* represents a naturalistic and interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena in their social worlds. Specifically, the phenomena can be so complex that it requires analysis which cannot be done using quantitative measures such as quantitative surveys. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003,3)

In some cases, it can be useful to study phenomena using a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Yet in this study, engagement is seen to be a complex phenomenon consisting of many elements and which by nature requires more qualitative intervention at this point in its understanding. In addition, engagement is a personal subjective feeling that individuals create themselves and thus it is best studied by personal accounts. The context of this phenomenon will provide an understanding of engagement and how people see it themselves.

Qualitative research fits best in this study because it aims at generating an in-depth and interpreted understanding of participants' lives by seeking for personal experiences, perspectives, and circumstances. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003,3) In this sense, the author wants to find what engagement is for different individuals and how individual circumstances may affect their engagement level.

For these reasons, here engagement is studied using only qualitative research methods since at this stage of its understanding, engagement has features requiring a single qualitative research approach. That is, more investigation into the nature of engagement is required to understand it fully. Engagement is personal, values, knowledge, experiences that may affect its formation and it is complex. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 32-33). Since this research focuses firstly on the *understanding* of the engagement process and its contribution to CSR success, quantitative measurement is not needed at this point. Second, engagement relates to the study participants' own knowledge and understanding of themselves. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003,32)

However, this research will utilize both approaches to qualitative data collection. These *are naturally occurring* and *generated data*. While the former data type studies the real settings with naturally occurring behaviour and interactions, generated data allows to shed light on peoples' own perspectives, interpretation of believes and actions, and the meaning they attach to events. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 34-36). As such, it is important to see the full picture of something by exploring how it is in addition to what it is spoken about.

Qualitative methods concentrate on understanding, rich description and emergent concepts and theories. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 14) Explanatory research is concerned with *why* phenomena occur and with *the forces and influences* that drive their occurrence. It examines a subject in-depth and finds what precedes actions, attitudes, and behaviour. It also finds peoples' associations and subjective meanings they ascribe to events. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 28). Since this thesis studies engagement and the factors conducive to its emergence, explanatory research suits well. Ritchie & Lewis (2003, 28) points out that explanatory research may find the following for the study:

- The factors underlying attitudes and believes
- The motivations leading to decisions and actions
- The origins and formation of events
- The context of phenomena

Since this study tries to answer questions "how" and "why" to explain real-life situations as for instance, what makes certain employees engage in CRS practices, it aims to explain the motivations and processes and it's by nature a qualitative study. Likewise, the factors underlying decisions and the context of the work environment are crucial for this study of engagement which is explanatory research. In particular, the context of engagement emergence is studied in relation to job roles, in the employees' workplaces, and in the arising awareness of sustainability issues.

Therefore, to study engagement in CSR in the company, *content analysis* was chosen as a naturally occurring data method and will include analysis of webpages and relevant to engagement and CSR data on the IHG website. Individual *interviews* will represent the generated data. They practically fit for the study since they will provide a detailed analysis of participants' own perspectives and conditions as well as deep subject coverage. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 35-36). Finally, an interview guide will become a research tool to facilitate individual interviews. An interpretive approach was chosen for the study, for it seeks people's accounts of how they make sense of the world and the structures and processes within it. As outlined before CSR is a wide topic, including many

issues in it, drivers for it and different people may attach different understandings to what is CSR. Thereof, and interpretive approach would as well best suit the type of research, in which process is “complex and dynamic”, may be interpreted widely, a sudden factor may influence it and politics may account for the understanding of issues.

5.2 Sampling Choice

Qualitative research uses non-probability samples as a sampling strategy. This research uses purposive sampling, whereby a researcher chooses to study unities based on their characteristics which will help to do detailed exploration and understanding of the central phenomena. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 78-79). Since the author wants to study the occurrence of engagement in its natural form, *how engagement in organizational CSR occurs*, it makes sense to choose differently aware of the wider sustainability and CSR topics individuals. That way, the reasons for lower awareness and ways to engage less knowledgeable participants as well as to understand the motives of well-aware individuals will be found.

One of the criteria for choosing the participants was that they worked in a responsible hotel group following CSR and other responsible initiatives. In terms of position, all personnel will be included to allow maximum opinion variation including receptionists, front office managers, housekeeping and restaurant employees, office workers.

This research tries to utilize a *maximum variation sampling* which is a sampling technique whereby the researcher selects a few units for the study with the view to maximize the diversity of collected opinions relevant to the research questions. The technique was chosen since it provides a greater understanding of phenomena, and allows to study a topic from all angles and find various perspectives of understanding the subject. As a result, several themes should appear at the end relevant to research questions. (Laerd dissertation & RWJF 2008)

5.3 Interview guide

The interview guide is a summary of the topics that a researcher wants to investigate and serves as a reminder for the research and data collection. A topic guide can range from a document summarising main research topics to the detailed document with categories and questions for each topic. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 114-122)

So, this thesis's guide consisted of interview *introduction*, where the interviewees were told about the study focus being CSR and what it is. Next were questions assessing *employees' awareness of own CSR* in their organization and questions assessing *their engagement in those* and questions to *find their opinion* on what could *improve their engagement* in CSR. The questions were created based on the theoretical assumptions about engagement and its creation, including theories, benefits of participation, interests, perceptions, autonomy of choice and communication methods as well as examples of IHG initiatives discussed above in theory chapters. The interviews were structured according to the following scheme below.

1. Introduction to Corporate social responsibility and employee engagement
2. Assessing awareness of CSR presence in employee's workplace
3. Assessing employee's engagement in CSR
4. Finding employee's perceptions on how to improve their engagement

Next, the following questions were formed according to the themes above.

1. What do you think about responsibility in a hotel?
2. Could you tell of any responsible initiatives your brand does?
3. Would be any of them meaningful for you to participate in?
4. In which activities can you participate in your hotel?
5. What kind of benefits would motivate you to participate more actively in them?
6. Would you have time for the activities?
7. How could your personal interests be integrated into CSR?
8. Is someone moving forward the idea of "behaving responsibly"?
9. Would it be possible for you to discuss CSR activities with others?
10. What is your preferred communication method for responsible activities?
11. Can you see any reminders on how to behave responsibly?
12. If you could choose from a few CSR activities, would you participate more actively?
13. What would make you extra positive about the whole thing?

The interview questions were agreed upon with the thesis supervisor. Using study cases was as chosen as a research strategy since it allows to study existing events in detail and explain the workings between them. More, the focus is on an individual phenomenon within a specifically chosen context. In other words, "The case study approach works best when the researcher wants to investigate an issue in-depth and provide an explanation that can cope with the complexity and subtlety of real situations". When choosing case

studies, one must do it based on the significance of the elements for the study phenomenon in a case. (Denscombe 2007, 36-40) That is, engagement is the issue of interest to be studied in-depth in chosen hospitality establishments.

Due to the complex nature of engagement, this thesis utilizes *several engagement theories* to balance different approaches to engagement and study the phenomenon in depth. Interview questions were created based on engagement theories. That is done since the author assumes that one theoretic perspective cannot fully address the complex engagement concept. Also, in doing so, the author has created a detailed **interview guide** to elicit all relevant information on engagement. Lastly, the author tried to keep questions opened- ended and non-leading.

IHG hotel group has been chosen for the study purposes since this hotel group has global sustainability practices in place and respects and implements responsible initiatives in various forms. Holiday Inn hotels were chosen for the study since, while both adhering to global practices, there are enough Holiday Inn hotels in Helsinki, Finland where research takes place.

5.4 Collecting and analysing data

The actual data collection started in September 2019. Originally, there has been a little challenge with gaining access to research participants. First, they were contacted via email and social media, yet the approach did not yield needed results. Next, the researcher decided to pay individual visits to interesting hotels and offer them to participate in the research study personally. Likely, many hotel employees were happy to participate in this undergraduate research and the interviews took place at hotels' lobbies. Yet, the sampling strategy had to be reconsidered.

As was mentioned above, data collection was done in two countries: Spain and Finland. In summary, all data was collected within 2-2,5 weeks. More, interview answers were recorded right away in Webropol so that it could be possible to access data easily. Having collected data, the researcher decided to use computer software for qualitative data analysis to help analyse interviews. [NVivo software](#) was used for data analysis.

When analysing data in NVivo, an *Inductive coding approach* was used, whereby a researcher approaches the data without pre-conceived ideas and pays attention to emerging themes, summarises them to bigger concepts and develops a theoretical story. An inductive approach was chosen due to its ability to extract an array of theoretical ideas and

because the engagement phenomenon needs to be explored thoroughly. (Wang & Park, 2016, 214-216)

5.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two important concepts when it comes to conducting research of any kind. Broadly speaking, reliability refers to the sustainability of research findings and validity refers to research correctness.

Reliability concerns the replicability of research results and whether the same results would be produced if research using similar methods would be repeated. The reliability of a study is achieved through careful research design, including the unbiased selection of participants, careful and thorough data collection and management, comprehensive data analysis and ensuring that data interpretation is supported by evidence. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 270-272)

The validity of research findings refers to the “correctness” or “precision” of the results. The internal validity measures if the researcher investigates what he claims to be investigating. (Arksey & Knight 1999 in Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 273)

External validation of research may use the “triangulation” to enhance research findings. Triangulation can be done in several ways. Denzin (1978 in Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 276) suggests *method triangulation* – when data is collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods, *triangulation of sources* – when data is collected and compared from observations, interviews, content analysis, and *theory triangulation* – when data is analysed from different theoretical perspectives and other. This thesis uses the triangulation of sources and theory triangulation. As an example, data is collected both through interviews, observation, content analysis of IHG written documents, and theory triangulation are used in applying several theoretical perspectives of employee engagement are to exam research findings.

6 Results

The chapter presents the study findings with the subsequent data analysis carried out in NVivo computer software for qualitative data analysis. The subchapters present findings amongst which are employees' perceptions and awareness of CSR, and engagement related themes such as interests, motivation, challenges, and positive feelings. Data is examined following the theoretical viewpoints on employee engagement discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis. Next, the empirical part of the thesis summarises the study findings by presenting key themes that are combined in bigger concepts. Finally, relationships between concepts are assessed and suggestions are created based on recurring patterns in data.

6.1 Overview of participants

Table 1 Below summaries data of 7 interviews conducted with employees of the hotel industry. Interviewees held various job positions. In total, 3 receptionists, 3 front office managers, and 1 guest relations were interviewed using a topic guide in Spain and in Helsinki, Finland. Further, 3 interviewees worked at the IHG hotel group in Helsinki and the rest represented various hotel groups in Spain.

Table 1. Interview participants

| Hotel Group | Position | Hotel | Country |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| Tahiti Playa Hotels & Suites | Front office manager | Hotel Tahiti Playa | Spain |
| GFH | Guest relations | Hotel Florida Park | Spain |
| H TOP Hotels | Receptionist, waiter | Hotel Royal Sun | Spain |
| Hotel Riviera | Receptionist | Hotel Riviera | Spain |
| IHG | Receptionist | Holiday Inn Expo | Finland |
| IHG | Front Office Manager | Holiday Inn Helsinki City Centre | Finland |
| IHG | Front Office Manager | Hotel Indigo Boulevard | Finland |

To remind, the main research question was *“How to ensure high employee engagement in work and related CSR activities of an organization?”* As the data show, the current state of employee engagement in CSR appears to be rather neutral. Main concepts drawn from employees' answers relate to employees' challenges, motivational factors, interests and positive feelings, and high awareness of CSR importance.

6.2 CSR perceptions and awareness

This subchapter will discuss employees' perceptions of sustainability and CSR related topics. As discussed in the theoretical part of CSR, its successful implementation will be influenced by positive views that employees have about CSR and the perceived meaningfulness of responsible actions that employees may have for their work.

Overall, employees stated that responsible conduct in the business including the tourism industry **is important and meaningful** when it comes to sustainability matters. The question "*What do you think about responsibility in a hotel?*" was asked to gather employees' general opinion. All 7 interviewees concluded that responsibility and sustainable operations in the hotel industry were important. Several reasons were highlighted, amongst which were references to facts that "sustainability has become a competitive advantage among hotel brands to attract more guests" and because it is "the factor that travellers value today when choosing a hotel". Figure 12 shows a summary of employees' opinions about sustainability and responsible conduct.

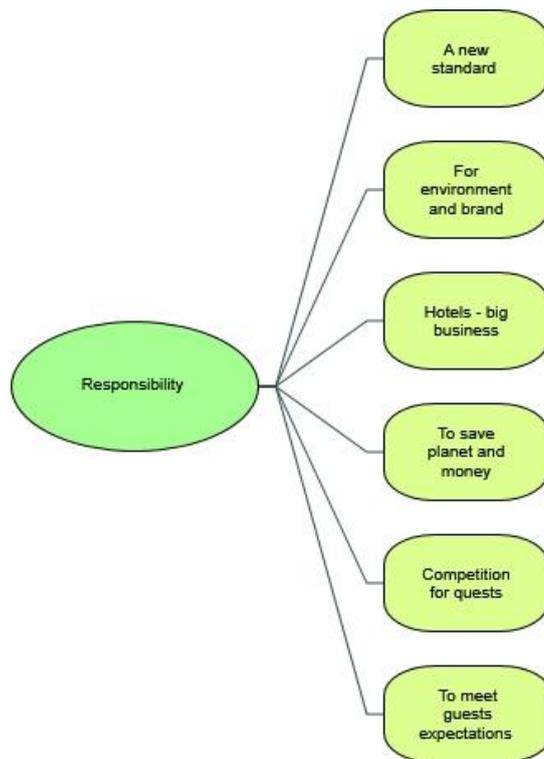


Figure 12. Employees' perceptions. (based on key-words analysis from interviews)

As seen in figure 12, employees considered sustainability initiatives were important because of the factors highlighted. They mentioned that responsibility has become a new standard, and a competitive advantage when it comes to attracting more guests. A few mentioned the importance of sustainable performance for brand and environment. Also,

interviewees indicated that sustainability is important since it helps to save the environment and reduce costs. Finally, sustainable conduct in hotels was thought to be important since the accommodation sector was big business. Below are a few quotes illustrating employees' opinions on why sustainability matters are important and meaningful.

*It's getting more and more important and soon all hotels will be more sustainable
We make sustainability with towels. When guests can use a towel several times.
It saves money and guests expect us to be sustainable. (Front Office Manager,
Tahiti Play, Spain)*

Responsibility, attending to clients and giving the best services are important because we are the face of the hotel. (Receptionist, Hotel Royal Spain)

It is important for our environment. (Guest relations, Hotel Florida park, Spain)

As seen from the quotations above, interviewees surely considered the study topic important and could provide examples of their thinking.

The question "Could you tell of any responsible initiatives your brand does?" accessed employees' general awareness of the responsible initiatives that were available for their hotels. Most of the interviewees were quite aware of the initiatives that their hotel used to address sustainability matters, which fell in 3 categories:

- Using sustainable materials
- Sorting, collecting, and reducing waste
- Lowering electricity and water consumption

Interviewees' answers were run through a word count tool, to see which initiatives were present and which accounted for a bigger part. Below figure 13 shows the word count of sustainable initiatives in participated hotels.

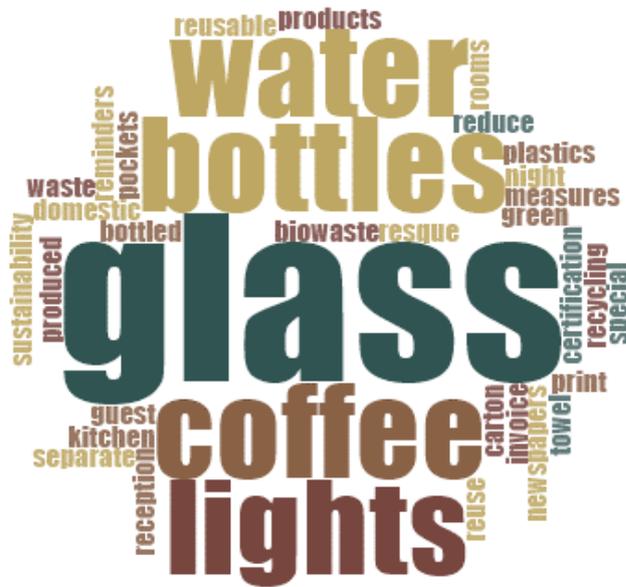


Figure 13. Word count of current initiatives

Considering the word count and content analysis, it is obvious that all interviewed hotels participated in a various extent in sustainable initiatives. The highest reference was made on having “glass material”, controlling “water usage”, reducing energy and water consumption, as “lights”, working with “bottles” and “coffee”. As an example, Holiday Inn Expo in Pasila used sustainably produced coffee and had glass bottled water. (observation) When asked to draw examples of the actual activities in which employees could participate, many options were mentioned.

An interviewee from Hotel Florida Park in Spain shared the following.

We have a special pocket that guests can take to the beach to collect waste. In the restaurant, we sort waste and have glass bottles. Premium rooms have special plastics bags for grocery needs. Guests can buy own reusable coffee cups from the lobby. Guest relations, Hotel Florida Park

Next, the examples of using sustainable material were highlighted by a receptionist from the Hotel Royal Sun and a manager from Hotel Tahiti Playa in Spain.

For deposit, guests can receive a “green card” at the reception for which they can take a glass cup to use during their stay. Receptionist, Hotel Royal Sun

We reuse towels when guests can use a towel several times. We have low consuming automatic lights, which turn on and off in the hotel outside area to save energy. Manager, Hotel Tahiti Playa

Another example, of sustainable materials mentioned, was by 2 employees of IHG group in Helsinki, Finland

“We recycle everything: equipment is second hand, second-hand chairs, hitting system water going around to save electricity.” Front office manager, Hotel Indigo Boulevard

“Recycle what we have don’t make mistakes, kitchen measures food waste, follows the usage of water and energy.” Front Office Manager, Holiday Inn Helsinki City Centre

6.3 Engagement assessed

As discussed above, one of the factors influencing employee engagement is the satisfaction of 3 needs being a task’s meaningfulness, employees’ availability to do the task and how safe they feel to do it. When asked “would be any of the initiatives meaningful for you to participate?” Interviewees concluded that it surely would for these reasons:

- To save the planet and money
- To compete for guests
- To meet guests’ expectations

These reasons highlight employees’ opinion that sustainable initiatives are valued for the environment and the tourism industry. Still, interviewees haven’t mentioned if they considered the possibility to benefit from CSR initiatives. That may suggest employees haven’t come to this conclusion yet, have not focused on it, or they may not have much to benefit from.

When assessed on the terms of availability to engage as “Would you have time for the activities?” Some employees agreed that they would have time for responsible initiatives. However, a few stressed that initiatives should be planned:

Yes, it should be planned in advance. I transmit to higher management what I see can be done differently, then they communicate from above to all levels about new policies. And employees should read instructions and sign. Manager, Tahiti playa

“Good to plan in advance. You must put extra time to explain these things to clients”. Receptionist, Hotel Royal Sun

So, employees may have a challenge when it comes to their “availability” since CSR

things should be planned well before its implementation and employees should have enough time to familiarize themselves and the guests.

In terms of the need for safety, on the question “Would it be possible for you to discuss CSR activities with others?” All employees gave positive answers. Additionally, the most preferred communication method was to talk with the management.

6.3.1 Challenges

Challenges can be one of the crucial themes when it comes to employees’ perceptions and engagement in adopting sustainable actions. Figure 14 shows the recurring themes, combined into 3 challenges.

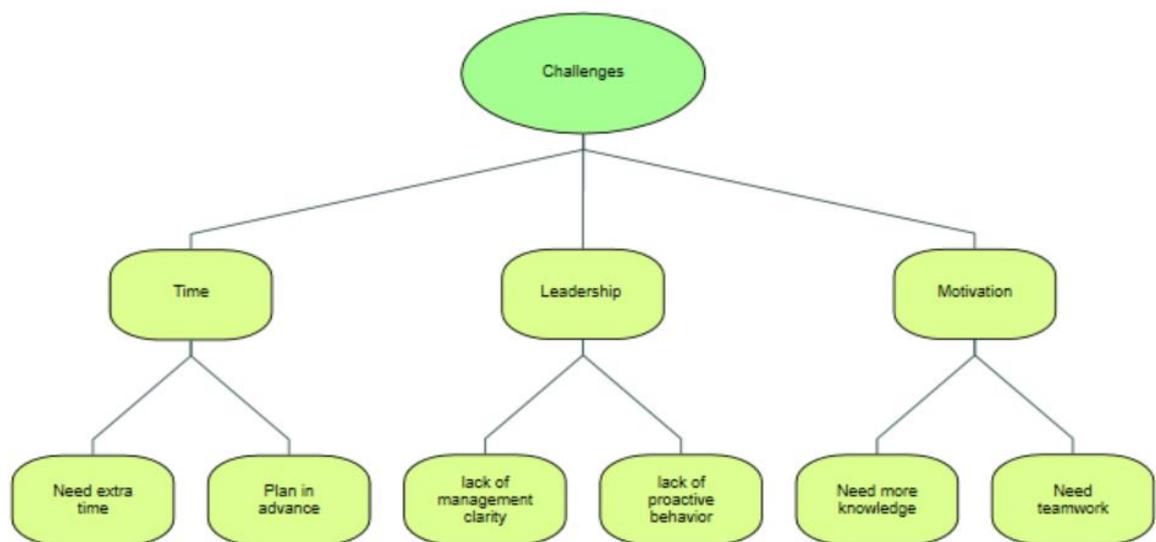


Figure 14. Challenges associated with engagement in CSR

Firstly, motivation seems to be one of the greatest challenges when it comes to CSR activities. Employees have expressed many ideas related to motivation and ways to improve it. Motivation has been identified as a crucial factor in employees’ answers about engagement since it tended to be present throughout data and had a relation to other themes such as employees Interests and positive feelings.

Shortly, employees would like to have more training in CSR matters and teamwork effort would need to have more leadership guidance, including clear standards on doing initiatives and what are the needed performance requirements.

Another challenge observed was that on the question Is someone moving forward the idea of "behaving responsibly" in the hotel? most of the respondents said "no" or that hotel brand would inform employees of possible actions. "Would it be possible for you to discuss CSR activities with others?" Got an affirmative response.

Finally, employees would need to have extra time, which they could use to learn and plan new activities. One of the factors mentioned referred to the employee's availability to engage in CSR actions. A few (3) said that initiatives should be planned, a couple of employees said that they would not have the time for extra activities, one reported that they would need to put extra time to explain these things for guests. (Receptionist, Hotel Royal Sun) These may suggest that, for an initiative to succeed, it should be agreed upon all employees beforehand and in a way that a person knows for sure, what is expected from him.

6.3.2 Interests, motivation, positive feelings

When asked "How could your personal interests be integrated into CSR?" Employees have provided many examples of how their interests could be applied to hotel sustainability. Amongst suggestions were having a joint activity for guests and employees, opportunities to gain new knowledge and work experience, receiving more training and various rewards including monetary rewards and establishing more recycling spots.

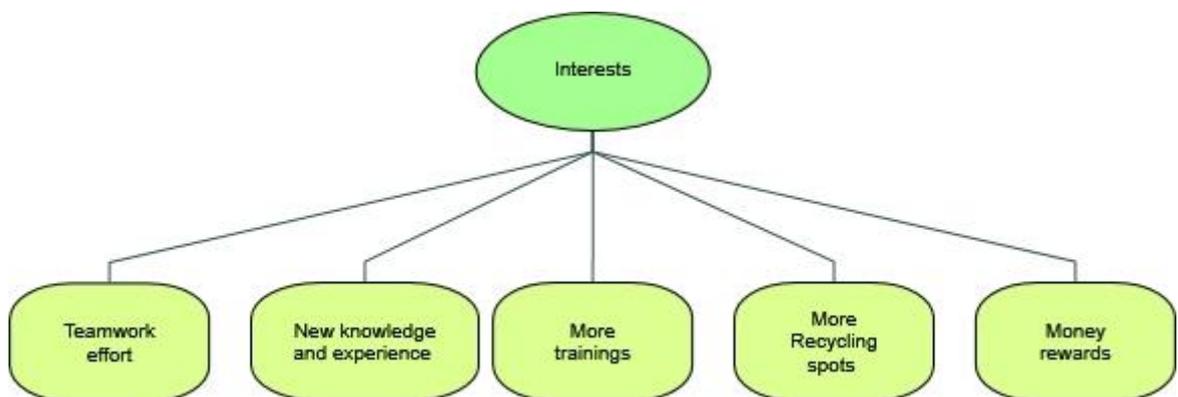


Figure 15 Employees interests in relation to CSR

As seen in figure 15, employees want to have more training in sustainability matters in hospitality. A wish to have "more training for personnel" supposes that employees are open to discuss CSR and want to receive extra information about it. Probably, after receiving more holistic induction to the topic, employees will become more

engaged in CSR. Additionally, it would be even more helpful to less informed about this topic employees to get to know practical information on how they could behave more sustainably.

Next, an interviewee suggested that he would enjoy having *“A day at the end of a season, when employees and guests all collect waste from the beach”* (Guest Relations, Florida park) That highlights the appealing nature of teamwork effort, whereby teammates get inspired by each other to achieve a common goal, in the case, towards making hotel operations more sustainable. Finally, one employee mentioned that he would become more engaged in CSR if he could receive *“more money, new knowledge and work experience”*, which he would not be able to receive otherwise. (Food & beverage employee, Hotel Royal Sun) In summary, it seems employees enjoyed the idea of putting their interest to work for sustainability issues. That may suggest that it could be one of the factors, determining their future engagement levels.

Then, interviews were asked *“What would motivate you to take more active participation in these initiatives?”* Several factors have been reported. Figure 16 shows various opinions.

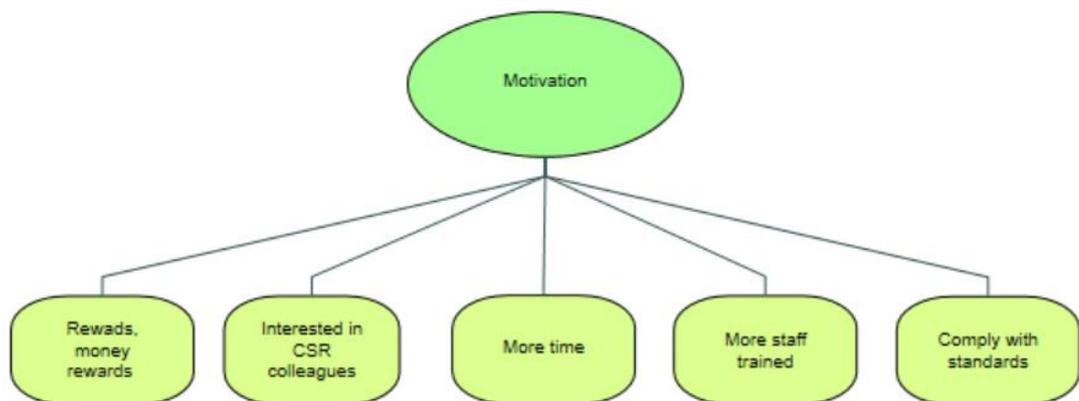


Figure 16. How to motivate employees

As seen in figure 16 above, among motivating factors were receiving rewards, having colleagues sincerely interested in sustainability topics, having more time and training opportunities, and a sustainability performance standard to comply with. Some of the interests can be included in employees’ motivation such as rewards, teamwork effort, and new knowledge. In summary, the answer to the question *“What would motivate you to take more active participation in these initiatives?”* comes down to *employees’ interests*.

Next, when asked *“What will make you extra positive about CSR?”* employees said that they would like to see that initiatives are actually working and receive feedback about their

performance. Also, that there could be proper training, colleagues happy to contribute and as well as rewards. Figure 17. shows factors that could increase employees' positive feelings about sustainable initiatives.

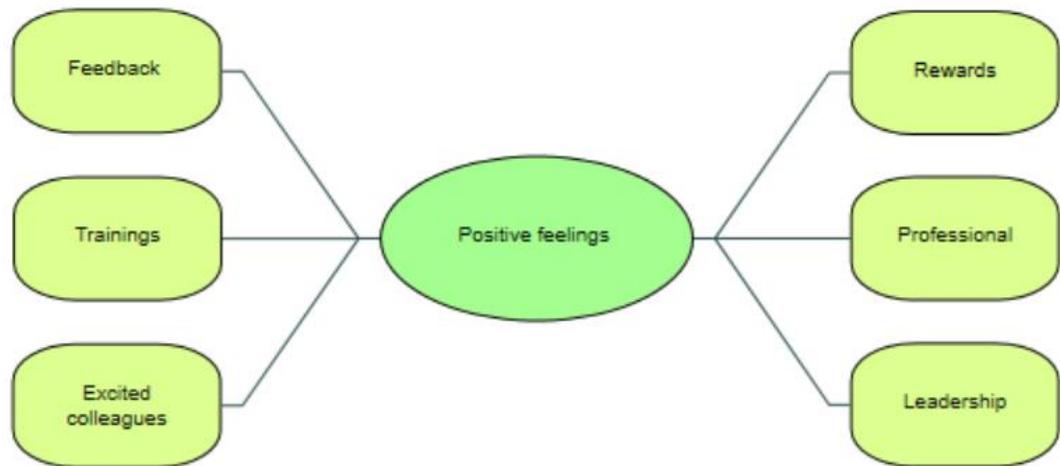


Figure 17. How to increase positive feelings of CSR

Below a few quotations illustrate employees thinking of how to make them more positive about CSR.

“To see that initiatives are actually working and that team members are happy to participate” Front Office Manager Holiday Inn Helsinki City Centre

“The fact that I am making a change and encourage other people to take part in important activities for the world” Guest Relations, Florida Park

“Proper training and people really knowing what they are doing.” Front office manager, Hotel Indigo Boulevard

As seen from the answers, employees have many suggestions for how their positive feelings towards CSR can be enhanced. This should be utilized to the degree available in order to increase their overall engagement.

6.4 Summary of findings

The summary explains what appears to be neutral employee engagement in interviewed participants and then suggests measures to improve current engagement levels in corporate responsibility subjects and sustainability topics in the context of lodging sector.

6.4.1 Low engagement

Current employee engagement in CRS is rather low, which is supported by findings. Main issues are related to motivation, lack of knowledge, leadership and team effort, low satisfaction of 3 needs as meaningfulness, safety, and availability, need for a resource as extra time.

Employees' perceptions of sustainability topics were in general positive. Many showed good awareness and general knowledge of CSR initiatives and why CSR is good for business and the world. Nevertheless, quite a few employees weren't well informed. A few others weren't interested. Curiously, all participants shared that sustainable performance was very important for the business, still didn't mention if they could personally benefit from initiatives. According engagement theory, employees assess a job task based on the meaningfulness of the task, which is specific for each employee. Employees were open to discussing this topic and have offered valuable insights. The engagement factors consisted of *motivative factors*, personal interests and the factors increasing positive feelings of CSR.

A few factors concerning needs satisfaction may contribute to feelings that employees have towards participating in sustainability initiatives. As discussed in the theoretical part of this thesis, psychological meaningfulness corresponded to the feeling of return on investment, which employees currently may not feel to the needed extent. Employees may not feel as if they receive enough return on a personal investment in CSR. For example, feedback on how the initiatives helped and rewards. Availability accounted for self-efficacy and having the needed resources. In interviewees' answers, it appeared in the need to have more knowledge, training and time. Similarly, a meaningful job provides an employee with feedback, growth opportunities, rewards, and recognition. All these factors were mentioned in employees' responses. Lastly, psychological safety includes a system of strong support, that employees as well may not feel. Employees desire to have more leadership guidance and peer support to create an environment conducive to trying and falling.

Employees lack an understanding of how they could personally benefit from engaging in sustainability-related activities. Also, employees' interests haven't been integrated yet in sustainable activities, on the other hand, employees identified very well why sustainability is important for the world and hotel business. Employees were quite enthusiastic when suggesting their interests which could be integrated with CRS of a hotel. Also, employees suggested that they would like to receive more feedback and recognition on their responsible performance. Secondly, low engagement can be due to the lack of management involvement to ensure coordinated efforts and set clear expectations of the desired behaviour. Also, employees would like to have good team spirit and common effort when it comes to doing CSR tasks.

Then, low engagement can be due to issues with motivation, the main challenges relate to employees' **motivation, need for leadership, and time**. On the other hand, various **interests and positives feelings** of CSR appeared to be factors that would improve the engagement of employees. Figure 18 shows the possible interplay between these factors when it comes to engagement in CSR.

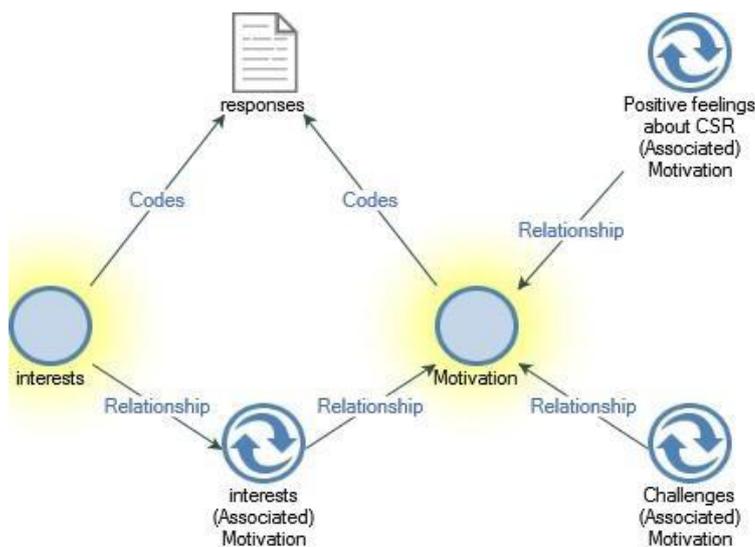


Figure 18. Possible relationships (Analysis based on interviews using NVivo software)

Figure 18 shows how the themes link to each other. As such, positive feelings and employees' interests in CSR are related to their level of **motivation**. **Employees' motivation is also linked to** current challenges with CSR. **Challenges** were one of the themes that emerged from interviewees' answers. There appear to be 3 challenges: *motivation, leadership and time*. Employees' interests, positive feelings, challenges regarding CSR are related and affect their motivation to engage. Current employee engagement appears to be low because of the low motivation and challenges discussed below.

6.5 Recommendations

Next will be suggested the measures for increasing employee engagement in sustainable performance in the hotel industry. As discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis and seen later in the findings, engagement is a complex concept. Therefore, to improve employees' engagement, one will have to take care of several matters. These will include working on improving employees' needs satisfaction in their work, such as adding their interests, motivational factors and eliminating challenges associated with doing sustainable activities.

Many employees were aware of the responsible initiatives in which their hotel participated and other basic practices. Still, it is possible that employees' engagement level would increase further if they received proper training, worked in a team agreed manner and got feedback, regarding how they have helped the world, and that got in return various rewards, new experiences, and knowledge. However, there seems to be a lack of an "agreed approach" of how to behave responsibly in a team agreed manner. Employees may not exhibit self-leadership qualities when it comes to discussing sustainability issues. Yet, employees agreed that they could openly discuss sustainability matters between themselves and the preferred communication method was through management.

The following strategies summarise the key points that could be improved to enhance employees' CSR interest and participation.

1. **Improve employees' motivation.**

Add interests, a system of peer support, rewards, and recognition establish leadership guidance and support, clear standards, provide opportunities for growth and learning in relation to sustainable agenda.

2. **Work on solving challenges.**

Work on motivation, plan activities in advance, allocate time, provide proper training, all teams should take part and encourage each other, receive feedback to see how their CSR efforts have helped, communicate with Management. Reminders in back office and signs in hotel facilities.

3. **Additional strategies**

Allocate time for sustainable initiatives, learning, etc. Establish communication practices regarding CSR performance. Enhance management and employee communication, facilitate proactive behaviour in employees.

Equally, to improve employee' engagement in CSR, it will be needed to involve leaders who will give more guidance, improve communication between employees, promote sustainable actions and encouraging them. Next, adding factors that will increase employees' positive feelings towards CSR will feasibly increase their engagement level. Lastly, the aspect of time should be addressed, by planning CSR activities in advance and allocating time devoted to studying and implementing CSR activities. Next, enhance employees' motivation by adding employees' interests in CSR programs such as providing more solid training, establishing team spirit and facilitate coordinated efforts, setting performance standards, giving feedback and recognition, providing

7 Discussion

Sustainable development in the tourism industry is vital. This thesis focused on the accommodation sector of tourism. Managing employees' engagement and perceptions is an important part of implementation of the sustainability agenda since employees' attitudes and perceptions may influence the implementation process of sustainable actions. As discussed in the theoretical part, engagement is complex, and the results confirm that employee engagement may occur as a result of several factors. These include theories on the needs-satisfying approach, the job demands-resources model, role of the positive emotions and interests, and social exchange theory whereby employees should have warm relationships with leaders and colleagues.

The results indicate that employee engagement factors are indeed important in the creation of employee engagement. Employees' awareness of CSR may have a higher relevance when it comes to the knowledge on how to contribute to being more sustainable. There is a relationship between employees' motivation, interests, positive feelings, and challenges. It appears that employees' motivation to engage in sustainable activities would be positively influenced by the factors of interests and positive feelings.

It can be so, that employees' *motivation to engage in more CRS actions would increase if employees' interests and positive feelings of CSR initiatives increased and if challenges could be solved first*. As mentioned above, interviews were structured around the topic of engagement into CSR and how to improve employee engagement. The introductory question "What do you think about responsibility in a hotel" and was meant to collect employees' general opinions on CSR. Overall, all respondents agreed that responsibility in a hotel is important. Among the factors were opinions that responsible operations have become a new standard, there is a competition between hotels to attract guests, who value sustainable hotel solutions amongst other factors of choosing a hotel.

On the other hand, challenges tend to undermine employees' motivation and as a sequence engagement in sustainable performance. More, the theme "*training*" repeats in employees' *interests, motivation, and positive feelings*. Theme "*exited in the topic colleagues*" as well is present in employees' interests, motivation, and positive feelings. Rewards also run through all themes. Therefore, it can be argued that individual training, working in a team agreed manner, and receiving recognition in terms of rewards are three crucial engagement factors in interviewees in relation to CSR.

Challenges concerned motivation, leadership, and time. Although many employees were quite aware of the importance of CSR in tourism and the world, the motivation can be improved significantly. Employees may not perceive engaging in CSR activities psychologically meaningfully since they may not be getting enough satisfaction and feedback, opportunities for growth, and rewards. In terms of psychological safety, the current organizational climate may not be supportive enough to CSR engagement since employees don't receive peer and social support. Interviewees would like to receive more support from the leader when it comes to CSR efforts. In the end, working on the challenges will be a crucial part of improving employee engagement in CSR.

Nevertheless, while many employees expressed good knowledge of why a hotel should operate sustainably, they might not be highly enthusiastic when it comes to engagement in CSR. Most of the participants were aware, yet a couple of interviewees were not. One employee was rather unsure about the topic and expressed her opinion as it is "Not my responsibility". Still, most of the employees were open to discussing sustainability topics in the hotel business, and all agreed on the opinion that it was important for the business and planet. Employees as well very interested in the idea of improving CSR participation and adding their interests and increasing positive feelings about it.

In summary, the results confirm the existing theories on engagement, amongst which some of the theories explain results better than the others. Although employees' awareness of the sustainability topic was rather decent in most of the interviewees, it was not the greatest factor accounting for engagement. Instead, the theories of employees' needs, resources, social exchange, and positive appear to have more weight in this context.

Next, the methodological choice and the sampling strategy was affected by the need to correct data collection procedures, when it was not working as had been planned. Nevertheless, final interviewees represented two countries, which was an alternative that yielded informative answers. Though in both countries' employees very aware of the importance of sustainability topics, engagement level could be improved in both countries. Finally, due to the study sample being relatively small, the research may not be easily generalizable. Again, the aim of the study was to obtain informative opinions, and not reach any big number of participants.

8 Conclusion

This research aimed to find factors creating high employee engagement. Based on the qualitative research performed, a few factors creating employee engagement in relation to CSR in the hospitality industry have been identified. The results suggest a holistic approach to the main research question “How to ensure high employee engagement into work and related CSR activities of an organization?”

First and foremost, there is a need to motivate employees to participate in sustainable actions. This should be done by adding employees' interests, positive feelings, and work-related needs into CSR practices. Also, challenges associated with doing CSR should be addressed. Employees' interests and challenges were directly related to their level of motivation. In summary, the current level of employee engagement in CSR appears to be low because of the current motivation and other factors.

Next, although results showed that many employees had a high awareness of the importance of CSR, a few might not. Likewise, a few interviewees expressed the need to have more training about “how to do things”. Therefore, employees could benefit from becoming aware of the clear instructions on doing sustainable actions. Employee engagement may occur as a result of several factors such as high employees' motivation, interest in the topic, awareness of the importance and knowledge of how to do things, presence of team effort and support of leadership, absence of challenges.

Overall, the research was beneficial for the author, since it gave an opportunity to explore a crucial topic, that has not been explored extensively before. Therefore, there were many choices to consider of which angle to come to the issue. There has been an abundance of available theoretical perspectives on the subject, which appeared to complement each other. As turned out, they surely did which confirmed the notion that engagement is indeed a complex human construct.

Future research could study more about how engagement factors should align, and if some of the factors have higher importance than the other. It could as well include a bigger sample and compare how different countries may prioritize different factors. Generally, this research identified that the issues of engagement were present, some of the factors that may account for engagement level and employees' perceptions towards sustainability matters.

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