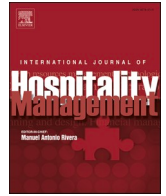




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Navigating institutional pressures in driving authentic environmental management practices in the hotel industry

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ABSTRACT

Numerous studies identify external pressures encouraging hotels to adopt environmental management (EM) practices in response to growing demand for sustainability. While some hotels implement these practices substantively, others emphasise environmental claims in marketing, raising concerns about potential greenwashing. Authenticity has thus emerged as a critical factor. This paper analyses the impact of pressures on the adoption of authentic EM practices in the hotel industry through a systematic literature review following PRISMA guidelines and applying the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). Our integrative synthesis shows that institutional pressures, coercive, normative, and mimetic, work as an interconnected system and are filtered through guest-perceived authenticity, reinforcing substantive practices or encouraging impression-oriented responses. By combining Institutional Theory with Impression Management Theory, we advance theoretical understanding and present a model explaining how hotels translate pressures into authentic EM or symbolic greenwashing, thereby clarifying the boundary between legitimacy and authenticity in sustainability implementation.

1. Introduction

Environmental management (EM) practices have become central to strategic decision-making within the global hotel industry (Abaeian et al., 2019). Hotels increasingly implement initiatives such as energy efficiency, waste reduction, water conservation, and community engagement to reduce environmental impact while enhancing operational efficiency and brand reputation (Barakagira and Paapa, 2024; Filimonau et al., 2023). Despite widespread adoption, however, the depth and integration of EM practices vary substantially across hotels. While some hotels embed environmental management substantively, others engage in deceptive green marketing, commonly referred to as “greenwashing” (Bernini and La Rosa, 2023; de Freitas Netto et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2015), whereby organisations respond to environmental expectations through impression-oriented and misleading actions rather than substantive change (Chen and Chang, 2013). This tension is further intensified as many hotels are adopting a range of sustainable technologies and innovations to reduce their environmental impact, not only as a corporate responsibility, but also as a strategic necessity to maintain competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market (Abaeian et al., 2019). As sustainability becomes embedded within

competitive positioning, environmental commitment risks being implemented for symbolic value rather than substantive integration. In such contexts, environmental conformity may be decoupled from authentic EM (Seele and Gatti, 2017). This divergence raises an important question regarding why similar sustainability pressures produce varying levels of authenticity in EM implementation across hotels.

This variation is shaped by the motivations underlying the implementation of EM practices. In a context marked by climate urgency, EM practices are no longer peripheral programmes but core organisational commitments (Majeed and Kim, 2023). This shift is particularly salient in the hotel industry, where energy-intensive operations and dependency on fossil fuels and electricity contribute substantially to its environmental footprint, raising questions about sustainability and the industry's long-term influence on the world's environment (Campos et al., 2024). In light of this, stakeholders in the hotel industry are increasingly aware of sustainability being a critical business imperative. Consequently, hotels face mounting pressure to demonstrate environmental responsibility from multiple directions. Regulatory bodies impose environmental standards and reporting requirements (de Grosbois and Fennell, 2022). Industry associations and certification schemes promote best practices and benchmarking systems (Assaker and

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O'Connor, 2023). Competitors adopt visible sustainability initiatives, creating imitation pressures within the field (Buffa et al., 2018). At the same time, guests increasingly express expectations for environmentally responsible accommodation, influencing brand trust and booking decisions (Alyahia et al., 2024; Gürlek and Koseoglu, 2021). These pressures collectively construct a context in which sustainability becomes institutionalised as a norm of appropriate organisational conduct.

Such pressures can be systematically understood through the lens of institutional theory (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983), which categorises external demands into coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures. While this theory might help explain why hotels adopt EM practices (de Grosbois and Fennell, 2022; Ouyang et al., 2019), it does not fully account for variation in implementation strength and authenticity. Institutional theory often treats pressure as a relatively static driver of conformity, implicitly assuming that stronger pressure leads to greater adoption. However, conformity under pressure may take different forms. In some cases, pressures result in deeply embedded environmental systems; in others, they produce impression-oriented responses designed to signal alignment. Recent microfoundational work suggests that although institutional theory explains why organisations conform, it largely black-boxes the real-time sense-making processes through which organisational actions are interpreted (Bitektine and Haack, 2015). The mechanism through which institutional demands are translated into substantive or symbolic implementation remains under-theorised. In this translation process, authenticity becomes central. Authentic implementation reflects coherence between environmental commitments and operational practices, whereas symbolic implementation manifests as impression-oriented compliance (Yu et al., 2024). Understanding how institutional pressures shape authentic versus symbolic EM implementation is therefore critical for clarifying the boundary between substantive EM and greenwashing. Guided by this tension, this study aims to address the following research questions:

RQ1. : *How are environmental management practices implemented in the hotel industry?*

RQ2. : *What are the drivers of the implementation of environmental management practices in the hotel industry?*

RQ3. : *How do institutional pressures lead to the implementation of authentic environmental management practices in the hotel industry?*

To identify the crucial components that might improve the authenticity of green hotels, it is essential to first understand the current state of hotel environmental management. Therefore, we conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) of peer-reviewed articles within the hotel industry (Tranfield et al., 2003). SLR is also one of the most suitable approaches for studying phenomena for which neither theory nor practice has yet managed to establish a uniform theoretical-empirical framework (Alhossini et al., 2021; López Pérez et al., 2024; Snyder, 2019). Our SLR follows the PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to ensure a robust and unbiased analysis, hence improving the quality of the paper.

Derived from the findings, this study proposes a framework for authentic EM practices in the hotel industry. The framework incorporates variables related to institutional pressures derived from Institutional Theory (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983), and further integrates guest authenticity perception, top management support, and perceived benefits, which collectively represent key elements aligned with Impression Management Theory (IMT) (Gardner and Martinko, 1988; Goffman, 1959). With this background in mind, the central theoretical puzzle of this study is not whether hotels conform to sustainability pressures, but how such conformity is translated into either substantive or symbolic environmental integration. In addressing this puzzle, the study contributes to hospitality sustainability research by clarifying why institutional conformity does not uniformly produce authentic EM and by identifying the mechanisms that distinguish substantive implementation from greenwashing.

This paper is organised as follows. Section 2 provides contextual information, defining the outline of the research. Section 3 elaborates the SLR method, including data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Section 4 presents the SLR results, providing descriptive and thematic insights, which aims to address the research question. Section 5 describes the answers to the research questions and presents the variables, propositions, and the theoretical framework. Finally, Section 6 summarises the findings and suggests opportunities for future research.

2. Contextual background

2.1. Greenwashing

Greenwashing, first identified by Jay Westervelt in relation to hotels' towel reuse promotions (Guo et al., 2018; Wolniak, 2015), has become a major concern within sustainability and hospitality research (Santos et al., 2023). The concept, however, lacks uniformity. Lyon and Montgomery (2015) describe it as corporate disinformation to create a false impression of environmental responsibility, while Seele and Gatti (2017) view it as a strategic disclosure tool. Broadly, it involves misleading claims about sustainability by emphasising positive initiatives while concealing negative impacts (Majeed and Kim, 2023). These definitional tensions highlight whether greenwashing is best understood as communication, intention, perception, or institutional constraint (Marquis et al., 2016).

In hospitality, accusations of greenwashing often stem from inconsistencies between hotels' claims and actions. Common examples include urging guests to reuse towels or conserve energy, framing these actions as environmental initiatives, despite their potential alignment with cost-reduction objectives (Alyahia et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2019). Reluctance to invest in resource-intensive initiatives, such as water management (Kasim et al., 2014) further fuels guest scepticism, where even minor doubts about motives can affect behavioural intentions (Rahman et al., 2015).

de Freitas Netto et al., (2020) reviewed greenwashing strategies such as selective disclosure, decoupling, and appeals to legitimacy, classifying them into claim and executional forms. The latter often relies on symbolic cues, such as green/blue imagery or nature sounds, to signal sustainability. These variations show that greenwashing can be framed and perceived in multiple ways, making it difficult to define and identify, reinforcing the need for reliable measurement, since different audiences may interpret the same practice differently. Yildirim (2023) advances this by categorising greenwashing into four stages, from "rapid escape" to "slow transition", illustrating not only its prevalence but also its evolving role in shaping sustainability awareness. Together, these frameworks underline why developing tools to assess authenticity is crucial for both research and practice in hospitality. Because greenwashing is multifaceted and difficult to detect, its consequences for firms are significant. As stakeholder expectations grow, organisations are now judged not only on whether they implement green practices, but on whether these are perceived as authentic (Scherer et al., 2013; Seele and Gatti, 2017). Thus, greenwashing is not merely a communication failure but an evaluative breakdown between organisational claims and stakeholder interpretation.

2.2. Importance of authenticity

In the hotel industry, authenticity is central to guest trust and credibility (Yu et al., 2024). It reflects alignment between stated values and actual practices, shaping guest responses to green initiatives. Authenticity reduces negative perceptions of greenwashing, enhances green trust, and strengthens support for eco-friendly hotels (Alyahia et al., 2024). Xu et al. (2021) note that authenticity can lose trust through unethical practices, while the perceived legitimacy of sustainability efforts is critical for guest loyalty and engagement. Thus, authenticity is not just branding but a driver of customer well-being and long-term

success (Yu et al., 2024).

To cultivate authenticity, Bernard et al. (2024) emphasise the importance of transparent communication. In relation, Delmas and Burbano (2011) shed light on green communication in the hotel industry that could lead to, as well as avoid, greenwashing. The study categorised firms as “vocal” or “silent” based on their environmental communication. Companies that actively communicate about their environmental performance, for instance by marketing and public relations (PR) initiatives, are referred to as “vocal” firms, and those that do not communicate about their environmental performance are referred to as “silent” firms.

Authenticity has long been treated as a qualitative felt experience (Rickly and Canavan, 2024), assessed in situ by observers who ask, ‘Does this feel real to me?’ Legitimacy, by contrast, is a collective judgement of appropriateness (Bitektine et al., 2025) that accrues over time through institutionalised endorsement. Put differently, authenticity is first-order and phenomenological and legitimacy is second-order and symbolic. Conflating the two obscures the micro-processes through which organisational staging translates into field status. Nonetheless, analytically distinguishing these constructs prevents conceptual conflation and clarifies the micro-foundations through which institutional conformity becomes either accepted or contested.

2.2.1. How authenticity is constructed, perceived, and contested

Authenticity is not a fixed attribute but the outcome of ongoing sense-making (Rickly, 2022). The literature converges on three inter-related processes. First, construction: managers deploy material (décor, artefacts) and discursive (storytelling) cues to “stage” authenticity; guests simultaneously co-create it through selective attention and meaning making (Rickly and Canavan, 2024). Second, perception: longitudinal studies show authenticity judgements evolve across pre-visit anticipation, on-site encounter, and post-visit reflection, with peak sensitivity during liminal transition moments such as check-in or the first meal (Boyle, 2024). Third, contestation: authenticity claims are routinely challenged in peer-to-peer reviews; managerial replies perceived as inauthentic (generic, copy-pasted) suppress satisfaction and e-WOM, whereas personalised responses amplify both (Han et al., 2023).

Combined (see Table 1), these streams reveal authenticity as a negotiated, dynamic quality, constructed by hotel’s management, perceived by guests, and continually contested in public, underscoring its pivotal role in the model.

2.2.2. Authenticity as the micro-foundation of legitimacy

While authenticity is frequently invoked alongside legitimacy in sustainability research, the two constructs are analytically distinct. Legitimacy is a socially aggregated judgement of organisational appropriateness within an institutional field (Suchman, 1995). It reflects collective endorsement that stabilises over time through norm conformance. By contrast, authenticity operates at the level of situated audience evaluation (Rickly and Canavan, 2024). It represents a first-order judgement formed during direct encounters with organisational actions: do environmental initiatives appear sincere, coherent, and substantively embedded?

Table 1
Authenticity insights from previous literature.

Study (year)	Lens	Authenticity insight
Rickly (2022)	Macro synthesis	Identifies shift from static to process views
Rickly and Canavan (2024)	Process-phase	Authenticity emerges across pre/on/post visit
Boyle (2024)	Digital discourse	Authenticity words predict sentiment & ratings
Han et al. (2023)	Managerial response	Personalised replies must feel authentic to work

This distinction has three implications. First, temporally, authenticity precedes legitimacy. Real-time authenticity judgements accumulate into broader legitimacy assessments. Second, analytically, authenticity operates at the audience level, whereas legitimacy reflects field-level evaluation. Third, the underlying mechanisms differ: legitimacy arises primarily through alignment with institutional norms, whereas authenticity emerges through impression formation processes in which stakeholders interpret observable practices and communication cues.

In the context of hotel sustainability, this distinction is critical. Hotels may conform to certification standards and regulatory requirements yet still be perceived as inauthentic if communication and practice appear misaligned (Assaker and O’Connor, 2023; Bernard et al., 2024). Authenticity, therefore, serves as a mediating evaluative mechanism through which institutional conformity is either translated into or decoupled from legitimacy.

2.3. From institutional conformity to perceived authenticity: a theoretical gap

Institutional Theory explains why organisations adopt environmental practices. Coercive regulation, normative expectations, and mimetic benchmarking generate field-level pressures that incentivise conformity to sustainability norms (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983). In hospitality, these pressures stem from regulators, certification bodies, destination authorities, and environmentally conscious guests. Empirical research, therefore, documents the widespread diffusion of EM practices. However, conformity does not automatically secure credibility.

The persistence of greenwashing reveals a structural–evaluative gap: organisations may comply with institutionalised sustainability templates yet be perceived as opportunistic or symbolic (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020; Seele and Gatti, 2017). Under conditions of reputational scrutiny, organisations may adopt impression-oriented responses that prioritise signalling environmental commitment rather than embedding substantive environmental change. Recent institutional scholarship similarly emphasises that legitimacy depends not merely on conformity, but on how actions are interpreted by audiences in real time (Bitektine and Haack, 2015). Institutional Theory remains comparatively under-specified regarding these evaluative micro-processes.

This limitation is particularly salient in service contexts. In hospitality, sustainability initiatives are experienced and assessed interactively. Guests evaluate not only whether environmental practices exist but also whether they appear genuine. We therefore distinguish authenticity from legitimacy. Legitimacy reflects a socially aggregated judgement of appropriateness within a field (Suchman, 1995). Authenticity operates at the level of situated audience perception: do observed practices align with stated commitments? Authenticity precedes and conditions legitimacy; cumulative authenticity evaluations consolidate into broader legitimacy outcomes. When alignment fails, accusations of greenwashing intensify.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

The data collection and structure for this SLR followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (Page et al., 2021), which provided a transparent, replicable, and systematic approach to identifying and evaluating peer-reviewed articles relevant to the research’s topic matter. The PRISMA 2020 checklist, consisting of seven categories with 27 elements, including sub-items, was utilised to ensure transparency and rigour in the search, selection, and inclusion of relevant material (Page et al., 2021). The papers for this SLR were obtained from the Scopus and EBSCO databases. The search strings and formulas were created to

maintain consistency across the aforementioned databases by including topics such as "green practices", "hotel industry", and "environmental pressures", reflecting the research's broad issue. The goal of the research was to collect a comprehensive and methodologically robust corpus of literature from reliable sources, allowing for a thorough investigation of the subject matter. The search strings and search formula for the data collection are presented in Table 2.

Filtering criteria were then applied, restricting the search to English language publications and peer-reviewed academic papers within scholarly journals only. Upon executing the search, a total of 1455 titles and abstracts were retrieved from the five databases. Subsequently, Microsoft Excel was used to facilitate the filtering process using PICOS (Population–Issue–Context–Outcomes–Study Design) grid presented in Table 3. Accordingly, the workbook was also structured to include sections for all references from Scopus and EBSCO, duplicate removal, parameter definition, title and abstract screening, report generation, and articles deemed suitable for inclusion (Godino, 2023). Through a deduplication process using conditional formatting and manual checking, 1151 unique articles remained for further analysis. Additional eligibility criteria were then operationalised based on the research questions, serving as the criteria for evaluating article relevance, including the title, abstract selection and full text eligibility. These criteria encompassed studies informing about: (1) greenwashing or environmental issues in the hotel industry, (2) descriptions of the impact of greenwashing, (3) explanations of implemented green practices, (4) reports on current issues related to green practices, and (5) discussions on pressures or drivers for enhancing green practices in the hotel industry.

In the first stage, title and abstract screening was conducted by strictly identifying studies containing the relevant keywords or their synonyms, as specified in the PICOS table. This step was necessary because the search strings yielded literature from various industries beyond hospitality. Following title and abstract screening, 131 articles were retrieved for full-text assessment, as illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram (Fig. 1). These studies met the preliminary eligibility criteria defined in the PICOS framework. However, full-text analysis revealed that 70 articles were not theoretically aligned with RQ2 and RQ3. While they referred to sustainability or environmental practices, they did not include discussions on pressures or drivers, either coercive, normative, mimetic, for enhancing EM practices in the hotel industry.

The next phase involved a thorough assessment of full-text articles using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT, 2018). MMAT was selected because the corpus includes qualitative, quantitative (non-randomised and descriptive), and mixed-method designs. Two authors independently assessed each study across the five MMAT domains appropriate to its methodological category. Inter-rater reliability was strong ($\kappa = 0.82$; Section 3.1), and disagreements were resolved by consensus. Each study received a score of 0–5. An exclusion threshold of ≤ 2 was established, indicating failure across three or more methodological criteria (e.g., unclear sampling logic, weak measurement

Table 2
Search strings and search formula for data collection.

Code	Formula
SS-1	"green practi*" OR "greenwash*" OR "green initiat*" OR "green acti*" OR "green marketing" OR "green effort*" OR "sustainab* marketing" OR "sustainab* act*" OR "sustainab*" OR "environment* postur*" OR "eco-act*" OR "eco-label*" OR "eco-certific*" OR "eco-friendly claim" OR "eco-marketing"
SS-2	"hospitality industry" OR "hospitality business" OR "hospitality sector" OR "green hotel" OR "hotel*" OR "green hospitality" OR "eco-hotel" OR "environment* hotel" OR "green-certificate hotel" OR "resort*" OR "hostel*" OR "sustainab* resort" OR "service* industry"
SS-3	"pressur*" OR "driv*" OR "source factor*" OR "environment* pressur*"
SF	SS-1 AND SS-2 AND SS-3

SS = Search Strings; SF = Search formula

Table 3
Operationalised eligibility criteria (PICOS).

Population	Hotels, resorts, hostels, inns (≥ 10 rooms)
Issue	Environmental management practice or greenwashing
Context	Hospitality sector, any geography
Outcomes	At least one environmental management practice metric or authenticity/legitimacy outcome
Study design	Empirical peer-reviewed (quantitative, qualitative, mixed) published 2004-2024 in English
Exclusions	Conceptual papers without data; conference proceedings; non-English; duplicate datasets.

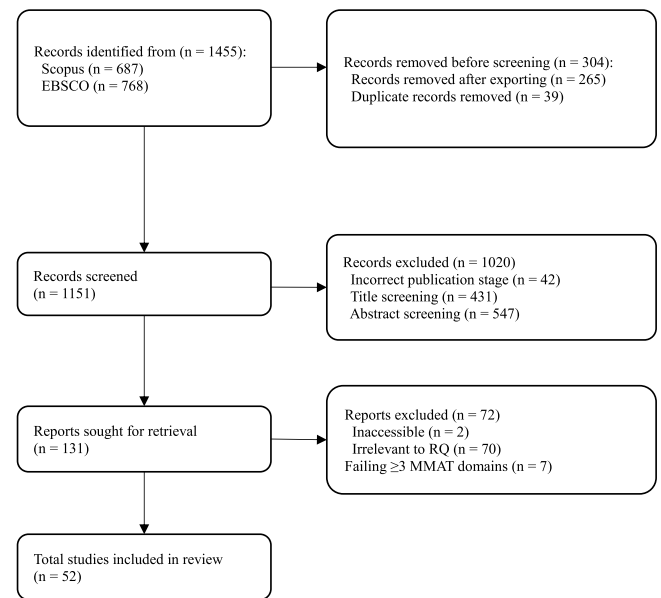


Fig. 1. Article screening based on the PRISMA flow diagram (Page et al., 2021).

validity, or poor integration in mixed-method designs). The median MMAT score was 4 (IQR 3–5), indicating generally robust methodological quality among the final 52 studies. A summary of the MMAT assessment, including inclusion and exclusion decisions, is presented in Table 4, while the full inclusion assessment details are provided in Appendix D. MMAT functioned not merely as a checklist but also as a quality-weighting mechanism to ensure that the integrative synthesis (Sections 5.2–5.3) and the refined theoretical framework (Fig. 3) were grounded in internally coherent empirical evidence.

3.2. Data analysis

In accordance with the SLR methodology of Tranfield et al. (2003), a systematic review should provide both descriptive and thematic analyses. Through coding and thematic investigation, underlying patterns and relationships in the data can be identified, providing deeper insight into conceptual variations and linkages within the research domain. Thematic analysis was aided by NVivo 15. The coding process was guided by Braun and Clarke (2006) and began with systematic familiarisation followed by iterative initial coding. As the data were

Table 4
Summary of mixed methods appraisal tool (MMAT 2018).

MMAT score	Interpretation	n	%	Action in synthesis
4	High quality	21	40	Included
4	Good quality	18	35	Included
3	Moderate	13	25	Included with caveats
≤ 2	Low / Critical risk of bias	7	-	Excluded

reviewed, relevant passages or extracts from the literature were assigned initial codes corresponding to each thematic category. Themes were developed as clusters of codes sharing conceptual similarity and were subsequently reviewed, defined, and refined as part of the final phase of the coding process. The initial coding theme was derived from the research questions guiding this study. Specifically, for RQ1, codes were developed to capture various EM practices, including common initiatives, implementation challenges, and reported benefits. This enabled a systematic examination of the depth and scope of EM implementation across the reviewed studies. Meanwhile, for RQ2, coding focused on themes related to institutional pressures. At this stage, pressures identified in the literature were categorised into their respective institutional groups: coercive, normative, and mimetic. Additional coding groups were also developed to capture related insights, such as other contextual drivers identified in the literature, including circular economy initiatives that complemented or interacted with institutional forces. The coded data were then analysed to identify patterns, links, and relationships among the codes. Fig. 2 presents the hierarchical coding structure generated using NVivo.

3.3. Synthesis

Theoretical frameworks are critical for synthesising the outcomes of this research (Durach et al., 2017). Synthesis, as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006), involves combining data to develop new understandings and theoretical ideas, rather than merely describing or summarising individual studies. Thus, theoretical frameworks guide the synthesis process. The first phase involves analysing emergent themes to develop research propositions, collecting detailed information on the explicit and/or implicit primary dimensions of institutional pressure, and their antecedents, consequences, and mechanisms in hotel EM practices. Constructs and variables are categorised based on the framework by Lusiantoro et al. (2018) that includes identifying antecedents (drivers), primary and secondary dimensions (main and sub-variables), moderating dimensions (influencing links), mediating dimensions (bridging elements), and consequences (implications). This classification facilitates the exploration of patterns and interactions among constructs, enabling the identification of factors that influence hotel EM practices and their placement within the proposed theoretical framework. The process leads to a new theoretical framework that links institutional pressure to core themes. The final stage involves refining the framework by analysing prominent patterns in variables and formulating propositions that serve as the basis for further theoretical refinement. This structured approach ensures a coherent and

comprehensive understanding of how institutional pressures shape hotel environmental management, rather than treating variables as isolated or arbitrarily positioned elements.

4. Findings

The literature dataset consists of 52 scientific papers selected after the screening process conducted during the data collection phase. A summary of the final collection of documents is presented in Appendix A. The analysis organises the reviewed articles according to themes derived from the coding process. This section addresses the research questions (RQs); however, not all questions can be fully answered at this stage.

4.1. Environmental management practices in the hotel industry

In addressing RQ1, the literature reveals several EM practices implemented in the hotel industry. Numerous hotels have prioritised green initiatives by investing in structured EM systems and sustainability programmes (Buffa et al., 2018; Y.-M. Guo et al., 2023; Yi et al., 2018). These growing environmental concerns have led hotels to adopt initiatives focusing on energy efficiency, resource conservation, and waste minimisation (Florido et al., 2019; Moscardo, 2019; Ouyang et al., 2019; Piya et al., 2022). These initiatives reflect increasing awareness of environmental responsibility within the hospitality sector, coming from stakeholders and guests (Fatoki, 2019; Kerdpitak, 2019; Martínez et al., 2019). Across the literature, commonly reported green initiatives include eco-labels such as Green Seal and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), which are associated with hotel characteristics (Rivera, 2006) and guests' willingness to pay more (Assaker and O'Connor, 2023; Ling and Aziz, 2021), as well as CSR reporting, which often emphasises employee-related impacts (Abaeian et al., 2019; de Grosbois and Fennell, 2022; Farmaki et al., 2023). Merli et al. (2019) and Ru-zhe et al. (2023) further demonstrate that environmental practices significantly impact guest satisfaction and revisit intention. Operational practices such as recycling, reuse, waste management, and host community support are also frequently identified (Langgat et al., 2023; Piya et al., 2022).

Despite this widespread adoption, however, the literature also reports variation in the depth and scope of EM implementation across hotels. Specifically, green hotels are being categorised as proactive, reactive, and non-eco-friendly, with the latter demonstrating limited engagement in environmental investments (Buffa et al., 2018). Differences are also evident across national contexts, Grecu et al. (2019)

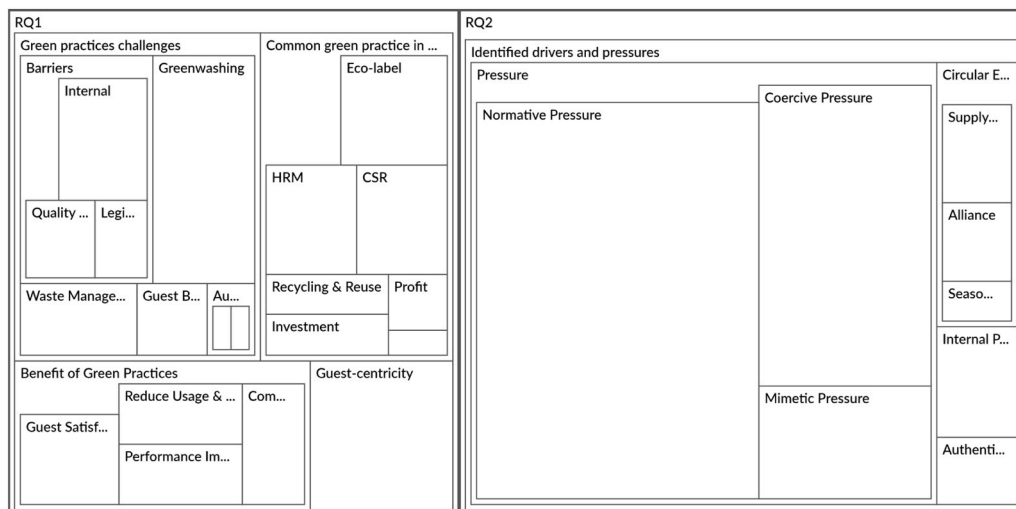


Fig. 2. Hierarchy chart of codes used.

highlighted how the absence of coherent sustainable development strategies in Romania has constrained the uptake of environmental practices in the hotel sector. Taken together, these findings indicate that while green initiatives are widely diffused, their scope and intensity vary substantially across hotels. The varied implementation of EM practices creates conditions in which symbolic compliance may persist. In this context, the concepts of greenwashing and legitimacy frequently appear in sustainability research (Khatter et al., 2021a), yet their conceptualisation remains inconsistent. Legitimacy generally refers to conformity with stakeholder expectations or institutional norms (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2014), whereas greenwashing reflects the appearance of such conformity without genuine environmental commitment. In practice, the two concepts may overlap, particularly when environmental initiatives simultaneously deliver operational benefits. For example, cost-saving measures such as energy efficiency or waste reduction have been described as “win-win” solutions that benefit both operations and environmental performance (Abaeian et al., 2019; Khatter et al., 2021a). However, these initiatives may also attract scepticism when they are perceived as prioritising efficiency over genuine environmental commitment, thereby blurring the boundary between legitimate sustainability and greenwashing (Yi et al., 2018). This dual interpretation illustrates how environmental signals can be perceived as either authentic or opportunistic depending on the evaluative perspective.

Another dimension is the tension between local legitimacy and global sustainability standards. Ertuna et al. (2019) highlight how local hotel affiliates may prioritise local legitimacy, such as satisfying community norms or market expectations, over the environmental standards imposed by corporate headquarters. Moreover, legitimacy itself is conceptualised differently across studies. Some scholars emphasise conformity to stakeholder expectations (Xu and Gursoy, 2015), whereas others link legitimacy to institutional adherence, such as certification schemes or industry standards (Rivera, 2006). Yet as Juvan et al. (2021) show, even certified hotels can face criticism when behind-the-scenes practices (e.g. food waste or energy misuse) contradict their public messaging. In this context, visible sustainability initiatives may appear performative if they are not supported by transparent operational practices. Consequently, institutional compliance does not necessarily translate into stakeholder trust, reinforcing the complexity of the legitimacy and greenwashing relationship. Authenticity emerged as a recurring theme in discussions of EM in the hotel sector (Ling and Aziz, 2021; Sukhu and Scharff, 2018; Yousaf et al., 2021). T. M et al. (2021) added the argument by noting the importance of clearly communicating authentic green practices. Ling and Aziz (2021) demonstrate that perceived inauthenticity in green messaging deters potential guests, while genuine environmental intent can strengthen guests' confidence in green hotels. In the literature, authenticity often intersects with constructs such as guest trust (Chan et al., 2014; Kuo et al., 2022).

While authenticity is widely referenced in the reviewed literature, its role and framing vary across studies. In many cases, authenticity is conceptualised as a guest-centred perception shaped by concerns about greenwashing and is considered crucial for fostering customer trust and loyalty (Sukhu and Scharff, 2018). Yousaf et al. (2021) demonstrate that authenticity mediates the relationship between green initiatives and overall hotel performance, suggesting that it plays a strategic role in sustainability outcomes. Kuo et al. (2022) further highlight that increasing public awareness of sustainability pressures organisations to adopt socially expected behaviours, which indirectly influences how environmental practices are enacted and communicated. The literature also emphasises the importance of guest involvement in sustainability efforts. Specifically, when hotels involve guests directly in sustainability efforts, such as through behavioural nudges or co-created environmental messaging, these actions tend to strengthen perceptions of authenticity. Such engagement can support the implementation of authentic environmental practices, as guests' beliefs and concerns about environmental issues also influence hotel attitudes and responses (Chang et al.,

2015; Noor and Kumar, 2014; Sucheran and Moodley, 2019). The literature, therefore, suggests that the effectiveness of EM practices depends not only on their adoption but also on how authentically these initiatives are perceived by guests.

4.2. Drivers of environmental management practices

The different EM practices implemented by hotels highlight the factors that motivate adoption, which are further examined through the lens of institutional drivers and pressures (answering RQ2). Mimetic pressure, while not immediate, has long-term impacts on hotels, pushing them to adopt similar sustainable practices to maintain competitiveness and credibility (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2014). Small hotels mimic sustainable practices due to competitive dynamics, resource constraints, and gaining legitimacy (Leroux and Pupion, 2018; Mzembe et al., 2019). Proactive hotels then serve as benchmarks for non-eco-friendly ones (Buffa et al., 2018). Piya et al. (2022) note that geographic proximity intensifies mimicry tendencies. Moscovici (2022), adds that industry collaboration and new environmental technology can enhance sustainability, as seen in ski resorts.

Coercive pressures, such as government regulations, significantly shape hotels' green activities (Hsiao et al., 2018; Leroux and Pupion, 2018; Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2014). However, Ouyang et al. (2019) found enforcement regulations less effective than supportive ones. The impact of government monitoring varies by hotel location (Rivera, 2006). Larger and foreign-owned firms show higher environmental compliance (Mzembe et al., 2019). Stakeholder influence is crucial for global hotels to disclose carbon information (de Grosbois and Fennell, 2022), with guests being significant drivers of green policies (Khatter et al., 2021b). Moreover, Buffa et al. (2018) highlight the role of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) in facilitating EM practices through collaboration. Contrary to Ouyang et al. (2019), Khatter et al. (2021b) find guests' awareness significant. Guests prefer hotels that provide information on environmental practices and local activities (Ru-zhe et al., 2023). Involving guests in green initiatives through rewards like discounts for eco-friendly behaviours also promotes participation (T. M et al., 2021; Chan et al., 2022).

Normative pressure aligns with environmental and social values (Mzembe et al., 2019; Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2014). Due to the indirect influence on behaviour and intention alone, Leroux and Pupion (2018) note that normative pressure appears to be a less appealing alternative for implementing green practices. However, normative impact might still affect the adoption behaviour directly if there is alignment with the organisation's principles (Bagur-Femenias et al., 2016; Vlad et al., 2016; Yousaf et al., 2021). Cooperation among business actors is crucial to unifying strategy in the supply chain to foster sustainable practices (Xu and Gursoy, 2015). The collaboration can help in developing circular practices, which can increase awareness among tourists, leading to more sustainable tourism products and services (Florido et al., 2019). Ge et al. (2018) then found that franchising outperforms management contracts and joint ventures in balancing strategic objectives and final performance for sustainability.

A significant aspect that helps in adopting green in the hotel is the expectation from stakeholders, mainly investors (Ouyang et al., 2019), which pushes managers to make quick decisions and respond more efficiently (Chan et al., 2022; Fatima and Elbanna, 2023). This makes normative pressure also closely related to internal driver (Lee et al., 2013), with top management commitment being crucial (Haldorai et al., 2022). A positive work atmosphere and clear environmental guidelines enhance sustainable services (Sutarmin et al., 2023). Encouraging employees to share green ideas in a supportive environment is essential (Kuo et al., 2022; Ru-zhe et al., 2023). Emphasising a “like-family” environment and integrating green into HR practices are key for sustainable adoption (Abaeian et al., 2019; Chan et al., 2014; Darvishmotevali and Altinay, 2022). At the same time, the perceived benefits, such as enhanced competitiveness, improved company image,

and cost savings, can motivate hotels to adopt EM practices more actively (Bagur-Femenias et al., 2016; Buffa et al., 2018). Environmental and social incentives have been shown to positively shape attitudes toward green hotels (Eid et al., 2020), while ethical motivations can also encourage the adoption of sustainable practices (Buffa et al., 2018). However, demand for green services does not consistently translate into stronger engagement in sustainability initiatives (Abaeian et al., 2019). Recognising the potential organisational advantages of sustainability may therefore strengthen how hotels respond to institutional pressures. Laggat et al. (2023) further note that acknowledging these benefits can improve organisational performance, suggesting that perceived benefits play an important role in translating institutional pressures into EM adoption.

5. Discussion

RQ1 examines how EM practices are implemented in the hotel industry. Although such practices have become widespread, their implementation varies considerably across hotels. For example, some hotels implement a broad range of initiatives, such as recycling, CSR reporting, and eco-certifications, whereas others adopt only a few select practices or engage in more symbolic actions. This varied implementation is reflected in the phenomenon of greenwashing, defined as the deceptive promotion of EM practices primarily to signal compliance rather than to achieve substantive environmental change (Bernini and La Rosa, 2023; de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). These varied patterns raise questions about what motivates hotels to adopt environmental practices in the first place. Addressing RQ2, the findings indicate that such motivations can be understood through the lens of institutional pressures. Institutional pressures have a comprehensive group of factors that affect a firm, stemming from external sources. While prior research has identified drivers and barriers to sustainability adoption, it has rarely systematically categorised these influences into coercive, normative, and mimetic dimensions. Table 5 summarises the sources of these pressures and their influence on hotel EM practices.

Among them, mimetic pressure appears relatively weaker and more situational. Its influence is stronger when sustainability is framed as a competitive advantage. Hotels often imitate nearby green or luxury hotels (Ouyang et al., 2019; Piya et al., 2022), which shows that such behaviour is motivated by legitimacy-seeking, rather than deep-rooted environmental values. In contrast, coercive and normative pressures frequently overlap and reinforce each other. While institutional pressures are often categorised separately, literature shows a more nuanced interdependence when pressures are combined in shaping hotel EM practices. Specifically, coercive pressures, such as regulatory mandates or stakeholder scrutiny, appear to drive stakeholders' perception. For instance, Leroux and Pupion (2018) note that a company's perception of regulatory expectations influences how sustainability is prioritised. This interplay indicates that coercive pressure may not be sufficient on its own to pursue change, but it can foster normative alignment when perceived as credible or urgent. This shows that normative commitment may be better understood not as an isolated driver, but as a response mechanism to regulatory imperatives.

Institutional pressures show why organisations pursue practices under coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures. However, the influence does not appear to result in consistent or comprehensive implementation, and deviates from the concept of institutional isomorphism (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983), making EM in hotels less a matter of capability and more a matter of selective compliance shaped by institutional expectations. Thus, there is a persistent gap in which institutional pressures of green initiatives alone do not necessarily reflect genuine environmental commitment. This raises an important question related to how hotels interpret and respond to institutional pressures under conditions of scrutiny. One explanation lies in the impression-oriented nature of organisational behaviour.

The extent to which institutional pressures translate into authentic

Table 5
Antecedents of institutional pressures.

Institutional Pressures	Category	Antecedents
Coercive	Social and company environmental pressure (Lee et al., 2013; Leroux and Pupion, 2018).	Demands from guests to incorporate green practices (Abaeian et al., 2019; Khatter et al., 2021b; Sucheran and Moodley, 2019). Community sustainability awareness (Laggat et al., 2023). Opinion from the dependent parties (Leroux and Pupion, 2018). Stakeholder pressure (Ouyang et al., 2019).
	Cultural expectations in society (Lee et al., 2013).	Being the vital business player for the development of the area (Buffa et al., 2018). Expectations of host communities about businesses' impact on social well-being (Mzembe et al., 2019)
	Regulatory pressure (Leroux and Pupion, 2018; Mzembe et al., 2019).	Mandatory for the business to comply with government regulations (Hsiao et al., 2018) The existence of regulatory bodies that enforce green practice (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2014).
Mimetic	Imitation of other organisations' behaviour (Lee et al., 2013; Leroux and Pupion, 2018).	DMOs and key local actors' sustainability value levels (Buffa et al., 2018; Moscovici, 2022; Mzembe et al., 2019). Lack of awareness and collaboration with other key actors in the hotel business (Buffa et al., 2018). Being within a close distance of large hotels or luxury hotels (Ouyang et al., 2019; Piya et al., 2022). Having a "first-mover" of green hotels around the business area creates a new legitimate aspect (Buffa et al., 2018; Leroux and Pupion, 2018).
Normative	Management professionalisation (Lee et al., 2013; Mzembe et al., 2019).	Managerial trust and support for the employees to implement sustainable practices (Fatima and Elbanna, 2023). Manager's role in measuring and implementing sustainability initiatives (Abaeian et al., 2019). Top manager's commitment and decision on practising the environmental practices (Bagur-Femenias et al., 2016; Kuar et al., 2022; Laggat et al., 2023). Company's perception of the regulations (Leroux and Pupion, 2018). Owner's perception of sustainability and firm's environment needs (Mzembe et al., 2019). Implement green HRM (Darvishmotevali and Altinay, 2022). Implement Green Marketing Operations (GMO) (Fatoki, 2019).

(continued on next page)

Table 5 (continued)

Institutional Pressures	Category	Antecedents
	Legitimate standards and accepted norms (Leroux and Pupion, 2018).	Ethical consideration and value (Abaeian et al., 2019; Buffa et al., 2018). Company's awareness of environmental sustainability (Buffa et al., 2018; Ouyang et al., 2019).

EM practices appears to depend on how the authenticity of these initiatives is perceived. Strong pressures or cues may promote visible practices aimed at compliance or market positioning, but when guest expectations are unpredictable, or sustainability initiatives are seen as risky, even strong external pressure may fail to generate commitment (Li et al., 2023; Yi et al., 2018). The literature frequently conceptualises authenticity as a guest-centred evaluation shaped by concerns about greenwashing. This is also partially because hotels are service-oriented, making them guest-centric. A recent study also argues that Institutional Theory still black-boxes the audience's real-time sense-making, the moment-to-moment evaluations through which legitimacy is ultimately earned (Bitektine et al., 2025; Bitektine and Haack, 2015). The literature further suggests that authenticity plays a crucial interpretive role in shaping how environmental initiatives are evaluated and enacted within the hotel industry. The effectiveness of EM practices depends not only on their adoption but also on how authentically these initiatives are perceived by guests. Institutional pressures may motivate hotels to introduce sustainability initiatives, but the translation of these pressures into authentic environmental practices is shaped by how hotels anticipate and respond to guest evaluations.

While institutional pressures cover pressures from external, literature also notes impactful internal organisational conditions, particularly top management support and perceived benefits. This is supported from literature, where investors' demand does not consistently drive the practice (Abaeian et al., 2019; Ouyang et al., 2019), but ethical motivations among hotel leaders can encourage the adoption of sustainable practices (Buffa et al., 2018). Similarly, environmental concerns and social incentives positively influence attitudes toward green hotels (Eid et al., 2020), suggesting that when sustainability is perceived as strategically beneficial, institutional pressures are more likely to result in meaningful implementation. These findings indicate that institutional pressures are filtered through managerial interpretation, shaping whether hotels pursue genuine environmental practices or engage in more symbolic compliance.

The aforementioned factors emphasise the impression-oriented nature of organisational responses, which underpins Impression Management Theory (Gardner and Martinko, 1988; Goffman, 1959).

5.1. Impression management as the micro-mechanism of authenticity

Impression Management Theory (IMT) conceptualises organisational behaviour as strategically framed performance in anticipation of audience evaluation (Gardner and Martinko, 1988; Goffman, 1959). In organisational and sustainability research, IMT has been applied to feedback-seeking behaviour, CSR strategy, reputational repair, and symbolic conformity under institutional scrutiny (Cheng et al., 2022; Hon and Gamor, 2022; Mao et al., 2024). Environmental reporting and sustainability communication are arenas in which organisations actively construct interpretive cues to influence stakeholder evaluation. (Ertuna et al., 2019).

IMT offers a robust and multi-level framework to examine how hotel industry strategically presents themselves to key stakeholders (Gardner and Martinko, 1988). As Bolino et al. (2008) highlight, IMT extends beyond individual behaviours to encompass organisational efforts to construct, enhance, and protect images that align with desired identities

and legitimacy. Crucially, however, such image construction is not inherently persuasive; its effectiveness depends on audience interpretation and the perceived coherence between projected claims and observable practices (Bolino et al., 2016), emphasis the distinguishes of IMT. Audiences are therefore not passive recipients; they are evaluative agents.

Sustainability practices are therefore not only adopted or signalled but also enacted within specific interactional settings to create a "definition of situation" (Gardner and Martinko, 1988). Hotels selectively disclose environmental initiatives, embed them in guest encounters, and visually cue their sustainability commitments. These impression-management practices shape whether institutional conformity is interpreted as substantive commitment or as performative compliance. Authenticity judgements emerge through this process.

Integrating Institutional Theory with IMT thus enables a multilevel explanation: institutional pressures drive adoption; impression-management practices shape presentation and interpretation; authenticity act as audience endorsement; and legitimacy emerges as the cumulative outcome of these evaluations. This integration provides a clearer behavioural foundation for the framework this study aims to develop.

Top management support, perceived benefits, and guest perceived authenticity, therefore, become critical mechanisms through which pressures are evaluated, determining how a hotel's sustainability initiatives can be perceived as a genuine commitment.

5.2. Positioning constructs and variables

To better understand and develop the framework describing the relationship between institutional pressures and hotel EM practices, as well as the variables identified in the literature, this study employed the construct positioning and variable classification framework (Lusiantoro et al., 2018) as an interpretive device to refine the theoretical framework of Lee et al. (2013). This approach examines how institutional pressure has been conceptualised across prior studies, rather than assuming a fixed theoretical role. The mapping shows how the construct has been positioned across prior studies, as an antecedent, primary dimension, moderating factor, mediating mechanism, or consequence.

The positioning analysis reveals substantial conceptual variation, as shown in Appendix E and Appendix F. Across the reviewed literature, institutional pressure is most frequently treated as an implicit antecedent that shapes organisational behaviour and decision-making to sustainability expectations (Fatoki, 2019). In several studies, it also functions as a primary explanatory dimension influencing environmental management adoption and performance outcomes (Eid et al., 2020; Haldorai et al., 2022; Hsiao et al., 2018). In others, it appears as a moderating mechanism affecting CSR implementation (Abaeian et al., 2019). However, it is rarely conceptualised as a secondary dimension, suggesting that its influence is typically assumed rather than examined as a result. This implicit positioning indicates a tendency to treat institutional pressure as a static driver, without sufficiently theorising the mechanisms through which it produces either substantive or symbolic responses. These findings highlight the need to treat institutional pressure more explicitly and to inform the refinement of the theoretical framework proposed in this paper, positioning it as a primary dimension driving hotel environmental management practice.

Following the positioning analysis, the constructs were further organised through a classification process. While positioning identifies how a construct has been treated across prior studies, classification groups related constructs into broader conceptual categories to reveal their structural relationships (Lusiantoro et al., 2018). Referring to the knowledge from thematic findings and the positioning process, institutional pressure and its dimensions were classified as primary drivers shaping organisational responses. Impression management was then further categorised as a mechanism through which organisations respond to such pressures, potentially leading to either substantive or

symbolic environmental management practices. As part of it, guest perceived authenticity is positioned as a mediating construct influencing how pressures are interpreted and evaluated. Top management support and perceived benefits then serve as moderating variables that influence the relationship between institutional pressure and hotel environmental management practices. Table 6 lists the variable categories and their alignment.

5.3. Cross-theme integrative synthesis

While the findings identified coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures in isolation, a more integrative reading of the literature reveals how these forces interact dynamically over time. Regulatory mandates (coercive) trigger compliance routines that become institutionalised as “the way we do things” (normative). Early adopters operationalise these routines in visible ways, such as eco-labels and CSR reports, which neighbouring firms imitate (mimetic). Over time, the locus of coercion shifts from the regulator to the competitive field itself, creating a pressure cascade.

Within this dynamic, authenticity emerges as a critical interpretative coupling mechanism. Guests interpret the mix of signals through an authenticity heuristic. When disclosures and on-site cues align, authenticity is granted, enhancing legitimacy and customer loyalty; when misaligned, authenticity is withheld, and accusations of greenwashing intensify. The reviewed studies indicate that guests rarely frame their evaluations in terms of legitimacy; instead, they describe experiences as ‘genuine’, ‘not staged’, or ‘for show’, reflecting authenticity-based judgement. These authenticity judgements predict revisit intention (Wang and Li, 2023) and word-of-mouth, irrespective of an actor’s institutional standing. By foregrounding authenticity as a mediator, we illuminate how impression-management practices translate field-level pressures into audience responses that later aggregate into legitimacy. This perspective enriches rather than substitutes Institutional Theory by specifying the behavioural processes through which

Table 6
Classification of constructs and variables.

Institutional Pressures	Categories	Constructs and Variables [number of articles]			
Coercive	Coercive Pressures	Coercive Pressures [1]			
	Legitimacy	Legitimacy [1]			
	Regulatory Pressure	Regulatory Pressure [2]			
	Visitor Expectation & Behaviour	Visitor Expectation & Behaviour [4]			
	Stakeholder Demand	Stakeholder Demand [2]			
Mimetic	Mimetic Pressures	Mimetic Pressures [2]			
	Competitiveness	Competitiveness [3]			
Normative	Normative Pressures	Competitive Advantage [1]			
		Normative Pressures [2]			
		CSR [4]			
	Firms' Value	Firms' Characteristics [2]			
		Firms' Image [5]			
		Absorptive capacity [1]			
	Environmental Management	Environmental Management [10]			
		Green Marketing [2]			
		Green Certification [1]			
		Green HRM [2]			
Impression Management	Categories	Constructs and Variables [number of articles]			
			Actors	Guest Perception of Authenticity [3]	
				Authenticity [2]	
				Top Management Support [1]	
				Behavioural Intention [4]	
			Stimuli	Perceived Benefit	Top Management Commitment [1]
					Managerial Trust [1]
					Perceived Benefit [1]
					Performance [10]
					Loyalty [3]

institutional conformity is interpreted and endorsed.

Importantly, it also clarifies the rationale for privileging Impression Management Theory (IMT) over alternative perspectives such as Signalling Theory or Legitimacy Theory. Whereas these frameworks explain why organisations communicate or pursue conformity, IMT uniquely offers the micro-process vocabulary required to unlock the “last metre” of institutional work, how organisations actively shape authenticity impressions in situ. Table 7 presents a comparative overview of theoretical lenses applied in the literature, highlighting the distinctive contribution of IMT in explicating the micro-dynamics of authenticity work.

The purpose of this integrative synthesis is not merely to aggregate findings across themes but to articulate a multilevel theoretical explanation of how institutional pressures translate into credible environmental management practices. While prior sections have identified the structural drivers of adoption and the challenges of greenwashing, this section clarifies the evaluative and behavioural mechanisms through which conformity is either endorsed as genuine or dismissed as symbolic.

5.4. Propositions and refined theoretical framework

The theoretical framework addresses RQ3 by examining how guest perception, top management support, and perceived benefits may influence hotel responses to institutional pressures. Built upon the initial framework of Lee et al. (2013), it conceptualises environmental management practices within the hotel industry as shaped by environmental concerns and institutional pressures (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983). These pressures, detailed in the literature (Fatoki, 2019; Vlad et al., 2016), are proposed to guide hotel practices, including regulatory and societal expectations. Hsiao et al. (2018) suggest that while such pressures foster isomorphism, they may also dilute organisational distinctiveness, highlighting the need for continual adaptation in environmental management.

Proposition 1. . Institutional pressures may influence hotel environmental management practices, implying that higher institutional demands could be associated with improved implementation of those practices.

This study further theorises that guests’ perceptions of authenticity may mediate the relationship between institutional pressures and environmental management practices. As authenticity is conceptualised as a guest-centred evaluation, it becomes an important factor in shaping the adoption of environmental management practices (Sukhu and Scharff, 2018). Building on this, Kuo et al. (2022) suggests that authenticity judgements emerge after organisations respond to institutional pressures, influencing how firms subsequently enact socially expected behaviours. However, such judgements depend on guests’ perceptions of transparency and sincerity, which are critical in evaluating environmental initiatives (Sucheran and Moodley, 2019).

Proposition 2. . Guests' perception of the authenticity of hotels' environmental efforts may mediate the relationship between institutional pressures and the adoption of environmental management practices.

Guests' assessments of hotels' environmental sincerity and credibility are theorised to influence how these efforts translate into concrete practices such as recycling, energy efficiency, and eco-label certifications (Leroux and Pupion, 2018; Piya et al., 2022; Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2014). Mediation analysis will explore how institutional pressures shape guests’ perceptions of authenticity, which then may affect the adoption of environmental management practices. Thus, it leads to:

Proposition 3. . Guests' perception of authenticity may shape the concrete actions of hotel environmental management practices. A higher perception of authenticity among guests is hypothesised to positively influence the adoption of such practices.

The framework also conceptualises top management support as a

Table 7
Theories comparison.

Criterion	Institutional Theory (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983)	Impression Management Theory (Gardner and Martinko, 1988)	Signalling Theory (Connelly et al., 2010)	Legitimacy Theory (Suchman, 1995)
Core focus	Field-level pressures	Actor framing & staging	Costly cues under uncertainty	Conformance to societal norms
Primary mechanism	Coercive/normative/mimetic	Framing, scripting, staging	Costly signals	Norm compliance
Treatment of the audience	Collective evaluator	Granular, multivocal evaluator	Binary receiver	Undifferentiated mass
Temporal sensitivity	Slow diffusion	Real-time feedback	Static cue	Static legitimacy state
Added value	Explains why pressure exists (Lee et al., 2013; Ouyang et al., 2019)	Explains how pressure is enacted	Partly explains ecolabel uptake (Leroux and Pupion, 2018; Seele and Gatti, 2017)	Black-boxes audience (Abacian et al., 2019; Seele and Gatti, 2017)

potential moderator between institutional pressures and environmental management practices. Leadership commitment is considered pivotal (Kerdpitak, 2019; Kuar et al., 2022). Unlike employees, top management's support significantly influences the adoption of environmental management practices. Fatima and Elbanna (2023) suggesting that managers with greater trust and commitment tend to foster innovation. From the above statements, it can be proposed that:

Proposition 4. . *The relationship between institutional pressures and the adoption of environmental management practices may be moderated by the level of top management support. Greater management support could strengthen the influence of institutional pressures on environmental management adoption.*

Lastly, perceived benefits, such as enhanced competitiveness, company image, and cost savings (Bagur-Femenias et al., 2016; Buffa et al., 2018), are hypothesised to moderate the relationship between institutional pressures and environmental management adoption. Langgat et al. (2023) note that recognising these benefits can encourage improved performance, supporting:

Proposition 5. . *The relationship between institutional pressures and the adoption of environmental management practices may be moderated by perceived benefits. Higher perceived benefits are expected to strengthen the influence of institutional pressures on environmental management adoption.*

To help summarise the propositions mentioned previously, Table 8 lists the references used for developing the propositions.

The refined theoretical framework extends Lee et al. (2013) initial model by integrating Impression Management Theory (Gardner and Martinko, 1988). It addresses RQ3 by positioning top management support as an actor and perceived benefits as stimulants in the context of institutional pressures influencing hotel environmental management practices (Wang et al., 2019). Guest perceptions of authenticity, influenced by greenwashing concerns, may also affect these pressures.

Institutional Theory explains why external stimuli are important, but offers limited insight into how organisations turn them into actual practice (de Grosbois and Fennell, 2022). Impression Management Theory addresses this gap by illustrating the micro-processes through which managers select cues and audiences assign authenticity. Consequently, IMT functions not merely as a supplementary lens but as the behavioural engine within the institutional framework. Fig. 3 illustrates the proposed framework, highlighting the relationships between

Table 8
References for the propositions.

Proposition	References from the literature retrieved
P1	(Fatoki, 2019; Hsiao et al., 2018; Vlad et al., 2016).
P2	(Kuo et al., 2022; Sucheran and Moodley, 2019; Sukhu and Scharff, 2018)
P3	(Leroux and Pupion, 2018; Piya et al., 2022; Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2014)
P4	(Fatima and Elbanna, 2023; Kerdpitak, 2019; Kuar et al., 2022)
P5	(Bagur-Femenias et al., 2016; Buffa et al., 2018; Langgat et al., 2023)

institutional pressures, environmental management practices, and the mediating and moderating factors.

6. Conclusions

This study synthesised 52 peer-reviewed articles to examine how institutional pressures shape EM practices in the hotel industry. While sustainability initiatives are widely adopted, the review reveals persistent variation in the depth and authenticity of implementation. Some hotels embed environmental practices substantively, within operational routines, whereas others respond through impression-oriented compliance (Khatter et al., 2021a). This divergence reflects differences in the institutional motivations underlying EM practices, identified as coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures. Importantly, the literature notes that these pressures do not exert uniform or linear effects and deviate from the isomorphic expectations traditionally associated with Institutional Theory (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983). Institutional pressures may instead encourage symbolic compliance, thereby increasing the risk of greenwashing. Thus, while Institutional Theory explains why organisations conform under external demands, it does not fully account for the conditions under which conformity translates into genuine environmental integration.

Existing research has primarily examined greenwashing through customer perceptions (Alyahia et al., 2024; Majeed and Kim, 2023), with limited attention to how hotels interpret institutional pressures and convert them into substantive environmental practices. The literature underscores the importance of guest perception of authenticity within the guest-centric context of the hotel industry, where environmental initiatives are continuously evaluated through stakeholder interaction. The findings further highlight the role of internal organisational conditions, particularly top management support (Fatima and Elbanna, 2023) and perceived benefits (Langgat et al., 2023), in shaping how institutional pressures are translated into EM practices. These three components are theoretically grounded in Impression Management Theory (IMT).

Derived from the findings, this study systematically positions and classifies the identified variables. This conceptual clarification forms the foundation of the refined framework proposed in this study. The framework integrates institutional pressures with internal organisational support, perceived benefits, and guest perception of authenticity to explain how pressures can be translated into authentic practice. In doing so, this study shifts the discussion from merely identifying the source of greenwashing to explicating the mechanisms for mitigating it.

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study contributes to theory in three ways. First, it refines Institutional Theory in the context of hospitality sustainability by demonstrating that institutional pressures do not uniformly produce authentic implementation. The findings challenge the implicit assumption that stronger coercive, normative, or mimetic pressures

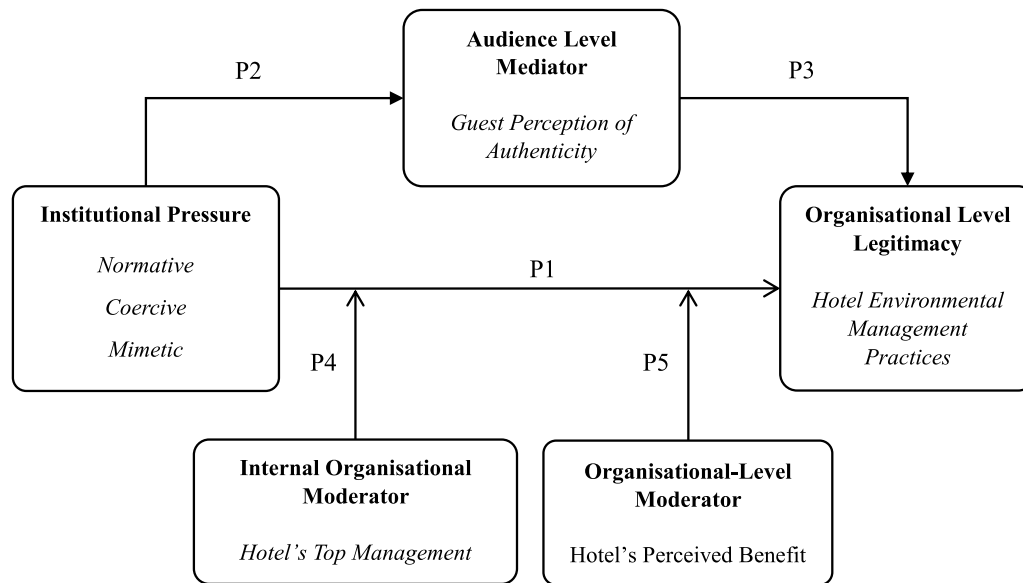


Fig. 3. Refined theoretical framework.

automatically lead to deeper environmental integration.

Second, by incorporating IMT, the study introduces a micro-level interpretative mechanism into institutional analysis. The actor–audience–stimulus configuration clarifies how managers anticipate and manage audience perception when implementing EM practices to create a “definition of situation”. This integration goes beyond structural explanations of conformity and highlights the evaluative dimensions of sustainability practices.

Third, the study advances the conceptual distinction between legitimacy and authenticity. While legitimacy reflects broader field-level endorsement, authenticity operates at the level of perceived coherence between commitments and actions. This distinction helps explain why hotels operating under similar institutional pressures may experience divergent outcomes in terms of perceived credibility and greenwashing risk.

6.2. Practical implications

The practical implications of this paper offer several ways for hotels to enhance their sustainability efforts. A key recommendation is for top management to commit to environmental management practices and clearly communicate their benefits to both employees and guests. Effective communication of authenticity is crucial, as employees play a vital role in implementing and promoting these practices. By focusing on environmental conservation rather than just cost reduction, hotels can foster a sustainability culture and align staff with environmental goals.

For guests, transparency about green initiatives is essential. Hotels should provide honest information about their sustainability efforts, including specific actions and positive impacts, through signage or other communications. Engaging guests with details on how they can contribute to reducing the hotel's environmental impact and offering rewards for eco-friendly behaviours can enhance their perception of the hotel's commitment to sustainability (Ru-zhe et al., 2023). Aligning actions with guest values builds trust and supports long-term success in environmental management.

Policy-makers can use these findings to develop regulations that promote genuine environmental practices. Adopting the antecedent approach can help in creating impactful policies and standards that encourage transparency and accountability, address authenticity issues, and reduce greenwashing. This will enhance both the environmental performance and the reputation of hotels committing to sustainable practices.

6.3. Limitations

This paper provides valuable insights by evaluating the methodological quality of all 52 empirical sources using the Mixed-Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT 2018). The five MMAT criteria are applicable to qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies, making them well-suited to our diverse collection. Two authors independently reviewed each study, achieving an inter-coder reliability of $\kappa = 0.82$, which reflects substantial agreement. Any disagreements were resolved through discussion and, where necessary, by consulting a third coder. However, several potential biases remain. Despite an exhaustive multi-database search (Web of Science, Scopus, Hospitality & Tourism Complete) combined with backward- and forward-citation chaining, studies published in non-English outlets or industry reports may be under-represented. To mitigate this, we included grey literature ($n = 6$) and applied dual coding for eligibility decisions. Nevertheless, the thematic profile may still lean toward Anglo-European practices. Publication bias is another concern. To counter the predominance of positive-results studies in peer-reviewed journals, we also reviewed conference proceedings and working papers. An examination of the funnel plot (Appendix C) indicated a slight right-skewness, suggesting the possible absence of small-sample, null-effect studies. Future meta-analyses may consider using trim-and-fill or p-curve methods to quantify this bias.

Given the rapid growth in digital guest interaction following the pandemic, more recent studies may reveal additional or different mechanisms. We therefore caution against making definitive temporal generalisations. Several limitations also stem from the reliance on literature review methods, as findings may not fully capture the latest trends and practices in a rapidly evolving field. The stringent search strings and inclusion criteria, including the MMAT appraisal, help reduce methodological variance, but certain biases, particularly from cross-sectional designs and non-response errors, should still be taken into consideration when assessing causality. The variety of methods and designs among the included studies may also affect result consistency.

6.4. Future research directions

As a systematic literature review, this study synthesises existing knowledge while also reveals important key areas for future theoretical and empirical advancement. The primary objective of this review was to examine how institutional pressures are conceptualised within hospitality research and to extend this understanding toward the authenticity

of EM implementation. The findings suggest that institutional pressures do not directly translate into authentic practices. Rather, they are filtered through three critical interpretative elements before being enacted: internal hotel support (e.g., top management commitment), perceived benefits of sustainability implementation, and guest perception of authenticity. Future research should build directly on this multilevel framework by empirically testing the translation mechanism proposed in this study. Beyond the hotel sector, the integration of Institutional Theory and Impression Management Theory (IMT) also has applicability to other service-intensive and reputation-sensitive industries. Sectors such as tourism, airlines, food services, and even non-hospitality industries facing environmental scrutiny may experience similar tensions between institutional conformity and authentic implementation. The framework can be operationalised through multi-source data collection, incorporating both organisational-level perceptions and audience-level authenticity evaluations. Collecting parallel data from both perceptions would allow researchers to assess congruence or

divergence between intended authenticity and perceived authenticity, thereby advancing understanding of how greenwashing risk emerges.

Additionally, the focus on institutional pressures and guest perceptions may overlook other influential factors, such as technological advancements, global economic shifts, and financial incentives. Future research could address these gaps by examining practical sustainability aspects, including costs, technologies, and internal strategies. It should also investigate how recent technologies and digital platforms influence hotel sustainability practices, particularly in enhancing transparency and authenticity.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendices

Appendix A: Articles reviewed

Author	Title	Year	Journal	Country	Study Design	Source
Abaeian, V., Khong, K. W., Kyid Yeoh, K., & McCabe, S.	Motivations of undertaking CSR initiatives by independent hotels: a holistic approach	2019	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Malaysia	Qualitative	Scopus
Arun, T. M., Kaur, P., Bresciani, S., & Dhir, A.	What drives the adoption and consumption of green hotel products and services? A systematic literature review of past achievement and future promises	2021	Business Strategy and the Environment	Asian, mainly China, Taiwan, and India	Qualitative Descriptive	Scopus
Assaker, G., & O'Connor, P.	The Importance of Green Certification Labels/Badges in Online Hotel Booking Choice: A Conjoint Investigation of Consumers' Preferences Pre- and Post-COVID-19	2023	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	United States	Quantitative randomised controlled trials	Scopus
Bagur-Femenias, L., Celma, D., & Patau, J.	The adoption of environmental practices in small hotels. Voluntary or mandatory? An empirical approach	2016	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Spain	Mixed	Scopus
Buffa, F., Franch, M., Martini, U., & Tamanini, A.	Hotel profiles based on environmental management practices: Evidence from a study at an alpine destination	2018	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Italy	Quantitative randomised controlled trials	Scopus
Chan, E. S. W., Hon, A. H. Y., Chan, W., & Okumus, F.	What drives employees' intentions to implement green practices in hotels? The role of knowledge, awareness, concern and ecological behaviour	2014	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Hong Kong, China	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus
Chan, M. K. M., Tsang, N. K. F., & AU, W. C. W.	Effective approaches for encouraging hotel guests' voluntary bedding linen reuse behavior	2022	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Asian and Western	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus
Chang, H. "Sean," Huh, C., & Lee, M. J.	Would an Energy Conservation Nudge in Hotels Encourage Hotel Guests to Conserve?	2016	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	United States	Quantitative randomised controlled trials	Scopus
Darvishmotevali, M., & Altinay, L.	Green HRM, environmental awareness and green behaviors: The moderating role of servant leadership	2022	Tourism Management	Kazakhstan	Quantitative non-randomised	EBSCO
de Grosbois, D., & Fennell, D. A.	Determinants of climate change disclosure practices of global hotel companies: Application of institutional and stakeholder theories	2022	Tourism Management	Mainly the USA, China, and Spain	Quantitative descriptive	EBSCO
Diker, O., Akbaş Tuna, A., Uysal, M., & Tuna, M.	Perceptions of hotel managers on future of all-inclusive system after COVID-19: the context of technology hygiene and cost cycle	2022	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Technology	Turkey	Qualitative	EBSCO
Eid, R., Agag, G., & Shehawy, Y. M.	Understanding Guests' Intention to Visit Green Hotels	2021	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research	Egypt	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Ertuna, B., Karatas-Ozkan, M., & Yamak, S.	Diffusion of sustainability and CSR discourse in hospitality industry: Dynamics of local context	2019	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Turkey	Qualitative	Scopus
Fatima, T., & Elbanna, S.	Drivers and outcomes of corporate sustainability in the Indian hospitality industry	2023	Management Decision	India	Quantitative descriptive	EBSCO

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Author	Title	Year	Journal	Country	Study Design	Source
Fatoki, O.	Green Marketing Orientation and Environmental and Social Performance of Hospitality Firms in South Africa	2019	Foundations of Management	South Africa	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Florido, C., Jacob, M., & Payeras, M.	How to carry out the transition towards a more circular tourist activity in the hotel sector. The role of innovation	2019	Administrative Sciences	Spain	Qualitative	EBSCO
Ge, H., Chen, S., & Chen, Y.	International alliance of green hotels to reach sustainable competitive advantages	2018	Sustainability (Switzerland)	China	Mixed	Scopus
Greco, A., Gruia, A. K., Marin, M., Bănuță, M., Olteanu, C., Constantin, I., Gadoiu, M., Teodorescu, C., Dobrea, R. C., & Drăghici, C. C.	Specificity of sustainable structural dynamics of local economy in Romanian tourist resorts	2019	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Rome, Italy	Mixed	Scopus
Guo, Y.-M., Ng, W.-L., Hao, F., Zhang, C., Liu, S.-X., & Aman, A. M.	Trust in Virtual Interaction: The Role of Avatars in Sustainable Customer Relationships	2023	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Hong Kong, China	Mixed	Scopus
Haldorai, K., Kim, W. G., & Garcia, R. L. F.	Top management green commitment and green intellectual capital as enablers of hotel environmental performance: The mediating role of green human resource management	2022	Tourism Management	Manila, Philippines	Mixed	Scopus
Hsiao, T.-Y., Chuang, C.-M., & Huang, L.	The contents, determinants, and strategic procedure for implementing suitable green activities in star hotels	2018	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Taiwan	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus
Juvan, E., Grün, B., Zabukovec Baruca, P., & Dolnicar, S.	Drivers of plate waste at buffets: A comprehensive conceptual model based on observational data and staff insights	2021	Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights	Portoroz, Slovenia	Mixed	Scopus
Kerdpitak, C.	Effect of drivers pressures on green supply chain management performance within the hotel industry; [Wpływ nacisku czynników na działanie zielonego zarządzania łańcuchem dostaw w ramach branży hotelowej]	2019	Polish Journal of Management Studies	Thailand	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus
Khatler, A., White, L., Pyke, J., & McGrath, M.	Barriers and drivers of environmental sustainability: Australian hotels	2021	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Australia	Qualitative	EBSCO
Khatler, A., White, L., Pyke, J., & McGrath, M.	Stakeholders' influence on environmental sustainability in the Australian hotel industry	2021	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Australia	Qualitative	Scopus
Kuar, L.-S., Ng, L.-P., Choong, Y.-O., Chen, I.-C., Teoh, S.-Y., & Tee, C.-W.	Hotels' green practices adoption: determinants and top managers' environmental commitment	2022	Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research	Malaysia	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Kuo, F.-I., Fang, W.-T., & LePage, B. A.	Proactive environmental strategies in the hotel industry: eco-innovation, green competitive advantage, and green core competence	2022	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Taiwan	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Langgat, J., Ramdani, B., Pavic, S., & Tok, E.	Environmentally Sustainable Practices and Hotel Performance: Evidence from Malaysia	2023	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Malaysia	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Lee, C. H., Wahid, N. A., & Goh, Y. N.	Perceived drivers of green practices adoption: A conceptual framework	2013	Journal of Applied Business Research	Malaysia	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Leroux, E., & Pupion, P.-C.	Factors of adoption of eco-labelling in hotel industry	2018	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	France	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus
Li, L., Li, C., Tang, Y., & Xie, S.	Going sustainable: Exploring the attribution of unusual tourist behavior in hotels	2023	International Journal of Hospitality Management	China	Qualitative	Scopus
Ling, T. L., & Aziz, N. A.	The Impacts of Perceived Greenwash Fear on Attitude, Reasons and Green Hotel Patronage Intention	2021	Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism	Malaysia	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Martínez, P., Herrero, Á., & Gómez-López, R.	Corporate images and customer behavioral intentions in an environmentally certified context: Promoting environmental sustainability in the hospitality industry	2019	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	Spain	Quantitative descriptive	EBSCO
Merli, R., Preziosi, M., Acampora, A., & Ali, F.	Why should hotels go green? Insights from guests experience in green hotels	2019	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Italy	Quantitative descriptive	EBSCO
Moscardo, G.	Encouraging hospitality guest engagement in responsible action: Building comprehensive theoretical models to support effective action (invited paper for 'luminaries' special issue of International Journal of Hospitality Management)	2019	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Australia	Qualitative	Scopus
Moscovici, D.	Ski Resort Closures and Opportunities for Sustainability in North America	2022	Land	USA	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Mzembe, A. N., Melissen, F., & Novakovic, Y.	Greening the hospitality industry in the developing world: Analysis of the drivers and barriers.	2019	Business Ethics: A European Review	Malawi	Qualitative	EBSCO
Noor, N. A. M., & Kumar, D.	Eco friendly 'Activities' vs Eco friendly 'Attitude': Travelers intention to choose green hotels in Malaysia	2014	World Applied Sciences Journal	Malaysia	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus

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Author	Title	Year	Journal	Country	Study Design	Source
Ouyang, Z., Wei, W., & Chi, C. G.	Environment management in the hotel industry: does institutional environment matter?	2019	International Journal of Hospitality Management	China	Quantitative non-randomised	EBSCO
Piya, S., Shamsuzzoha, A., Azizuddin, M., Al-Hinai, N., & Erdebilli, B.	Integrated Fuzzy AHP-TOPSIS Method to Analyze Green Management Practice in Hospitality Industry in the Sultanate of Oman	2022	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Oman	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Prakash, S., Sharma, V. P., Singh, R., Vijayvargy, L., & Nilaiash.	Adopting green and sustainable practices in the hotel industry operations- an analysis of critical performance indicators for improved environmental quality	2023	Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal	India	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Rivera, J.	Institutional pressures and voluntary environmental behavior in developing countries: Evidence from the Costa Rican hotel industry	2004	Society and Natural Resources	Costa Rican	Quantitative descriptive	EBSCO
Ru-zhe, J., Aujirapongpan, S., Phetvaroon, K., & Agmapisarn, C.	Why should hotels become more environmentally friendly? Does gender matter in customer feedback?	2023	ABAC Journal	Phuket, Thailand	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Sáez-Fernández, F. J., Jiménez-Hernández, I., & Ostos-Rey, M. del S.	Seasonality and efficiency of the hotel industry in the Balearic Islands: Implications for economic and environmental sustainability	2020	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Balearic, Spain	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Sánchez-Fernández, M. D., Vargas-Sánchez, A., & Remoaldo, P.	Institutional context and hotel social responsibility	2014	Kybernetes	Spain, Portugal	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus
Sucheran, R., & Moodley, V.	Guest dynamics and perceptions towards environmentally-friendly practices in hotels in KwaZulu- Natal, South Africa	2019	African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure	South Africa	Quantitative descriptive	Scopus
Sukhu, A., & Scharff, R.	Will 'doing right' lead to 'doing well'? An examination of green behavior	2018	Journal of Consumer Marketing	USA	Quantitative non-randomised	EBSCO
Sutarmin, S., Yulianeu, A., Darmawan, A., & Kurniawan, A.	Driving Sustainable Change: Green Transformational Leadership, Job Crafting, and Work Engagement in Frugal Eco-Innovation	2023	International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning	Bali, Indonesia	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus
Vlad, L. B., Vasile, D. C., Macovei, O.-I., & Tuclea, C. E.	Determinant factors of green marketing adoption in the hospitality sector	2016	Amfiteatru Economic	Rome, Italy	Quantitative non-randomised	Scopus
Xu, X., & Gursoy, D.	A Conceptual Framework of Sustainable Hospitality Supply Chain Management	2015	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	USA	Qualitative	EBSCO
Yi, S., Li, X., & Jai, T.-M. (Catherine).	Hotel guests' perception of best green practices: A content analysis of online reviews	2018	Tourism and Hospitality Research	USA	Qualitative	EBSCO
Yousaf, Z., Radulescu, M., Nassani, A. A., Aldakhil, A. M., & Jianu, E.	Environmental Management System towards Environmental Performance of Hotel Industry: Does Corporate Social Responsibility Authenticity Really Matter?	2021	Engineering Economics	Pakistan	Quantitative non-randomised	EBSCO

Appendix B. : PRISMA 2020 Checklist

TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	Title
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist	
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.	1
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	1
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	3
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	3
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	3
Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	3
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	3
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g. for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	4
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g. participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	4
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	3

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TITLE			
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	N/A
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g. tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item 5)).	3
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	3
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	3
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	3
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g. subgroup analysis, meta-regression).	3
	13 f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	3
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	N/A
Certainty assessment	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	N/A
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	4
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded, and explain why they were excluded.	N/A
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	Appendix A
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	3
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	4
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	4
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was done, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	4
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	4
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	4
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	3
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	4
DISCUSSION			
Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.	5
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	6
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	6
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	6
OTHER INFORMATION			
Registration and protocol	24a	Provide registration information for the review, including register name and registration number, or state that the review was not registered.	N/A
	24b	Indicate where the review protocol can be accessed, or state that a protocol was not prepared.	N/A
	24c	Describe and explain any amendments to information provided at registration or in the protocol.	N/A
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review, and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	N/A
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	N/A
Availability of data, code and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	N/A

Appendix C. : PRISMA Abstract Checklist

Topic	No.	Item	Reported?
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	Yes
BACKGROUND			
Objectives	2	Provide an explicit statement of the main objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	Yes
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	3	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review.	Yes
Information sources	4	Specify the information sources (e.g. databases, registers) used to identify studies and the date when each was last searched.	Yes
Risk of bias	5	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies.	Yes
Synthesis of results	6	Specify the methods used to present and synthesize results.	Yes
RESULTS			
Included studies	7	Give the total number of included studies and participants and summarise relevant characteristics of studies.	Yes
Synthesis of results	8	Present results for main outcomes, preferably indicating the number of included studies and participants for each. If meta-analysis was done, report the summary estimate and confidence/credible interval. If comparing groups, indicate the direction of the effect (i.e. which group is favoured).	Yes
DISCUSSION			
Limitations of evidence	9	Provide a brief summary of the limitations of the evidence included in the review (e.g. study risk of bias, inconsistency and imprecision).	Yes
Interpretation	10	Provide a general interpretation of the results and important implications.	Yes
OTHER			
Funding	11	Specify the primary source of funding for the review.	No
Registration	12	Provide the register name and registration number.	No

Appendix D. : Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT 2018) quality scores and assessment criteria for included studies

Author(s)	S1	S2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	
Abaeian, V., Khong, K. W., Kyid Yeoh, K., & McCabe, S.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Arun, T. M., Kaur, P., Bresciani, S., & Dhir, A.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Assaker, G., & O'Connor, P.	Yes	Yes						Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes																Good Quality
Bagur-Femenias, L., Celma, D., & Patau, J.	Yes	Yes																					No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Moderate
Buffa, F., Franch, M., Martini, U., & Tamanini, A.	Yes	Yes						Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes																Good Quality
Chan, E. S. W., Hon, A. H. Y., Chan, W., & Okumus, F.	Yes	Yes											No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes											Moderate
Chan, M. K. M., Tsang, N. K. F., & AU, W. C. W.	Yes	Yes											No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes											Moderate
Chang, H. "Sean," Huh, C., & Lee, M. J.	Yes	Yes						Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes																Moderate
Darvishmotevali, M., & Altinay, L.	Yes	Yes											No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											Good Quality
de Grosbois, D., & Fennell, D. A.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						High Quality
Diker, O., Akbaş Tuna, A., Uysal, M., & Tuna, M.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Eid, R., Agag, G., & Shehawy, Y. M.	Yes	Yes																Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes						Moderate
Ertuna, B., Karatas-Ozkan, M., & Yamak, S.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Fatima, T., & Elbanna, S.	Yes	Yes																					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High Quality
Fatoki, O.	Yes	Yes																Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes						Moderate
Florido, C., Jacob, M., & Payeras, M.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes																					Good Quality
Ge, H., Chen, S., & Chen, Y.	Yes	Yes																					Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Moderate
Grecu, A., Gruia, A. K., Marin, M., Bănută, M., Olteanu, C., Constantin, I., Gadoiu, M., Teodorescu, C., Dobrea, R. C., & Drăghici, C. C.	Yes	Yes																					Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Good Quality
Guo, Y.-M., Ng, W.-L., Hao, F., Zhang, C., Liu, S.-X., & Aman, A. M.	Yes	Yes																					Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Good Quality

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Author(s)	S1	S2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	
Haldorai, K., Kim, W. G., & Garcia, R. L. F.	Yes	Yes																					Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Good Quality
Hsiao, T.-Y., Chuang, C.-M., & Huang, L.	Yes	Yes											Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes											Good Quality
Juvan, E., Grün, B., Zabukovec Baruca, P., & Dolnicar, S.	Yes	Yes																					Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Good Quality
Kerdpitak, C.	Yes	Yes											Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No											Moderate
Khatter, A., White, L., Pyke, J., & McGrath, M.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Khatter, A., White, L., Pyke, J., & McGrath, M.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Kuar, L.-S., Ng, L.-P., Choong, Y.-O., Chen, I.-C., Teoh, S.-Y., & Tee, C.-W.	Yes	Yes																No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes						Moderate
Kuo, F.-I., Fang, W.-T., & LePage, B. A.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						High Quality
Langgat, J., Ramdani, B., Pavic, S., & Tok, E.	Yes	Yes																Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes						Moderate
Lee, C. H., Wahid, N. A., & Goh, Y. N.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						High Quality
Leroux, E., & Pupion, P.-C.	Yes	Yes											Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											High Quality
Li, L., Li, C., Tang, Y., & Xie, S.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Ling, T. L., & Aziz, N. A.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						High Quality
Martínez, P., Herrero, Á., & Gómez-López, R.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						High Quality
Merli, R., Preziosi, M., Acampora, A., & Ali, F.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes						Good Quality
Moscardo, G.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes																					Good Quality
Moscovici, D.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes						Good Quality
Mzembe, A. N., Melissen, F., & Novakovic, Y.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Noor, N. A. M., & Kumar, D.	Yes	Yes											Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes											Good Quality
Ouyang, Z., Wei, W., & Chi, C. G.	Yes	Yes											Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											High Quality
Piya, S., Shamsuzzoha, A., Azizuddin, M., Al-Hinai, N., & Erdebilli, B.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes						Good Quality
Prakash, S., Sharma, V. P., Singh, R., Vijayvargy, L., & Nilaiash.	Yes	Yes																Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes						Moderate

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Author(s)	S1	S2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	
Rivera, J.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						High Quality
Ru-zhe, J., Aujirapongpan, S., Phetvaroon, K., & Agmapisarn, C.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes						Good Quality
Sáez-Fernández, F. J., Jiménez-Hernández, L., & Ostos-Rey, M. del S.	Yes	Yes																Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes						Moderate
Sánchez-Fernández, M. D., Vargas-Sánchez, A., & Remoaldo, P.	Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes															High Quality
Sucheran, R., & Moodley, V.	Yes	Yes																Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						High Quality
Sukhu, A., & Scharff, R.	Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes															High Quality
Sutarmin, S., Yulianeu, A., Darmawan, A., & Kurniawan, A.	Yes	Yes											N/A	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes											Moderate
Vlad, L. B., Vasile, D. C., Macovei, O.-I., & Tuclea, C. E.	Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes															Good Quality
Xu, X., & Gursoy, D.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes																					Good Quality
Yi, S., Li, X., & Jai, T.-M. (Catherine).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																					High Quality
Yousaf, Z., Radulescu, M., Nassani, A. A., Aldakhil, A. M., & Jianu, E.	Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A															Good Quality

Appendix E. : Positioning construct and variables of institutional pressure

Ex/Implicitly mentioned in the literature	Antecedents [number of articles]	Primary dimensions [number of articles]	Secondary dimensions [number of articles]	Moderating dimensions [number of articles]	Mediating dimensions [number of articles]	Consequences [number of articles]
Explicit	Institutional pressures [1]	Environmental & organisational perspective [1]	Top management commitment [1], slack resources [1]		Sustainability [1]	Performance [1]
Implicit	Institutional pressures [15]	Environmental management [5], green marketing [1], alliance [1], firms' image [1], CSR [2], green practices [3], supply chain [1], guest perceptions [2], leadership [1]	Joint venture [1], management contract [1], franchising [1]		Absorptive capacity [1], firms' image [2], guest satisfaction [1], authenticity [1], green practices [1], behaviour [1], communication [1], engagement [1], eco-innovation [1]	Performance [4], competitiveness [3], strategic objective [2], behavioural intention [3], loyalty [1], impact & contribution [1], authenticity [1], environmental management [1], innovation [1]
Explicit		Institutional pressures [7] slack resources [1], attitude [1], perceived behavioural [1], stakeholder demand [1],	Normative pressure [2], coercive pressure [1], mimetic pressure [2], firms' characteristics [1], regulatory pressure [2], cognitive pressure [1]	Characteristics [1]	Environmental management [1], performance [1], intention [1], CSR [1]	Competitive advantage [1], behaviour [2], environmental management [2], legitimacy [1], disclosure [1]
Implicit		Institutional pressures [11] environmental management [1], readiness [1]	Perceived usefulness [1], perceived ease of use [1], top management support [1], employee connectedness [1], stakeholders demand [1]	COVID-19 [1], cultural [1], education level [1]	Green practices [2], green HRM [1], guest attitude [2], corporate image [1]	Visitor expectation & behaviour [4], green supply chain [1], performance [2], green marketing [1], green practices [1], sustainability [2]
Explicit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Implicit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Explicit		Business system [1], performance [1]	Firms' characteristics [1]	Institutional pressures [2]		Sustainability [2], green practices [1]
Implicit		Manager perceived CSR [1], collaboration [2], subjective norm [1], environmental knowledge [1], perceived benefits [1]	EMP investing [1],	Institutional pressures [4] motivation [1], network [1], market research [1], value proposition [1], managerial trust [1]	Hotel sector [1]	Implement CSR [1], influence DMO [1], population [1], green practices [1]
Explicit		Collaboration [1]			Institutional pressures [1]	CSR [1]
Implicit		Green HRM [1], trust [1], green practice [1]		Servant leadership [1]	Institutional pressures [3]	Pro-environmental performance [1], loyalty [2], guest experience [1]
Explicit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Implicit		Sustainable strategy [2], guest perception [1], seasonality [1], efficiency [1], certification [1], management [1], greenwash [1], awareness [1]				Institutional pressures [8]

Appendix F. : Respective authors of institutional pressure in relation to hotel environmental management practices

Institutional pressure – hotel environmental management practices relationship	Number of Articles	Authors
Institutional pressure as explicit antecedent	1	(Fatima and Elbanna, 2023)
Institutional pressure as implicit antecedent	15	(Bagur-Femenias et al., 2016) (Chang et al., 2015) (Fatoki, 2019) (Ge et al., 2018) (Kuo et al., 2022) (Martínez et al., 2019) (Merli et al., 2019) (Moscardo, 2019) (Moscovici, 2022) (Noor and Kumar, 2014) (Piya et al., 2022) (Sucheran and Moodley, 2019) (Sutarmin et al., 2023) (Xu and Gursoy, 2015) (Yousaf et al., 2021) (de Grosbois and Fennell, 2022) (Hsiao et al., 2018) (Leroux and Pupion, 2018) (Lee et al., 2013) (Ouyang et al., 2019) (Rivera, 2006) (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2014)
Institutional pressure as explicit primary dimension	7	(T. M et al., 2021) (Eid et al., 2020) (Chan et al., 2022) (Diker et al., 2022) (Haldorai et al., 2022)) (Juvan et al., 2021) (Kerdpitak, 2019) (Khatter et al., 2021b) (Langgat et al., 2023) (Sukhu and Scharff, 2018) (Vlad et al., 2016)
Institutional pressure as implicit primary dimension	11	
Institutional pressure as explicit secondary dimension	N/A	N/A
Institutional pressure as implicit secondary dimension	N/A	N/A

(continued on next page)

(continued)

Institutional pressure – hotel environmental management practices relationship	Number of Articles	Authors
Institutional pressure as explicit mediating dimension	2	(Mzembe et al., 2019) (Prakash et al., 2023)
Institutional pressure as implicit mediating dimension	4	(Abaeian et al., 2019) (Buffa et al., 2018) (Florido et al., 2019) (Kuar et al., 2022)
Institutional pressure as explicit moderating dimension	1	(Ertuna et al., 2019)
Institutional pressure as implicit moderating dimension	3	(Darvishmotevali and Altinay, 2022) (Guo et al., 2023) (Ru-zhe et al., 2023)
Institutional pressure as explicit consequences	N/A	N/A
Institutional pressure as implicit consequences	8	(Assaker and O'Connor, 2023) (Chan et al., 2014) (Greco et al., 2019) (Khatter et al., 2021a) (Li et al., 2023) (Ling and Aziz, (2021)) (Buffa et al., 2018; Yi et al., 2018) (Sáez-Fernández et al., 2020)

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