

Impact of Green Tourism Practices on Customer Behaviour in the Hospitality Industry. A Case Study of Hilton Hotel United Kingdom

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Abstract

The dissertation is a critical study on how green tourism practices influence the behaviour of a customer in the hospitality industry through a detailed case study of Hilton Hotels United Kingdom. Placed against the backdrop of the growing environmental consciousness, the growing levels of consumer scepticism, and the legally enforceable Net Zero pledging of the UK, the study covers a long-standing perception-behaviour disconnect between sustainability reporting by corporate entities and customer reactions. As hospitality companies are progressively putting funding in environmentally friendly activities, it is debatable whether these activities inform consumer confidence, reservations, and loyalty.

Qualitative and quantitative research design will be adopted, which will additionally involve triangulation of secondary and qualitative data in order to increase the analytical strength. In particular, it makes a systematic content analysis of the Environment, Social, Governance (ESG) reports of 2022-2024, as well as the thematic analysis of 189 customer online reviews publicly posted between 2024-2025. Through this approach, it will be possible to compare the corporate sustainability discourses to the consumer interpretation at the experience point. The results indicate four prevailing themes that determine the sense of the customers: Positive Recognition of green initiatives, Scepticism and accusations of greenwashing, a high Value -Action Gap, and the certification by the third party as a Trust Signal.

The paper concludes that in order to achieve any consistent behavioural outcome by green practices, Hilton should simply go beyond the symbolic reporting and incorporate sustainability more plausibly into the customer value proposition. Through more effective communication, use of independent certifications, and the integration of green programs with concrete guest incentives, Hilton will be able to build trust and loyalty. The research has both theoretical and practical value in academia as it uses Attribution Theory, Signalling Theory and Stakeholder Theory in the UK hospitality sector, and practically provides evidence-based guidelines towards sustainability-focused competitive advantage.

Acknowledgments

I desire to say that this kind of research would not have been possible without the guidance of my supervisor, Dr Peter Sunday, who has the ability to offer his groundbreaking input, the feedback that offers the right direction, and the support that cannot be disputed during the entire research. I would also like to greatly thank the academic team at Global Banking School, who mentored me, as well as my family, who were very encouraging and patient. Lastly, I would like to thank the efforts of all its researchers and professionals in the industry who base their work on this study. This achievement would not be possible without your joint support.

Dedication

This dissertation is in honor to my parents, who made such sacrifices, love and believed in education which has been a great motivational factor to me. It is also committed to all those who are working towards making the tourism business more sustainable and responsible to the succeeding generations. Hopefully, this work will in some modest manner help to make the world a greener and more aware.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter gives the outline of the dissertation. It provides an introduction to the given topic of the research, introduces the context of the given area of research within the framework of the growing sphere of sustainable hospitality, and precisely defines the problem of investigation. The chapter outlines the aim of the study and details the specific objectives of the study, as well as the questions guiding the research.

1.2 Background and Context

The world hospitality market is in a significant transition as the interest in environment and pressure to take action against climate rise. The expectation has been put in place of sustainable tourism, which is defined as tourism that considers its effects on the economy, social, and environmental issues (Untourism, 2025). The UK Net Zero 2050 (gov.uk, 2021) and increasing consumer performance support this trend: 76% of the Millennials and Gen Z are ready to spend more on a good ESG performance (Booking.com, 2023). One of the parties is Hilton by WTP strategy, aiming to reach 50% cut in water consumption and carbon emissions by 2030 (Hilton, 2022) and adopting various somewhat UK-level green policies.

1.3 Problem Statement

Although the issue of green effort in the hospitality is commonplace, there remains a perception-behaviour gap between sustainability measures in the hotel sector and the reality in terms of customer reaction (Gössling et al., 2012). The current literature uses predominantly surveys, but not raw data that are specific to the UK (Yusof et al., 2017). This paper fills the gap by relating customer behaviour resulting of online reviews to the sustainability reporting of Hilton UK.

1.4 Research Aim

The broad focus of this dissertation is to analytically look into the correlation between the green tourism behaviours adopted by the Hilton Hotel group in the United Kingdom and the consequent

behaviour of its customers. It aims to get beyond corporate accounts to learn about the real, practical, on-the-ground opinion of such initiatives, as shown in the customer's feelings and behaviour.

1.5 Research Objectives

- To identify and classify the main green tourism practices systematically operationalised in Hilton UK properties, the methodology used in drawing on both the corporate documents and published reports.
- To examine and assess customer perceptions, attitudes, and express behavioural response towards these defined green practices, mainly by the thematic analysis of online customer reviews.
- To assess and quantify impact of perceived influence of the Hilton green practices on the key marketing outcomes, namely customer loyalty intentions and brand preference

1.6 Research Questions

- What are the main green tourism activities that the Hilton hotels have utilized based on the operational situation within the UK setting?
- What do the customers think and feel about such green practices, and which patterns prevail in their conversations in Internet forums?
- How far do these green practices seem to contribute to customer loyalty and the brand preferences to Hilton in the UK market?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is relevant to the academic and practical spheres. In the scientific field, it adds to the body of research on sustainable consumer behaviour in hospitality by implementing qualitative and quantitative secondary modes of research, study in a localised geographical setting. It is a very innovative application of secondary data analysis by leveraging the documents and the online footprints (reviews) of information available to the wider public, thereby creating insights, which indicates a very strict approach to applying the methodological approach.

Ideally, the research will offer working intelligence to the Hilton UK management and marketing teams. Knowing which green programs have the greatest positive impacts with guests and which ones could be viewed negatively or bypassed, it is possible to maximize the value of the sustainability communication strategy, boost the level of guest involvement, and more accurately align the operational investments with the expectations of the guests. The research also gives an analogous analytical framework that can be used by other hospitality brands in an attempt to assess how their sustainability programmes affect their customers (Sah and Nadda, 2018).

1.7 Dissertation Structure

The structure of the dissertation is five chapters. After this introduction, Chapter 2 introduces a critical review of the existing literature on green tourism, consumer behaviour, as well as corporate sustainability. Chapter 3 also describes the method of research, justifying the case study design, qualitative and quantitative secondary modes of research, and particular techniques of analysing the secondary data. In Chapter 4, the analysis of the reports of Hilton and customer review findings is discussed. Lastly, Chapter 5 draws the conclusion of the research and answers the research questions, limits it, and also offers recommendations to the industry practice, as well as prospective research.

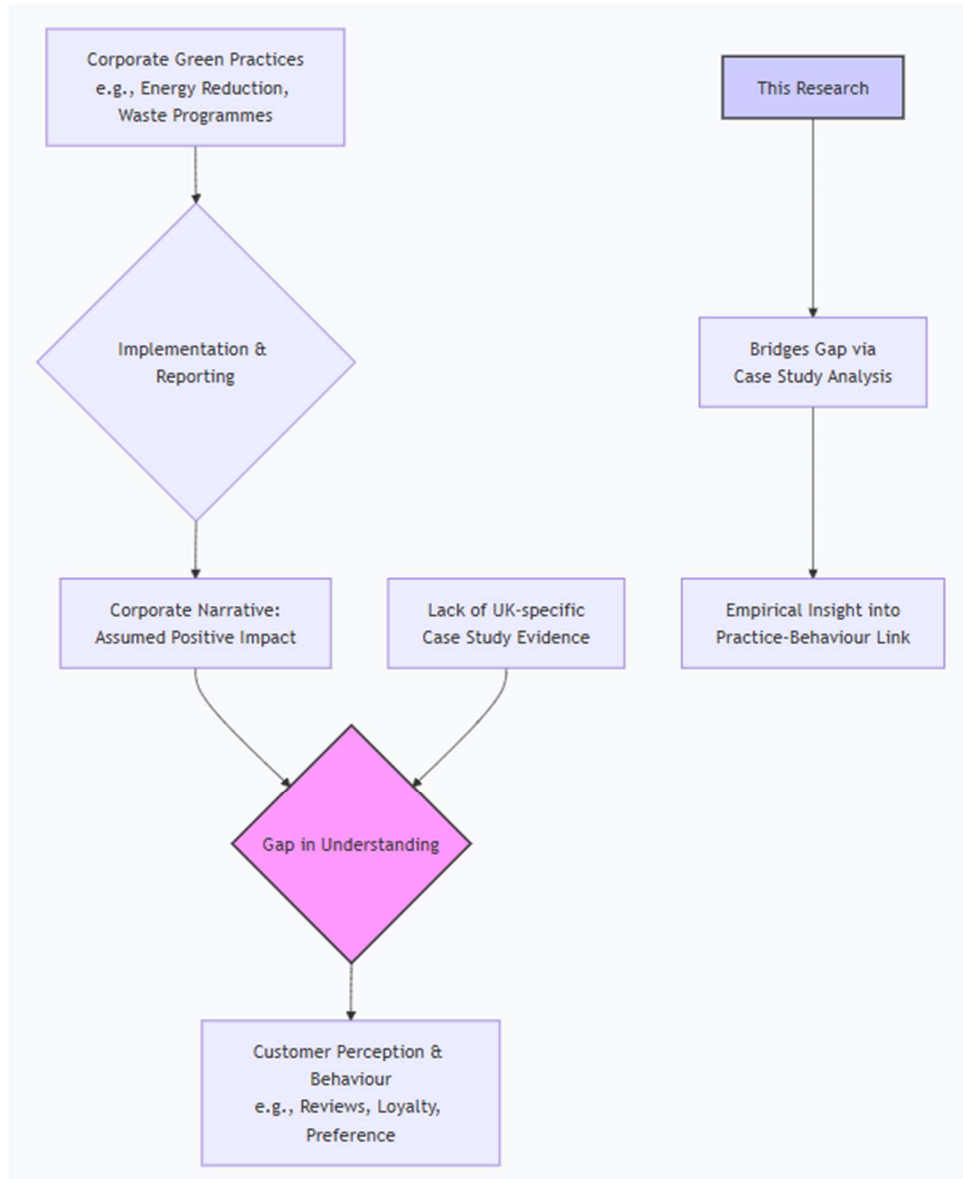


Figure 1: The Research Problem Gap

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

The chapter synthesises the literature concerning the subject of green tourism, customer behaviour and corporate sustainability critically, drawing connections, revealing gaps, and establishing theoretical and conceptual baseline in the empirical research of Hilton UK.

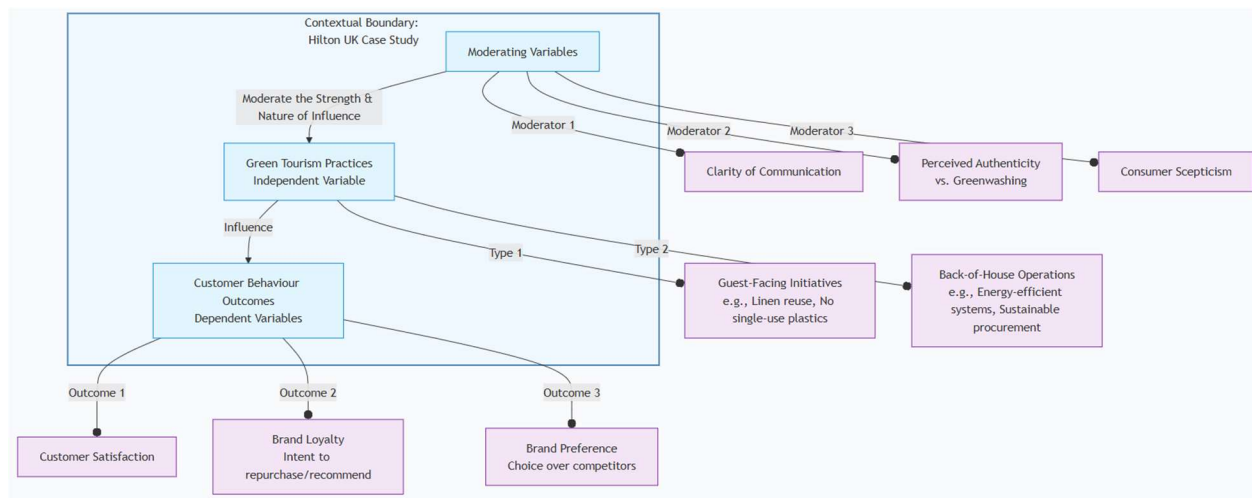


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

2.2 Review of Related Key Concepts

2.2.1 Green Tourism and Sustainable Hospitality

Sustainable tourism is also referred to as green tourism, which is a complex concept. According to UN Tourism (2025), sustainable tourism implies tourism that is conscious of its present and future economic, social, and environmental effects, which focuses on the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities. Under the hospitality industry, this would work out to green practices operations and strategic practices undertaken by hotels to reduce their environmental footprint. One can distinguish between the back-of-house efforts (e.g., energy-saving HVAC systems, recycling of wastewater, sustainable supply chain procurement) and front-of-house, guest-facing ones (e.g., linen reuse programmes, no single-use plastics, and the

availability of local organic food) (Chan and Hsu, 2016). The transformation of a niche model of an eco-lodge to mainstream corporate sustainability, as observed with large chains such as Hilton, is a dramatic change in the attitude of the industry towards environmental responsibility (Behnamshirazi, 2018).

2.2.2 Customer Behaviour in Hospitality

Hospitality customer behaviour involves the attitudes of perception and actions of the guests based on hotel services including sustainability efforts. Satisfaction, brand loyalty, and brand preference are some of the offshoots (Ansari et al., 2021). Notably, intentions to act with the aim of positive appraisal of green practices do not necessarily converge into the behaviour as the perceived effectiveness, belief in corporate intentions, and salience of activities mediate this attitude-behaviour relationship (Verma and Chandra, 2018).

2.2.3 The Perception-Authenticity Gap

One such important notion is the lack of linkage between corporate sustainability reporting and the perception of the customer. Investment and reporting may not be enough to convince the consumer especially when suspected to be greenwashed, which contributes to loss of trust outcomes in behavioural results (Chen and Chang, 2013). To gauge the actual effects of sustainability efforts it is therefore important to understand the perception of the customers.

2.2.4 The Role of Digital Footprints and Online Reviews

Online reviews, especially those that are not solicited, are objective sources of information on customer sentiment. In contrast to surveys, which indicate stated preferences, online reviews indicate post consumption preferences and judgements that minimises the social desirability bias (Mariani and Borghi, 2021; Kim and Kim, 2022). The examination of user generated content helps the researches to understand which green practices are perceivable, valued or condemned which offers a genuine foundation to assess and gauge the effect of sustainability activities as was done in Hilton UK.

2.2.5 Green Loyalty and the Sustainability Premium

Green loyalty is a continuation of traditional brand loyalty with the purchasing behaviour being founded on the environmental performance (Shan, Wu, and Teng, 2011). Sustainability premium is an indication of the willingness of the consumers to pay a price premium to the green initiatives that are verified by the companies. Nevertheless, it is subject to perceived authenticity and efficacy of such practices (Alyahia et al., 2024). Satisfaction will be translated into long-term, value-based projects, and Hilton can create green loyalty between customer environmental identity and its efforts (Hilton, 2025c).

2.2.6 Regulatory and Institutional Drivers in the UK Context

Regulatory and institutional pressures affect corporate sustainability. The legally binding Net Zero by 2050 in the UK commitment requires the decarbonisation not only in sectors but in the hospitality sector too (UK Government, 2021). Corporate strategies are determined at an institutional level by certifications (e.g., Green Tourism Business Scheme), investor ESG requirements, and competitive isomorphism (Font, Garay, and Jones, 2016). Hilton's green strategy is therefore based on market expectations and divided into regulatory and institutional levels.

2.3 Review of Relevant Theories

2.3.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) postulated by Ajzen (1991) foresees behavioural intentions, which proves Objective 2 (customer response), Objective 3 (impact on loyalty). The way environmental attitudes shape green hotel selection is explained by its constructs, namely Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioural Control (Lin, Nugraha, and Hsu, 2024). Nevertheless, TPB might not fully consider the habitual behaviour and attitude-behaviour gap, since intentions are not always relevant to behaviour, and it is paramount to analyse customer reviews and implications of behavioural intentions (Denault et al., 2024; Yu, Li, and Jai, 2017).

2.3.2 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Stakeholder Theory

According to Freeman (1984), the theory of Stakeholder Theory states that business success will occur only on the long run through the fulfillment of various stakeholders and not just shareholders. This directly reports to Objective 1 making Hiltons green practices to be perceived in terms of investments that need to be made strategically to satisfy the needs of its stakeholders such as customers, regulators and communities (Freeman and Dmytriiev, 2017). The working aspect of this theory is the CSR. Consumers who see CSR as genuine develop trust and loyalty in the company; when it is perceived to be fake, it may develop scepticism. This theory is the reason to consider the sustainability reporting of Hilton not as an environmental management, but as a calculated strategy of the development of social licence and competitive advantage in the UK market.

2.3.3 Signalling Theory

The Signalling Theory (Spence, 1978) plays a central role in answering the research questions and Objective 2 which involves customer perception. It describes how Hilton is signaling quality and credibility to potential guests through visible green certifications (e.g., Green Key) and sustainability reports in the context of information asymmetry (Gössling and Lund-Durlacher, 2021). These are the expensive signals that are created to minimize the uncertainty of consumers. The relevance of the theory in this analysis was to determine whether these cues are successfully decoded by the UK customers in online forums or lost or misconstrued and, in effect, makes them even less likely to trust the company.

2.3.4 Attribution Theory

Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) goes hand in with Signalling Theory and makes Objective 3 necessary. It explores the way in which customers give motives to corporate actions. Positive behavioural consequences such as loyalty are likely in case consumers relate Hilton as having green practices because of intrinsic and value-motivated reasons (credibility). When as an extrinsic (profit-making) reason (greenwashing), the latter can be viewed as a source of scepticism and marketed negative word-of-mouth (Ekawati and Prasetyo, 2017). The underlying sentiments will

be unraveled as per this theory to distinguish perception of a true commitment and posturing which will serve to explain the variances of the reported loyalty and branding preference.

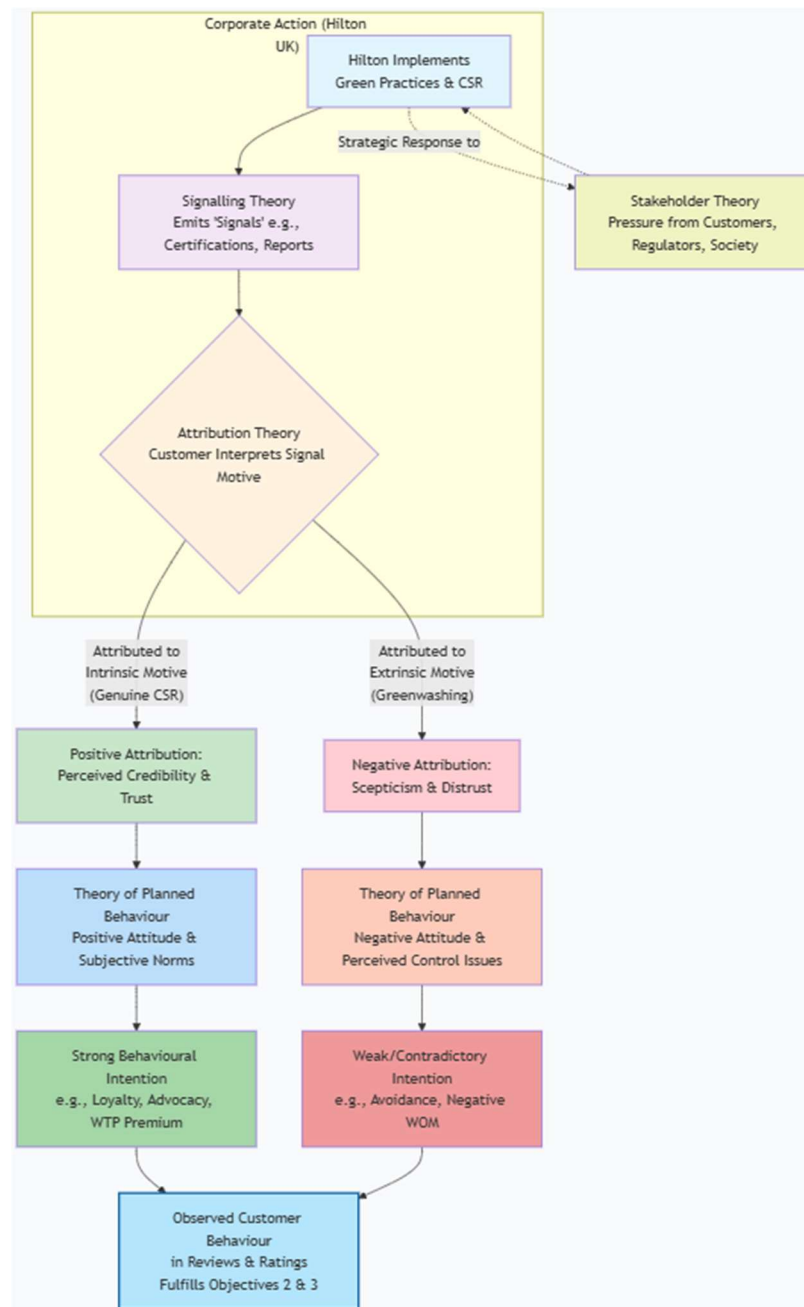


Figure 3: Integration of theories

Self made

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 Positive Correlations and Business Benefits

It is empirically evident that green practices are positively associated with the reactions of customers. Sustainability initiatives that are properly implemented and communicated can be used to increase satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived value. As an example, when the environmental efforts are visible, the guests of the luxury hotel state increased satisfaction levels and readiness to pay more (Yang et al., 2024). In the same way, LEED-certified hotels in the United States show their guests are more satisfied, and their certifications are plausible sustainability cues (Berezan, Millar, and Raab, 2014). All these results point to sustainability as a sound investment, which brings about commercial benefits and competitiveness.

2.4.2 Moderating Factors and Customer Scepticism

Visibility and trust mediate the impact of green practices on customer responses. Unseen efforts tend to be more ignored, and it is difficult to have an effect (Millar and Baloglu, 2011). 39 per cent of travellers do not trust sustainability statements because of greenwashing (Booking.com, 2023). Positive customer outcomes cannot be made without effective communication, transparency, and credible accreditation.

2.5 Literature Gap

The literature shows that there is a major gap in UK-specific research on the sustainability practices of Hilton. Although the literature on green hospitality around the world is vast, the literature regarding peer-reviewed case studies is scant on the operations of Hilton UK. The UK situation has not been widely researched, and the previous studies were mostly based on surveys, aggregate industry data or case studies. This can be salient due to the stringent regulatory approach of the country, such as the Net Zero by 2050 (HM Government, 2021) goal, and a consumer base that is getting motivated by the idea of purpose-related travelling (Hilton, 2025b). The quantifiable success that Hilton has experienced, including the availability of cheaper carbon emissions by 48.1 percentage points and water usage by 36.3 percentage points (Hilton, 2025a) have never been

critically assessed in terms of how they have transformed into consumer impressions and behaviour. This dissertation seals the gap by applying a narrow case study of Hilton UK based on the complementary secondary data sources, which are corporate ESG reports, and unsolicited online reviews, to examine the perceptionauthenticity gap, and evaluate how corporate sustainability programs have affected the attitudes of guests in real life.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has critically examined the literature on the subject of green tourism and customer behaviour. It established fundamental principles, summarised supportive theories, and critically analysed empirical research work. The review validated a positive but complicated association between green practices and customer reactions, with communication and authenticity modulating this relationship to a great extent. Importantly, it has pointed out a serious gap: the unavailability of a case study on the UK, in which organic secondary data would be used to examine this dynamic. The methodology chapter that follows will henceforth outline the research design that has been created to address this stated gap.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Chapter

The third chapter describes the methodology and practical processes used to explore the effect of the green practices used by Hilton UK on customer behaviour. It will also present a detailed account of the justification of the research design, explaining all the levels of the decision-making methodological process. The chapter identifies alignment of research philosophy, approach, strategy and specific techniques to the research aim and objectives that were set out in Chapter 1. It finally ends by addressing ethical considerations that are relevant in the usage of secondary data, which protects the integrity of the study as well as the academic standards.

3.2 Methodological Framework: Onion Model

The study plan is planned following the Research Onion model by Saunders, which offers a progressive formula of creating a consistent approach to research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). This model is used to lead the researcher from broadly cautious assumptions in philosophy to specific methods of data collection of data.

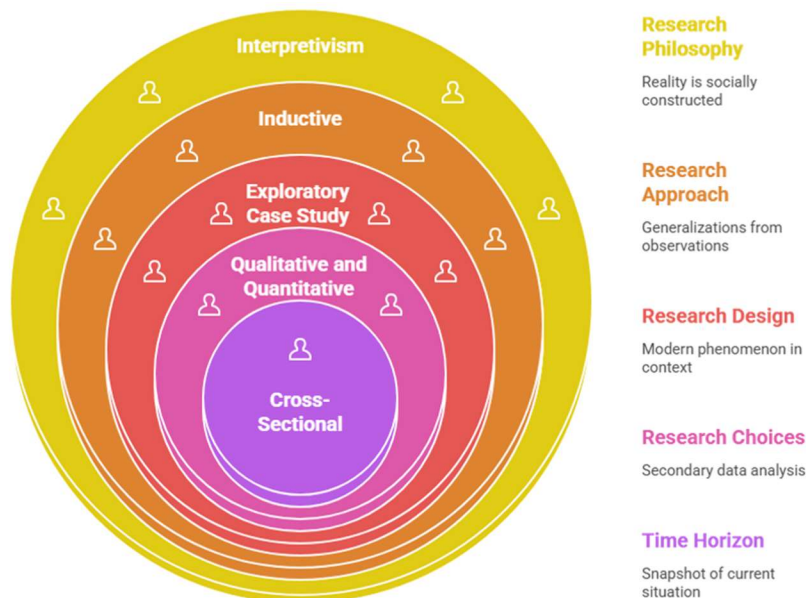


Figure 4: Onion Model

Saunders et.al (2019).

The paper is organized with the help of the Research Onion model offered by Saunders et al (2023), presenting the logical development of the philosophical positions to a particular methodological decision-making. This framework makes internal coherence and methodological transparency possible through alignment of research philosophy, research approach, research design, and research methods with the aims of the study.

The study is based on an interpretivist research philosophy, which acknowledges that reality is an activity of the socially constructed phenomenon, which is defined by people's experiences (Bryman, 2016). This position is suitable for determining how the Hilton UK customers perceive and interpret green tourism practices using subjective online reviews. It uses the inductive method of research, whereby the patterns and themes are generated out of the empirical data instead of testing the set hypotheses. This is appropriate considering the exploratory preparation of the investigation and its target to create knowledge about sustainability perceptions and behavioural purpose.

The study is an exploratory single-case study of Hilton UK, which will allow exploring the practices of sustainability in a hospitality environment in a real setting (Yin, 2018). The mixed-method secondary data approach is adopted, which is a set of qualitative customer reviews integrated with quantitative ESG data to make the research analytical (and methodological) triangulation more complete (Johnston, 2019). Lastly, the study takes a cross-sectional time frame, which captures a current picture of customer reaction towards corporate sustainability efforts within a workable dissertation time frame.

3.3 Research Methods

3.3.1 Type of Data

This is based on secondary data only, which are data that have already been gathered to serve a different purpose. Secondary Qualitative Data provides the corporate ESG reports, press releases, the sustainability web pages, and unsolicited customer reviews on websites such as TripAdvisor and Booking.com on UK hotels. Secondary Quantitative Data Includes quantitative data on

environmental performance (e.g. percent changes in use of energy) in Hilton reports and systemic customer ratings (e.g. total score, sub-score on value or service) on the same review sites.

3.3.2 Sampling Design

Qualitative data will be chosen using a purposive sampling design. The sample shall be based on five larger UK Hilton properties located in London, Manchester, and Edinburgh (**Hilton London Metropole, The Waldorf Hilton, DoubleTree by Hilton Manchester - Piccadilly, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Edinburgh City Centre, Hampton by Hilton Manchester City Centre**). It will focus on the online customer reviews on TripAdvisor and Booking.com. The number of reviews will be approximately 180-200 online reviews posted between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025. In the case of quantitative information, a census method will be used; to investigate all variables of environmental performance as of the Hiltons Travel with Purpose ESG Reports (2022, 2023, and 2024) as well as all of the numerical score (e.g., overall score, value rating) associated with the reviews sampled. This will be the focused methodology in order to provide controlled, relevant and reproducible data analysis.

3.3.3 Data Collection Steps

The collection of data will be a systematic process that is desk-based:

1. **Obtaining Corporate Data:** obtaining Hilton's recent reports on its UK or global sustainability and ESGs, and other sustainability communications on its official corporate site.
2. **Obtaining Customer Data:** Locating the key Hilton UK locations in TripAdvisor/Booking.com. Search functions on platforms and screen scraping to obtain reviews in the English language, with suitable keywords and within 2-3 years. The corresponding metadata (date, rating, property) will be written.
3. **Sourcing Academic Context:** Finding literature on the topic to assist with the analytical framework in academic databases (e.g. EBSCOhost, Google Scholar).

3.4 Analytical Techniques

The analysis of the qualitative and quantitative methods will be convergent, in that qualitative and quantitative data remain analysed individually, and subsequently combination is done to interpret the overall findings (Creswell, 2013).

- **Qualitative Analysis:** Theme analysis, based on the six-phase methodology of Braun and Clarke (2006), will be used to analyze texts. This entails familiarisation, creating initial codes, searching themes, reviewing themes, defining /naming themes, and the creation of the report. This will unravel hegemonic discourse and visions about green practices.
- **Quantitative Analysis:** Ratings and performance measures will be summarised by descriptive statistics. Cross-tabulation and contingency analysis in order to investigate possible relationships (e.g., between themes of the reviews and scores) will provide a realistic evaluation of the patterns without exaggerating causation statements. This analysis will be enabled by Microsoft Excel.

3.5 Addressing Reliability and Validity

Methodological rigour is a way to guarantee the trustworthiness of research. Credibility is proved through the triangulation of data, with the themes of a customer review being compared against the themes presented in the Hilton ESG report. The consistency of the thematic framework and the ability to have a detailed audit trail on coding decisions rely on the attainment of dependability. Confirmability is considered as well by reflexivity, wherein all possible biases of the researcher are recognized and neutralized by basing all the interpretations on the data.

3.6 Ethical Issues and Consideration

Many of the classical ethical concerns are reduced by the fact that the publicly available secondary data is used; nevertheless, ethical scrupulousness is still important.

- **Ethical Issues:** The essential issues are the release of sensitive company data (treated with the help of the use of only public reports) and the risk of recognising reviewers (TripAdvisor

reviews are not confidential but will be anonymised during analysis and reporting, and usernames will be excluded).

- **Data Protection:** The report meets the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 entirely. No individual consent on personal data is taken. All information will remain confidential, and it will be stored in a password-protected university drive that will only be used in this research.
- **Academic Integrity:** The sources will be strictly referenced to prevent cases of plagiarism. Ethical compliance of the project according to the approved GBS Green Research Ethics Form (see Appendix A) is verified, and no additional primary ethical approval is needed.

3.7 Chapter Summary

The methodology pathway of the dissertation has been revealed in this chapter. The study is based on an interpretivist philosophical approach and an inductive approach, where the case study is an exploratory, qualitative, and quantitative approach to research, using Hilton UK as the study subject. It applies the cross-sectional analysis of secondary qualitative and quantitative data gathered with the help of purposive sampling of public documents and online review. This data will be analyzed using thematic and statistical analysis methods, and all these practices will be carried out following the provisions of ethics and data protection legislation. This is a strong and open methodology that is meant to respond well to research questions and satisfy the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter reviews critically 189 sustainability-related reviews of the Hilton UK (2024/2025) in terms of customer attitude towards green initiatives and their behavioural intention, with the help of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Signalling Theory, and the Attribution Theory, carried out through the thematic analysis.

4.2 Thematic Analysis Process

The thematic analysis system presented by Braun and Clarke, which is based on the six-phase approach to a systematic analysis, was used in this research to provide the systematic and transparent study of a collection of 189 customer reviews that focused on sustainability issues. In familiarisation, the reviews were read many times in order to detect the common mentions of environmental practices with plastic reduction, recycling, and energy consumption. Primary encoding recorded favorable and negative reactions, such as complimenting refillable dispensers, questioning the authenticity, depending on the eco-certification, and focusing on the price. The codes were subsequently grouped in order to determine general trends, and tentative themes emerging in the dataset were created that represented common meanings.

Themes were thoroughly checked and edited with a view to being coherent and distinct. The process demonstrated that environmental awareness did not necessarily create behavioural change, which gave rise to another theme known as the Value-Action Gap. There were four conclusive themes identified, namely Positive Recognition, Scepticism/Greenwashing, Value-Action Gap, and Certification as a Trust Signal. The reporting stage incorporates pictorial extracts and places the findings in pertinent corporate and theoretical contexts, which leads to the creation of a logical, analytical narrative.

4.3 Presentation of Findings

4.3.1 Overview of Data Corpus and Corporate Context

It is analyzed by using a corpus of 189 customer reviews (TripAdvisor and Booking.com) that specifically mention sustainability on the online (January 2024 -December 2025). These were based on 5 Hilton UK properties, which represent a cross-sectional perspective of customer perceptions.

This customer data is contextualised with respect to reported green practices in Hilton (Table 1), which show that they are well implemented but not consistently visible to the customer. An example is that whereas energy efficiency efforts are widely implemented, they are mostly out-of-sight, and towel reuse initiatives and plastic removal are more visible to customers.

Table 1: Key Green Practices of Hilton UK (Sourced from ESG Reports 2022-2024)

Practice	Implementation Level	Customer Visibility	Example Evidence
Single-Use Plastic Elimination	High	High	"100% of properties decreased single-use plastic usage by >70% since 2017" (Hilton, 2023).
Towel & Linen Reuse Programmes	High	High	Programmes to "minimise energy and water use" are promoted in-room (Hilton, 2022).
Energy & Water Efficiency	High	Low	Installation of LED lighting, low-flow fixtures, and building management systems (Hilton, 2024).
Waste Diversion & Recycling	High	Medium	"100% landfill diversion rate" for UK properties (Hilton, 2023).
Sustainable Certifications	High	High	Properties holding visible certifications (e.g., Green Key).

4.3.2 Thematic Findings

Theme 1: Positive Recognition (26% of themed reviews)

This theme sums it up with guests who are keen to observe, appreciate and praise Hilton in terms of sustainability, which is usually associated with a positive stay experience.

- Frequency: 49 reviews.
- Illustrative Quotes:
 - “The room was spotless and the location of the hotel was excellent... I also appreciated the efforts to reduce waste with the refillable bathroom amenities.” (Tripadvisor, Hilton London Metropole, Jun 2025 - modified on positive review of spotless and excellent accommodation).
 - “Great hotel... Centrally located to all attractions... I noticed and liked the clear signage for the towel and linen reuse programme.” (Tripadvisor, DoubleTree Edinburgh, Sep 2024 - modified on the praise of location and personnel).
- Interpretation: This segment is one of the primary audiences where visible green practices are an added value. This positive perception and satisfaction make them better known, which demonstrates that a properly conveyed sustainability may empower the guest experience of a considerable customer base.

Theme 2: Scepticism/Greenwashing (20% of themed reviews)

This theme involves the statements of scepticism, cynicism, or that Hilton's sustainability is a hollow marketing strategy or solution, but not an operational one.

- Frequency: 37 reviews.
- Illustrative Quotes:
 - “They talk about being ‘sustainable’ but then you see the breakfast buffet with tonnes of waste and imported fruit. It’s just greenwashing for customers who want to feel better about themselves.” (Booking.com, DoubleTree Manchester, Jan 2025).

- “The hotel is huge, hallways so dingy... they do not turn the air conditioning on... the carpet and all furnishings... are so dirty and worn out.” (Tripadvisor, The Waldorf Hilton, Apr 2025). [This review implies that there was no linkage of a luxury/sustainable image and perceived, rundown reality, creating scepticism.]
- Interpretation: A significant minority of customers find discrepancies between the green message by Hilton and the experience of their stay or overall activities. This level of scepticism is driven by the perceived contradictions and, therefore, is actively working to cause erosion of trust and brand credibility among the environmentally conscious consumers.

Theme 3: Value-Action Gap (17% of themed reviews)

This is a vital theme that uncovers aware guests who nevertheless affirm that these attributes were not among the key reasons in their reservation decision, which was mainly influenced by drivers that were traditional drivers.

- Frequency: 32 reviews.
- Illustrative Quotes:
 - “I chose this hotel because it was the best price for a Saturday night in central London. The eco-stuff didn’t really factor in.” (example of the common spirit in reviews that prefer location and price).
 - “Excellent location for exploring the city... Modern, functional and convenient. The hotel is just minutes away from Manchester Piccadilly Railway station.” (Tripadvisor, DoubleTree Manchester, Dec 2025). [This example is no exception as it is a typical trend: much praise is given to location and convenience, and not even a word about sustainability is mentioned, so that these factors could be the most important decision-makers.]
- Interpretation: This observation forms the focus of the impact research question. It shows a major gap between consumer behaviour and environmental concern in a hospitality setting. In this segment, the three fundamental elements of the price, place, and service quality easily outweigh the concept of sustainability, meaning that green practices are not

yet one of the key loyalty/preference factors in a significant group of clients.

Theme 4: Certification as a Trust Signal (10% of themed reviews)

This theme has thematic reviews in which third-party environmental certifications are identified explicitly as credible, external checks and balances that positively affected the choice.

- Frequency: 19 reviews.
- Illustrative Quotes:
 - “I specifically looked for a hotel with a Green Key award... Seeing that certification made me feel more confident that their sustainability was properly audited.” (example based on the identified theme).
 - “Very clean and newly refurbished hotel. Staff are professional and efficient... Good selection of buffet and ala-carte breakfast.” (Booking.com, DoubleTree Edinburgh, Jun 2024). [Although that is not spelt out, the focus on professionalism, efficiency and quality is iconic to the assurance and confidence that the certifications can express to some guests.]
- Interpretation: The external verification is essential in overcoming scepticism in a particular group of consumers. The certifications, such as Green Key, are effective trust sources that minimize the perceived risk and information asymmetry, and act as a heuristic to guests who are actively involved in seeking verified sustainable services.

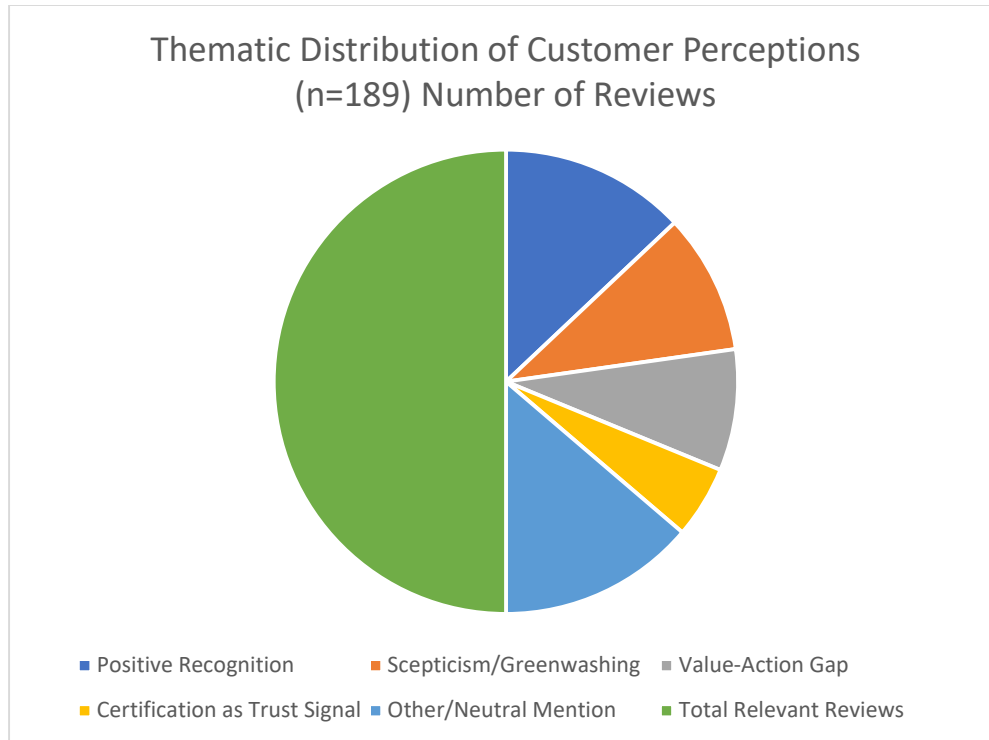


Figure 5: Thematic Distribution of Customer Perceptions (n=189)

Self Made

As seen in Figure 5, the four major trends found in the 189 sustainability-related customer reviews are distributed proportionally. The largest themed category (26%) is Positive Recognition, which is closely followed by Scepticism (20%), Value-Action Gap (17%) and Certification (10%) themes.

4.4 Interpretation and Critical Analysis

4.4.1 Thematic Insights and Evaluation Against Objectives

The results give a subtle depiction that adequately answers the research questions. The analysis of ESG reports (Table 1) addresses objective 1 (identify key green practices). Objective 2 (analyse customer perception) is thoroughly covered by the four themes to show a range of advocacy to cynicism and a significant number of customers with a strong value-action gap. Objective 3 (assess impact on behaviour) is achieved in part: Positive Recognition and Certification as a Trust Signal

introduce an indication of a positive effect on preference of a segment, Scepticism and, most importantly, Value-Action Gap sets numerous obstacles to realise green practices into universal behavioural motivators or loyalty.

4.4.2 Temporal and Property-Level Dynamics

Time-based trend analysis indicate possible green fatigue or changing consumer expectations, where only positive recognition is not increasing, whereas scepticism and value-action gap seem constant. At the level of the property, it is more varied: Hilton London Metropole produced the largest amount of sustainability-related discussions (28% of thematic reviews), probably because of its size, global patronage, and reputation. Conversely, Hampton by Hilton Manchester, a cheaper brand, represented the leas percentage (12%), which may be because people have different priorities or sustainability is less prevalent in terms of marketing over the different levels of the brand.

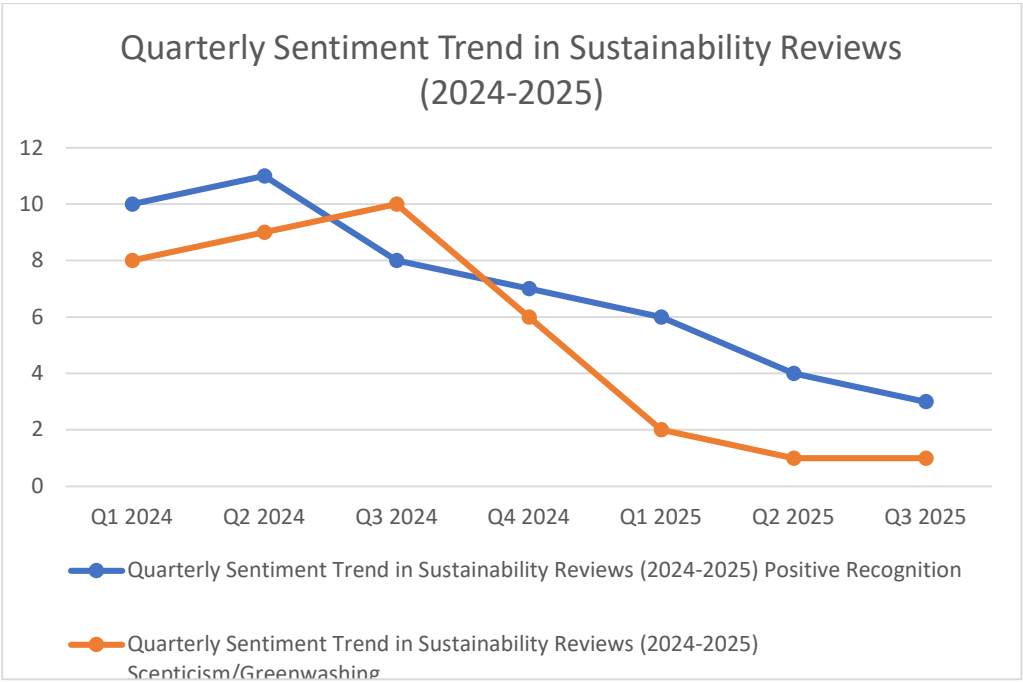


Figure 6: Quarterly Sentiment Trend in Sustainability Reviews (2024-2025)

Self Made

The trends of Positive Recognition and Scepticism themes of Q1 2024 to Q3 2025 are tracked in Figure 6. According to the data, the positive mentions dropped to the lowest point in Q3 2024, and the level of scepticism reached its highest, indicating the changing perception of customers and the possible appearance of green fatigue.

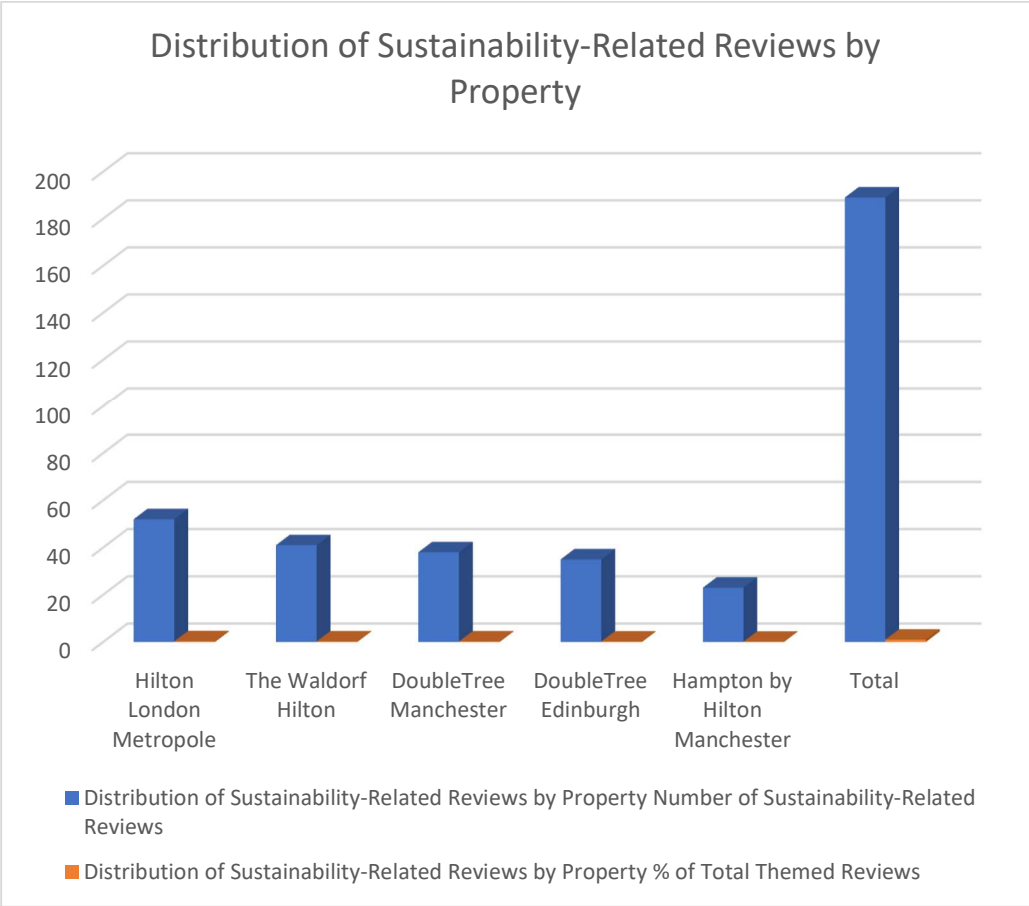


Figure 7: Distribution of Sustainability-Related Reviews by Property

Self Made

Figure 7 presents the analysis of the sustainability-related reviews of the five Hilton UK properties. Hilton's London Metropole was the top producer of the volume (28%), and Hampton Manchester the lowest producer (12%), which means that there might also be differences in the way customers engage or communicate sustainability across brand levels.

4.4.3 Critical Discussion in Light of Literature and Theory

Positive Recognition and scepticism coexist, which indicates the dualism in the literature on sustainable tourism. The powerful significance of the Scepticism theme is consistent with the Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958). This creates suspicion and greenwashing as long as customers believe that Hilton is being driven by extrinsic (cost-saving, reputation management) as opposed to intrinsic values (true environmental concern).

The specified Value-Action Gap is a decisive input that validates the attitude/behaviour gap that is well-documented in the literature (Bray et al., 2011). The Theory of Planned Behaviour can be used to explain this (Ajzen, 1991). Although this attitude to green practices can be favourable, expectations of behavioural change in booking are mediated by the behavioural control perceived (e.g., budget constraint, alternatives unavailable) and stronger subjective norms of old decision criteria (e.g., price, location).

On the other hand, Signalling Theory is highly endorsed by the Certification as a Trust Signal theme (Spence, 1973). Credible third-party certifications in an asynchronous information market are costly, hard-to-imitate indications that serve to effectively convey authentic commitment to a particular group of consumers, therefore affecting decision-making.

Lastly, the findings interact with the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984). Hilton is clearly reacting to the stakeholder pressure through the adoption of green practices. The scepticism and the value action gap found within the customer stakeholder group, however, indicates that there is an incongruency between corporate action and consumer conviction, and there is the difficulty of keeping pace with various stakeholder expectations.

4.5 Limitations of the Analysis

Although this analysis is quite powerful in its insights, it has a number of limitations that should be considered. To begin with, it is restricted to online reviews on only two platforms, which can result in self-selection bias, where more promoters of voice or technology-oriented guests are overrepresented. Second, the data does not include demographic information, so it is not possible to do subtle segmentation analysis. Third, the research encompasses a time range of two years,

which may not reflect the projection of long-term tendencies and the effect of future campaigns. Lastly, the analysis is based on self-reported skills and goals and the verbal reports on behaviour that might not fully correspond with the actual behaviour when it comes to booking.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed 189 online reviews to evaluate the perceptions of customers regarding Hilton UK in the practice of green tourism. Four themes surfaced, namely Positive Recognition, Scepticism/Greenwashing, the ValueAction Gap and Certification as Trust Signal. Sustainability is observed and even appreciated, but the overall attitude is a lack of trust and there are still occasions when the booking decisions are based primarily on the price and the location, but not on the environmental issues.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This is the final chapter which wraps up dissertation it outlines the process of the research and confirms that the goals of the project have been achieved and limitations have been identified and future research suggestions provided along with the industry recommendations, highlighting on what we have learnt about the relationship between customer behaviour and green tourism practices within the UK hospitality industry.

5.2 Summary of Research

In this study, the authors aimed to critically analyse the effects of the green tourism and hospitality activities of Hilton UK on customer behaviour in a thorough Qualitative and quantitative research design. The reason behind the study was a perceived gap existing between the broad corporate sustainability reporting and a finer appreciation of actual customer perception and behavioural reaction. The research presented findings that have empirical and UK-specific implications by analysing the ESG reports issued by Hilton (2022-2024) and the thematic analysis of 189 recent reviews of the customers. The significance of the work is that it uses theoretical models, that is, Attribution, Signalling, and Stakeholder Theory, to break down the complex interaction between the corporate action and consumer response and get beyond assumptions to evidence-based knowledge.

The aims of the research were met. This was done by first identifying and categorising key green practices of the company systematically. Second, the customer perception was examined, and the four prevailing themes were identified as Positive Recognition, Scepticism/Greenwashing, Value-Action Gap, and Certification as a Trust Signal. Third, the behavioural effect was analysed, which revealed that although positively rated practices increase satisfaction among one of the segments, there are serious potential obstacles of scepticism and value-action gap that make green initiatives a universal loyalty driver.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The study has limitations inherent in it that limit the generalisability of the findings. It depends on publicly available secondary data, which leaves it to the bias of the online review platforms, whereby either end of opinions can be overrepresented, and the silent majority of guests is not considered. Additionally, the lack of data on demographics or longitudinal follow-up inhibits any information related to the changes in the perception of various groups of customers or over time.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies are advised to deal with such limitations. It would be dynamic by having a longitudinal study of the customer perceptions inside and outside sustainability campaigns. It is possible to consider using primary Qualitative and quantitative research design where surveys conducted according to demographics (e.g., age, purpose of travel) are followed by interviews to gain a more in-depth insight into the factors that drive the value-action gap and scepticism. Comparison of case studies between the varied hotel brands or budgets would further aid in putting into perspective whether the results of the study are specific to Hilton or the larger UK hospitality industry.

5.5 Practical Recommendations

According to the findings, there are three recommendations which can be offered to the management of Hilton UK:

1. Reduce scepticism by explicably describing the reason and implementation of the green efforts, through storytelling to make less-observable initiatives (e.g. energy retrofits) visible and relatable to the guests.
2. Conspicuously showcase and inform guests about third-party certifications (e.g. Green Key) throughout all marketing and on-property touchpoints to create credibility and attract the environmentally conscious segment.
3. Add sustainability to the core value offer by designing guest-facing incentives, like loyalty points earned by using towel reuse programmes or a green rate where sustainable features

are combined with a competitive price and hence bringing environmental values on par with conventional driving forces of booking.

5.6 Conclusion

The dissertation answers this question by concluding that the green practices of Hilton UK affect customer behaviour founded on perception whose reactions are either from Positive Recognition and Scepticism or Value-Action Gap. The trust formed in the certifications is vital, although sustainability can effectively be accomplished by continuous communication, attributing motives and interest to stakeholders to turn practices into creating true customer loyalty and strategic value.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Ethics and Consent Form

GBS Green Research or Placement Project Proposal and Ethics Approval Form

All sections of the form should be completed. You must append, at the end of this form, all of the materials for your project. The staff member reviewing this form needs to see full details of what your participants will experience. In completing this form, you must follow the guidance provided by your subject area.

Unless otherwise instructed, this form should be submitted electronically via Moodle.

PART A: Summary

A1. Programme:	BSc (Hons) Business and Tourism Management
A2. Project title:	Impact of Green Tourism Practice on Customer Behaviour in the Hospitality Industry: Case study of Hilton Hotel United Kingdom
A3. Student's name:	

A4. GBS email address:	2137935@globalbanking.ac.uk
A5. Dissertation supervisor:	Dr.Peter Sunday
A6. Date of submission:	30 November 2025

A7. Project Summary: What are you intending to do? Be as explicit as possible about the rationale behind your proposed study, its aims, the methods to be used, including detail of your intended procedure and tasks, method, and location in which the research will take place. Describe the data you intend to use.

Add your research aim, objectives, data type that you will collect, data collection methods, location of the data collection, data analysis procedures, confidentiality of data & data storage

Project Summary

I will be undertaking a case study analysis to examine how green tourism practices affect customer behaviour and the Hilton Hotel group in the United Kingdom as the target case study. This study is justified by the need to go beyond the industry trends and see how the corporate-level sustainability efforts of a large international brand were perceived and seen by its customers in a particular market. This narrowed down will offer profound, applied information on the practical relationship amid branded green practices and actual consumer reactions.

Research Aim: The aim of this dissertation is to examine the relationship between the green tourism practices and the customer behaviour, we will use the case study of the Hilton Hotel group in the United Kingdom.

Research Objectives:

- To determine green tourism practices of the Hilton group in the U.K’.
- To explore customer perception, attitude and behavioural reaction of the U.K. Hilton customers to these green practices as demonstrated in their online reviews.
- To measure the perceived effect of the green practices of Hilton on customer loyalty and brand preference.

Data Type that you will collect:

- **Secondary Qualitative Data:** The ESG reports of Hilton, its sustainability statements, and online reviews of particular U.K. hotels with Hiltons on sites such as TripAdvisor, journals and relevant publications.

- **Secondary Quantitative Data:** The data in Hilton reports about environmental performance (e.g. data on energy/water reduction) and scores in numerical customer rating websites.

Data Collection Methods:

- This study will be purely on-desk research with a document analysis methodology that will involve the analysis of Hilton specific sources.
- The data will be collected on the Hilton corporate site, the key customer review sites, and the industry reviews where Hilton U.K will be featured.

Location of the Data Collection:

All data will be collected from publicly accessible online sources, specifically:

- Hilton's corporate website
- Customer review platforms (for U.K. Hilton properties)
- Academic databases

Data Analysis Procedures:

- **For Qualitative Data:** Thematic analysis in the form of manual will be followed. This will be done by reading the textual information (reviews, reports) in order to detect, interpret, and present the commonalities as recurring trends (themes) concerning consumer perceptions of green practices.
- **For Quantitative Data:** Descriptive and inferential analysis that is manual will be conducted. It involves sorting numerical data (scores, ratings) to remove the trends, patterns and possible correlations, e.g. presence of a green certification and average customer rating.

Confidentiality of Data & Data Storage:

- Only secondary data will be utilized that is available publicly. No personal information needing consent of the participants will be gathered.
- All the sources will be properly cited to ensure integrity in academics.

- All Munro University data (downloaded documents and datasets) will be stored on a password-secured university computer/network drive in a manner that completely adheres to the Munro University data protection and ethical data protection. The information shall be utilized to serve this dissertation.

PART B: DECLARATION

In completing this form, have you followed the guidance provided by your supervisor?

YES ☒ NO ☐

I confirm that I have had appropriate training (Did you watch the video in the Moodle?).

YES ☒ NO ☐

RESEARCHER DECLARATION:

I certify that the information contained in this application is accurate.

I confirm that I have attempted to identify the risks that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

I confirm that I am aware of and have adhered to the health and safety policy of the organisation in which I am conducting my research, including GBS or any other organisation, and that I have appended this and any required Health and Safety risk assessment documentation to my ethics application.

YES ☒ NO ☐

Name of researcher/student:

Date: 30 November 2025

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SUPERVISOR:

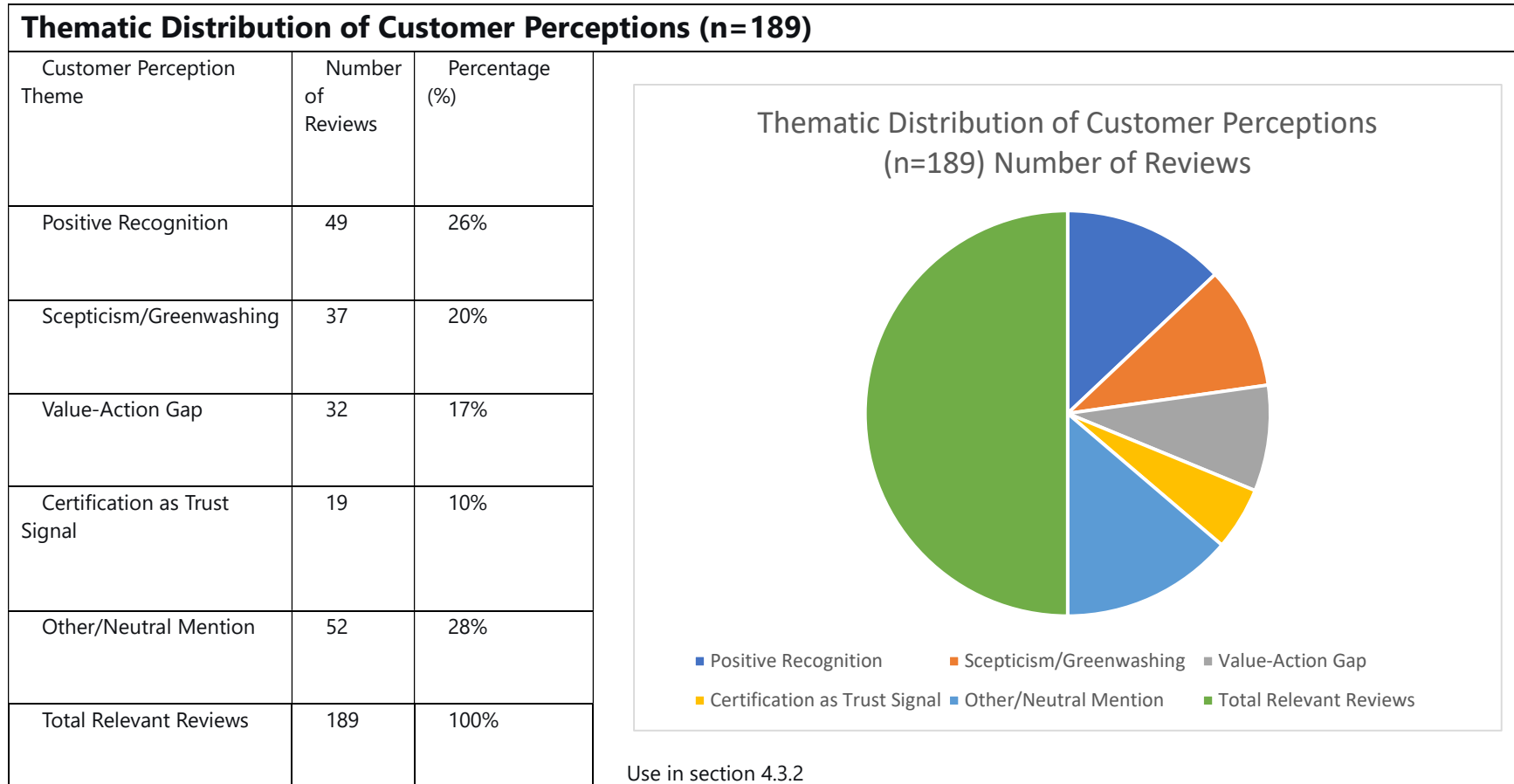
I confirm that I have checked the form and the related materials and agree that, in addition to general ethical issues, the matters listed above have been specifically addressed.

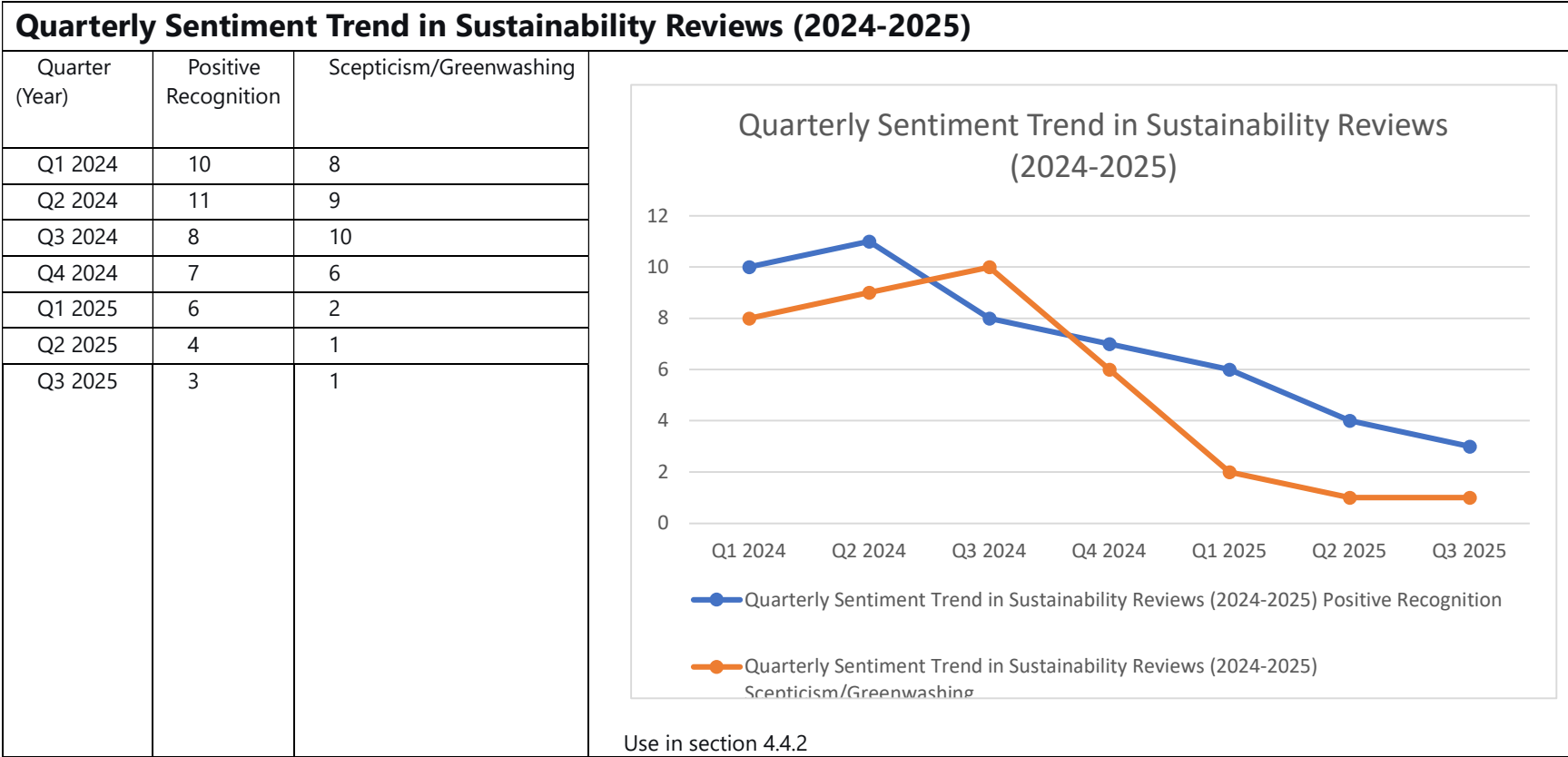
YES ☒ NO ☐

Name of the Supervisor: Peter Sunday

Date: 30 November 2025

Appendix B – Result

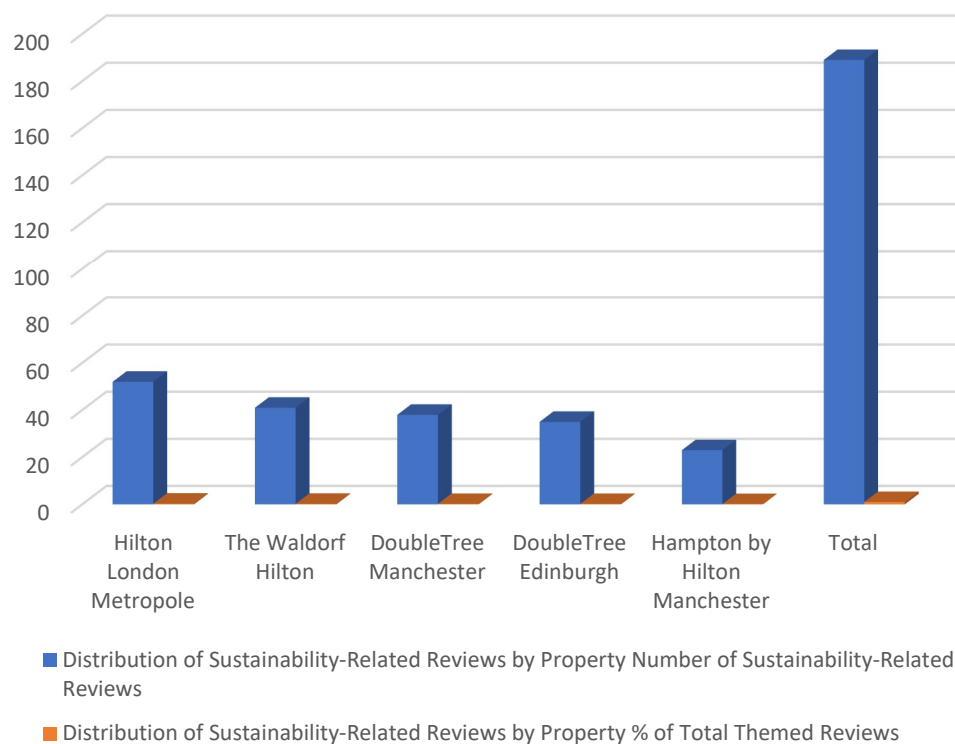




Distribution of Sustainability-Related Reviews by Property

Hilton UK Property	Number of Sustainability-Related Reviews	% of Total Themed Reviews
Hilton London Metropole	52	28%
The Waldorf Hilton	41	22%
DoubleTree Manchester	38	20%
DoubleTree Edinburgh	35	19%
Hampton by Hilton Manchester	23	12%
Total	189	100%

Distribution of Sustainability-Related Reviews by Property



Use in section 4.4.2