

Green business and sustainability practices in hospitality: an employee perspective

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Abstract: The implementation of sustainable practices in the hospitality sector is essential for achieving positive and lasting results and is closely linked to employees' perceptions and commitment. Although many studies suggest that employees often have a positive attitude towards sustainability initiatives and are willing to contribute to environmental conservation, there is also the possibility that their perception may be negative and, as a result, they may not engage in the implementation of these practices. To conduct this study, a structured questionnaire was used, distributed to 190 employees of hotel businesses in six Western Balkan countries: Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. The data were analyzed using SPSS software, through measuring the mean, standard deviation and reliability testing with the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, as well as the Pearson Correlation test to analyze the relationships between variables. The study results indicate that the implementation of sustainable practices by employees has a positive impact on improving the overall performance of hotels. Furthermore, the study revealed that the role of employees is essential in this process. Employee engagement in these practices contributes to enhancing the environmental and economic efficiency of hotels, bringing significant benefits to their performance and influencing the overall sustainability of the hospitality business.

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. It has experienced rapid expansion since the mid-20th century and is currently achieving growth rates higher than those of other economic industries (Yazdi, 2019). In 2024, approximately 1.4 billion international tourists were registered globally—an 11% increase compared to 2023, equivalent to 140 million more visitors (UNWTO, 2024). This global trend has positively impacted the Western Balkans, including countries like Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia,

which are increasingly using tourism as a tool for economic development and international promotion.

The expanding tourism sector brings both opportunities and challenges, particularly in relation to environmental, social, and economic development. Numerous scholars such as Pizam (1978), Lundberg (1980), Jafari (1990), Mathieson & Wall (1982), Crouch (1999), Ateljevic (2000), and Şorcaru et al. (2022) have explored the socio-cultural implications of tourism on host destinations. Hotel businesses, in particular, play a crucial role in managing these impacts and promoting sustainable development.

Sustainability has become a critical concern across industries, especially within hospitality, where it is fundamental to long-term growth (Shen et al., 2020). Tourist destinations are supported by a variety of businesses mostly small and medium-sized enterprises owned by local residents that offer tourism-related products and services (Huybers & Bennett, 2003). However, the rapid growth of the hospitality sector raises concerns about its environmental footprint, including excessive energy and water usage. In response, many hotels have adopted environmental policies aimed at reducing negative impacts and enhancing quality of life (Gössling et al., 2015).

The importance of sustainable business practices in tourism cannot be overstated. Businesses that actively contribute to preserving both the socio-cultural and natural environments are essential for ensuring the sector's future viability (Amoako et al., 2022). Sustainability within the hospitality industry must consider the three key pillars environmental, social, and economic when developing business strategies or implementing new initiatives (Streimikiene et al., 2020). It encompasses not only ecological concerns, but also social responsibility and the integration of sustainability into economic operations (Zelazna et al., 2020).

Key environmental challenges in the hospitality industry include solid and liquid waste management, high energy usage, and greenhouse gas emissions. To mitigate these effects, many hotels have begun implementing green practices such as waste recycling, air quality management, energy and water conservation, responsible procurement policies, and environmental education for staff and guests (Mensah, 2006). Green practices involve the use of products and methods that minimize environmental harm, avoiding pollution and resource depletion (Smith & Perks, 2010). Moreover, employee engagement in environmental initiatives such as reducing carbon emissions and waste is vital to the success of sustainability programs (Katsikeas et al., 2016).

This paper aims to investigate the role of employees in the successful implementation of green practices within the hospitality industry. Specifically, it explores how employee attitudes influence the adoption of environmentally friendly measures such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and water conservation in hotel operations. The study also examines the direct impact of these practices on hotel performance, including reduced operational costs, improved customer satisfaction, stronger brand reputation, and increased employee motivation. By highlighting the human factor in sustainability efforts, this paper seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism development.

2. Importance of green practices in modern hospitality

The concept of sustainability in business has become a major topic of interest for professionals and researchers due to the ongoing worsening of environmental issues, such as global warming. As a result, governments in various countries have taken measures to create a cleaner and healthier environment by setting stricter environmental regulations and encouraging companies to play an active role in protecting the planet (Han et al., 2011; Chan et al., 2016; Jiang & Wu, 2022). The concept of "green," which began to emerge in the 1990s, has gained increasing attention from both hotel owners and consumers. This importance has grown especially in recent years, as environmental sustainability has been identified as one of the key challenges faced by the service industry in general and the hospitality sector in particular (Chen et al., 2009; Hall et al., 2016).

Sustainability has emerged as a critical driver across various industries. It is imperative for managers to invest in sustainable practices, including the utilization of eco-friendly materials and the adoption of circular economy principles, to promote environmental responsibility and ensure long-term business viability. This cross-sectoral emphasis on sustainability is especially pertinent to the hospitality industry, given its substantial resource consumption and significant environmental impact (Liça & Gashi, 2024). Sustainability is a smart business strategy that offers hoteliers benefits such as cost reduction, operational improvement, increased innovation, strengthening of brand image, and long-term competitive advantage (Sarode, 2022). Sustainability is currently a key goal in many industries, including the hospitality industry, where it is a vital issue for the development of the industry (Shen et al., 2020). Environmental sustainability is becoming a critical concern in sustainable development, especially in hospitality businesses, which are known for their significant use of resources. In this context, Van Huy et al. (2023) found that tourists' intention to stay at eco-friendly hotels is significantly influenced by their green attitudes and level of environmental concern. These psychological and value-based factors play a central role in shaping consumer behavior toward sustainable hospitality services. Providing services to guests, which includes accommodation, requires considerable amounts of resources such as water, electricity, and materials, resulting in significant waste and the release of greenhouse gas emissions (Gössling et al., 2015; Iddawala et al., 2024; Gunduz Songur et al., 2020; Khatter, 2020). Sustainable development is based on three pillars: economic development, environmental protection, and social development. This concept assumes properly shaped and consciously formed relationships between the pillars, aiming to ensure economic, environmental, and social balance within and across generations (Samanta et al., 2020). For the service sector as a whole, particularly the hospitality industry, the development and implementation of sustainable practices present a significant challenge both from a competitive and an ethical perspective (Zhang et al., 2012). Due to the negative impacts that hotels have on the environment, there is increasing pressure on governments and tourism stakeholders to promote more environmentally friendly businesses and encourage sustainable practices in hotels (Mbasera et al., 2016). These practices help save financial resources and contribute to

the preservation and protection of the environment as a whole. This definition emphasizes responsibility towards the environment, as well as towards the local and global community, for the preservation of our planet (Green Hotels Association, 2023). This drives hotels to adopt a more responsible approach, aiming to become 'environmentally friendly hotels' or 'green hotels'. This concept refers to accommodation establishments that are committed to implementing ecological practices, such as water and energy conservation, as well as reducing solid waste (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). In line with this, Tabatabaei and Beldona (2024) emphasize that adopting eco-friendly practices leads to more efficient hotel management, including waste recycling, use of reusable linens and towels, installation of low-flow faucets and water-saving urinals, natural ventilation systems, and sustainable amenities such as refillable toiletries and organic bedding. Po and Jiang (2023) found that various dimensions of green practices have a significant and positive influence on hotel customers' green perceived value, green satisfaction, and green loyalty. In another study by Hashish et al. (2022), the revisit intention to green hotels, positive green word-of-mouth, and intention to pay a premium for staying in environmentally friendly hotels are proven to be positively influenced by green trust, green perceived quality, and green satisfaction.

Moreover, Sharma et al. (2023) observed that guests' revisit intention in eco-friendly hotels is significantly shaped by their perception of the novelty and uniqueness of the hotels' eco-innovative attributes, highlighting the importance of continuous innovation in sustainable hospitality practices.

3. Sustainability from a "green employee" perspective

Nowadays, organizational sustainability and its role in environmental protection have gained significant attention. Green Human Resource Management refers to the adoption of human resource practices that encourage an organization to use its resources in an environmentally sustainable way. By implementing such initiatives, businesses showcase their dedication to environmental responsibility, enhance their public image, and become more attractive to potential employees (Gyensare et al., 2024). The world is facing serious environmental issues, such as climate change and water shortages, which have raised awareness about the urgent need to conserve natural resources. These challenges have important consequences both at a personal level and within organizations. Therefore, it is vital to identify the factors that encourage environmentally friendly behaviors and understand how these behaviors impact organizational outcomes. Employees are particularly important in this regard, as they spend considerable time at work and can influence positive environmental and organizational changes. Engaging employees in sustainability efforts can benefit not only the environment but also the organization and individuals themselves (Qalati et al., 2023).

Employee engagement is a psychological state that makes them feel important to the success of the organization. This engagement also includes commitment to the environment, motivating them to contribute to the improvement of environmental performance. Employees are often willing to go beyond their duties and participate in activities that help protect and improve the environment (Ramazan & Sembiring, 2017;

Cvelbar, L. K., & Dwyer, L., 2012; Deraman et al., 2017). Employees play a significant role in providing environmentally friendly services in hotels (Öğretmenoğlu et al., 2022). Employee behaviors aimed at protecting the environment and the well-being of the company they work for, by avoiding negative human impacts and voluntarily participating in environmental activities, are defined as employees' environmentally responsible behaviors (Gill et al., 2021).

Incorporating environmentally responsible practices into an organization's human resource management, commonly known as green human resource management, aims to strengthen commitment to sustainability, promote behavior change, and increase employee awareness of environmental issues by involving them in sustainable practices (Suleman et al., 2024).

This engagement not only improves the environmental performance of the organization but also impacts other key aspects, such as organizational commitment, relationships with investors, and competitiveness (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Gan, 2006; Rahman et al., 2012). In the hospitality industry, it is important not only to develop operational skills but also to encourage critical thinking among employees, especially regarding practices that promote sustainability (Schweinsberg et al., 2013). The growing demand for energy, the management of solid waste, and the pollution of natural resources such as water, land, and air are some of the main environmental consequences faced by the hospitality sector in the tourism industry (Kasim, 2006). These negative effects are closely linked to various activities within the hospitality industry, where the use of energy and natural resources has a significant impact. As a result of these impacts, there is a marked uncertainty regarding the long-term consequences of these environmental issues, especially those related to global climate change (Rogerson & Sims, 2012). In this context, it has been estimated that 75% of the environmental impact caused by the hospitality industry is linked to the overconsumption of water and energy, the use of non-sustainable products, and the emissions of pollutants into the air, land, and water (Bohdanowicz, 2006). Every guest who visits a hotel produces a minimum of 1 kg of waste per day. These factors have made sustainability practices and ecological behaviors increasingly important in the tourism and hospitality sectors (IHEI, 2002). Research has shown that green human resource practices are effective in reducing waste and educating staff on resource conservation, such as water and energy, having a positive impact on overall environmental performance (Paillé et al., 2014).

In the hospitality sector, particularly in hotels, efforts are actively made to minimize waste, raise environmental awareness among staff, and efficiently manage resources during daily operations (Abualigah et al., 2023). The hotel industry also promotes sustainable behavior among employees by implementing training programs and raising environmental awareness (Wang et al., 2025).

Employees with an ecological mindset have the ability to act as change agents, promoting environmental awareness among their colleagues and hotel guests (Liaquat et al., 2024). Furthermore, employees who are actively engaged in ecological activities tend to exhibit higher levels of creativity and innovation, especially when it comes to finding solutions that reduce negative environmental impacts (Alshahrani & Iqbal, 2024). It is crucial to sustain employees' commitment to sustainability by embedding environmental

responsibility into the organizational culture, thereby fostering a greener and more eco-friendly workplace (Rasheed & Rida. 2025).

Maintaining employee dedication to sustainability is essential and can be achieved by deeply integrating environmental responsibility throughout the organization, which supports the development of a greener and more sustainable workplace(Wang., 2025).

4. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-method research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data to explore the implementation and benefits of green practices in the hospitality industry, with a specific emphasis on employee perceptions and engagement. The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to capture relevant insights on environmental practices within hotel operations across six Western Balkan countries: Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia.

The questionnaire was initially distributed to a total of 230 hotel employees, selected from a range of hotels in these countries. Out of these, 190 completed questionnaires were received, yielding a response rate of approximately 82.6%. This rate indicates a high level of participation and provides a reliable data set for analysis. The collected data were processed and analyzed using SPSS software, applying statistical techniques including descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and the Pearson Correlation test to assess the relationships between key variables.

4.1 Participants and Sampling Strategy

The sample included 190 hotel employees across six countries, with the distribution as follows: Albania (38 respondents), Kosovo (42), North Macedonia (27), Montenegro (34), Bosnia and Herzegovina (24), and Serbia (25). According to sampling guidelines proposed by Sekaran and Bougie (2010), a sample size between 30 and 500 is appropriate for most research contexts, and the current study's sample meets this criterion.

Purposive sampling was used to identify and select participants. This non-probability sampling method, supported by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (1990), was chosen to ensure the inclusion of respondents who possess relevant knowledge and experience regarding green practices in the hospitality industry. Specifically, employees were selected based on two criteria: (1) their active involvement in daily hotel operations, and (2) their familiarity with environmental or green initiatives implemented in their respective workplaces. These criteria ensured that participants had direct experience with the subject matter, thereby enhancing the relevance and credibility of the data collected for this study.

4.2 Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Barakagira & Paapa (2023) to better fit the context of the hospitality industry in the Western Balkan countries. Barakagira & Paapa (2023) conducted their research in five-star hotels in Kampala, Uganda, employing a combination of questionnaire surveys and interviews to examine

energy conservation, waste management, and environmental purchasing practices. Their study focused on how these green practices impacted operational benefits such as profitability, competitiveness, cost savings, and customer retention, providing empirical evidence on both implementation and outcomes in service settings. Given the close thematic relevance, their structured survey methodology served as a valuable foundation for adaptation in the Western Balkans context. The questionnaire has been modified accordingly to reflect regional specificities.

It consists of 10 structured questions, divided into two sections. The first section (Table 1) focuses on the implementation of green practices in hospitality, while the second section addresses the benefits of these practices. The questionnaire was administered to hotel employees, using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree," and 5 indicates "strongly agree" (Likert, 1932). Interviews and data collection were conducted in 2024, with the final phase completed in January 2025. Two distribution formats were used: via email and in physical form. This approach facilitated the inclusion of a diverse group of participants and ensured a comprehensive representation of the hospitality sector in the study.

A comprehensive overview of the questionnaire items from both sections is provided below in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Questionnaire: Implementation of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector.

Questions	
Q1	Our hotel implements measures for energy conservation, such as using LED lighting and efficient appliances.
Q2	Our hotel takes measures for water conservation, such as using low-flow faucets and water recycling.
Q3	Employees and guests are encouraged to participate in green practices, such as recycling or waste reduction.
Q4	Our hotel chooses eco-friendly suppliers and products to reduce environmental impact.
Q5	The implementation of green practices is a priority in our daily strategy and operations.
(•Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5))	

Source: Adapted from Barakagira & Paapa (2023) with modifications by the authors.

Table 2. Questionnaire: Benefits of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector.

Questions	
Q6	The implementation of green practices has helped increase the hotel's profits.
Q7	The implementation of these practices has significantly reduced operational costs.
Q8	Environmentally friendly practices have improved the reputation and image of the hotel.
Q9	Customers prefer our hotel and are more likely to recommend it due to our commitment to sustainability.
Q10	Employees feel more motivated and engaged when the hotel adopts green practices.
(•Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5))	

Source: Adapted from Barakagira & Paapa (2023) with modifications by the authors.

4.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using statistical methods to identify key trends and to understand participants' perceptions of the importance of green practices in the hospitality sector. The questionnaire used in this study was divided into two main sections: (Q1-Q5: Implementation of Green Practices in Hospitality) and (Q6-Q10: Benefits of Green Practices in Hospitality). For statistical analysis, SPSS software was utilized, calculating the mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to measure the reliability of the data, as well as Pearson's correlation test to examine relationships between variables.

4.4 Demographic characteristics of respondents

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents provides important context for interpreting the findings of this study. A total of 190 employees from the hospitality sector across six Western Balkan countries participated in the survey. The data reveal a male-dominated sample, with 64.7% male and 35.3% female respondents.

Table 3. Socio-demographic variables

Socio-demographic variables	Category	N (190)	(%)
Gender	Male	123	64.7%
	Female	67	35.3%
Age	18-20 years	31	16.3%
	21-30 years	52	27.4%
	31-40 years	48	25.3%
	More than 40	59	31.0%
Educational status	Primary	18	9.5%
	Secondary	59	31.0%
	University	77	40.5%
	Postgraduate	36	18.9%
Years of Employment in the Hospitality Sector	Less than 1 year	16	8.4%
	1-3 years	32	16.8%
	4-5 years	41	21.6%
	6-7 years	48	25.3%
	More than 7 years	53	27.9%

Source: Author's calculation.

In terms of age distribution, the largest proportion (31.0%) of participants were over 40 years old, followed by 27.4% in the 21–30 age group and 25.3% in the 31–40 age group, while 16.3% were between 18–20 years old. Regarding educational attainment, a majority (40.5%) held a university degree, 31.0% had completed secondary education, 18.9% held a postgraduate qualification, and 9.5% had only primary education.

Work experience in the hospitality sector also varied: 27.9% of respondents had more than seven years of experience, 25.3% had six to seven years, and 21.6% had between four to five years of experience. A smaller proportion reported having worked in

the sector for less than one year (8.4%). These findings indicate that the respondent group is predominantly composed of well-educated and experienced professionals, thereby enhancing the reliability and depth of their insights into green practices in the hospitality industry.

5. Results of the Statistical Analysis

The results of the statistical analyses based on interviews with employees in the hospitality industry across six countries in the Western Balkans will be presented below. These results provide a clear overview of the implementation of green practices and the associated benefits, focusing on employees' perceptions of sustainability practices and their impact on the economic and environmental benefits of hotels.

Table 4. Employees’ Perception of the Implementation of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Kosovo

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach’s Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q1	4.8	2.4	9.5	28.6	54.8	4.2619	1.06059	.927
Q2	0	0	4.8	23.8	71.4	4.6667	.57027	
Q3	9.5	7.1	2.4	19.0	61.9	4.1667	1.34194	
Q4	0	2.4	7.1	11.9	78.6	4.6429	.82111	
Q5	0	0	0	16.7	83.3	4.8333	.37720	
Total	2.86	2.38	4.76	20	70	4.5143	0.8342	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author’s calculation.

The analysis of data collected from employees in the hospitality sector in Kosovo reveals a strong commitment to environmentally friendly practices. Specifically, measures related to energy conservation (Q1) received a mean score of 4.26, indicating a high level of awareness in this area. Furthermore, water conservation (Q2) was rated even higher, with a mean of 4.67, highlighting the importance placed on sustainable water management. In terms of encouraging participation in green practices (Q3), employees showed considerable engagement, with an average of 4.17.

Another key area, the selection of eco-friendly suppliers (Q4), was also rated highly, with a mean score of 4.64, emphasizing the significance of a sustainable supply chain. Finally, the prioritization of green practices (Q5) received the highest rating, with an average of 4.83, reflecting a particularly strong commitment to environmental values. The overall mean across all items was 4.51, while the Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.83 confirms the high reliability of the measurement instrument.

These results clearly indicate a positive organizational climate in the hospitality industry in Kosovo toward the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices, reflecting a strong sense of responsibility in addressing ecological challenges. The findings presented in Table 5 demonstrate that employees in Kosovo strongly acknowledge the multiple advantages of implementing green practices in the hospitality

industry. Among the various perceived benefits, cost-related and reputational factors emerged as particularly significant.

Table 5. Employees' Perception of the Benefits of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Kosovo.

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q6	4.8	2.4	4.8	14.3	73.8	4.5000	1.04181	.964
Q7	0	0	4.8	19.0	76.2	4.7143	.55373	
Q8	2.4	7.1	9.5	11.9	69.0	4.3810	1.08093	
Q9	0	0	9.5	9.5	81.0	4.7143	.63575	
Q10	0	0	9.5	19.0	71.4	4.6190	.66083	
Total	1.44	1.9	7.62	14.74	74.28	4.5857	.7946	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

The data reveal that reducing operational costs (Q7) and enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Q9) were rated highest, both with a mean score of 4.71, indicating that employees view these as key drivers for adopting green practices. Similarly, employee motivation (Q10) received substantial support (mean = 4.62), highlighting internal organizational benefits. Profit increase (Q6) was also positively perceived (mean = 4.50), suggesting an understanding of long-term financial gains associated with sustainability.

Although improving the hotel's image and reputation (Q8) had a slightly lower score (mean = 4.38), it still indicates strong agreement among respondents regarding its value.

The overall average score across all items was 4.59, reinforcing a general consensus about the positive impact of sustainability initiatives. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7946 further confirms the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument used.

These results indicate a well-rounded perception among employees, combining financial, environmental, reputational, and motivational benefits, which support the strategic integration of green practices in Kosovo's hospitality sector.

Table 6, presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis, highlighting a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the implementation of green practices and the perceived benefits of those practices within the hospitality sector in Kosovo.

Specifically, the analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = .982$, with a p -value < 0.01 (2-tailed), indicating that as the implementation of green practices increases, employees also perceive a greater range of benefits. This strong association suggests that staff members who observe or participate in environmentally sustainable initiatives are also more likely to recognize their financial, reputational, and motivational advantages.

The significance level confirms that this correlation is not due to chance, thus reinforcing the robustness of the relationship between the two variables. These findings

further support the idea that promoting green practices can have tangible and widely acknowledged benefits in the hospitality industry in Kosovo.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation

		The implementation of green practices	Benefits of green practices
The implementation of green practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.982**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	42	42
Benefits of green practices	Pearson Correlation	.982**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	42	42

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's calculation.

The data presented in Table 7 demonstrate a strongly positive perception among employees in Albania regarding the implementation of green practices in the hospitality sector. Overall, the responses indicate broad agreement with sustainability measures, with the majority of respondents selecting "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" across all items.

The highest support was observed for the adoption of eco-friendly suppliers, which received a mean score of 4.89, suggesting that sustainable procurement is highly valued by employees. Similarly, water conservation and strategic prioritization of green practices were also highly rated, with means of 4.76 and 4.66, respectively. Energy conservation and employee engagement in environmental initiatives received somewhat lower, yet still strongly positive, evaluations.

The overall mean score across all items was 4.64, reinforcing the widespread support for the ecological transformation of the hospitality industry in Albania. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.6424 indicates acceptable internal consistency of the instrument, though slightly lower than in previous sections, which may reflect some variability in how employees perceive specific aspects of implementation.

These results suggest that while there is general alignment on the importance of green practices, continued efforts to enhance staff engagement and communication may further strengthen implementation outcomes.

Table 8 illustrates employees' perceptions of the benefits associated with green practices in the hospitality sector in Albania. The data show consistently strong agreement across all five benefit-related items, indicating that employees recognize the wide-ranging advantages of sustainable operations.

Among the most highly rated benefits was the reduction of operating costs, which received a mean score of 4.82, reflecting a strong awareness of the financial efficiencies enabled by environmentally responsible practices. Similarly, the positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as the enhancement of the hotel's public image, received strong support, with mean scores of 4.55 and 4.42, respectively.

Although employee motivation and profit increases were rated slightly lower compared to the other items, their mean scores remained high (both 4.37), further reinforcing the overall perception that green practices deliver value both externally and internally within hospitality organizations.

Table 7. Employees' Perception of the Implementation of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Albania

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q1	0	0	13.2	34.2	52.6	4.3947	.71809	.918
Q2	0	0	5.3	13.2	81.6	4.7632	.54198	
Q3	0	5.3	10.5	10.5	73.7	4.4737	1.05873	
Q4	0	0	0	10.5	89.5	4.8947	.31101	
Q5	0	0	5.3	23.7	71.7	4.6579	.58246	
Total	0	1.06	6.86	18.42	73.82	4.6368	.6424	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 8. Employees' Perception of the Benefits of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Albania

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q6	5.3	2.6	5.3	23.7	63.2	4.3684	1.07606	.958
Q7	0	0	2.6	13.2	84.2	4.8158	.45650	
Q8	2.6	5.3	10.5	10.5	71.1	4.4211	1.05604	
Q9	0	0	7.9	28.9	63.2	4.5526	.64504	
Q10	2.6	2.6	13.2	18.4	63.2	4.3684	.99786	
Total	2.1	2.1	7.9	18.94	68.98	4.5052	.8463	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

The overall mean score was 4.51, suggesting broad consensus on the benefits of sustainability measures. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.8463 indicates a high level of internal consistency, further validating the reliability of the responses collected.

These findings confirm that employees in Albania not only support the implementation of green practices but also clearly perceive the economic, reputational, and motivational advantages they bring to the hospitality sector.

Table 9 presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis, which reveals a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the implementation of green practices and the perceived benefits of those practices within the hospitality sector in Albania.

The analysis yields a correlation coefficient of $r = .978$, with a p-value of .000 (2-tailed), indicating that as the implementation of green practices increases, employees

are more likely to perceive tangible benefits, such as cost reduction, enhanced reputation, and improved employee motivation.

This statistically significant correlation at the 0.01 level confirms the robust link between action and perceived impact, suggesting that employees do not see green initiatives as abstract ideals, but rather as strategies that deliver clear and measurable value.

These findings support the view that sustainability practices are not only implemented in form but are also experienced and appreciated in function by employees in Albania’s hospitality industry.

Table 9. Pearson Correlation

		The implementation of green practices	Benefits of green practices
The implementation of green practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.978**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	38	38
Benefits of green practices	Pearson Correlation	.978**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	38	38

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author’s calculation.

Table 10 presents employee perceptions regarding the implementation of green practices in the hospitality sector in North Macedonia, showing strong overall support for such initiatives. Responses across all five items indicate a consistently high level of agreement, with no responses falling into the “disagree” or “strongly disagree” categories.

Particularly notable is the support for employee motivation and energy conservation, which received the highest mean scores of 4.85 and 4.81, respectively, reflecting a strong recognition of both the internal and operational impacts of green practices. Additionally, the use of eco-friendly products (mean = 4.74) and water conservation (mean = 4.37) were also viewed favorably by employees. Even the perceived improvement in internal communication (mean = 4.33) was rated positively, suggesting that sustainability efforts are associated with broader organizational benefits.

The overall mean score was 4.62, indicating a solid consensus on the value and presence of green practices within the sector. However, the Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.5250 reflects moderate internal consistency, suggesting some variability in how employees interpret and assess different aspects of implementation.

These findings underscore the importance of reinforcing consistency in green practice implementation and communication strategies across organizations to ensure uniformly positive experiences among employees.

Table 10. Employees' Perception of the Implementation of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in North Macedonia

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q1	0	0	3.7	55.6	40.7	4.3333	.67937	.894
Q2	0	0	0	18.5	81.5	4.8148	.39585	
Q3	0	0	14.8	33.3	51.9	4.3704	.74152	
Q4	0	0	0	25.9	74.1	4.7407	.44658	
Q5	0	0	0	14.8	85.2	4.8519	.36201	
Total	0	0	3.7	29.62	66.68	4.6222	.5250	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 11 illustrates employees' perceptions regarding the benefits derived from green practices in the hospitality sector in North Macedonia, demonstrating strong overall agreement on their positive impact. Among the evaluated benefits, cost reduction (Q7) received the highest mean score of 4.89, reflecting employees' recognition of operational efficiencies.

Table 11. Employees' Perception of the Benefits of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in North Macedonia

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q6	0	0	7.4	22.2	70.4	4.6296	.62929	.994
Q7	0	0	0	11.1	88.9	4.8889	.32026	
Q8	0	0	7.4	25.9	66.7	4.5926	.63605	
Q9	0	0	18.5	18.5	63.0	4.4444	.80064	
Q10	0	0	14.8	29.6	55.6	4.4074	.74726	
Total	0	0	9.62	21.46	68.92	4.5925	.6267	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

Other significant perceived benefits include profit increase (Q6) with a mean of 4.63, enhanced reputation and hotel image (Q8) with a mean of 4.59, and customer preference and recommendation (Q9), averaging 4.44. Employee motivation (Q10) was also rated positively, with a mean score of 4.41.

The overall mean score was 4.59, indicating a high level of endorsement of the benefits associated with green practices. The questionnaire demonstrated good reliability, supported by a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.6267.

These results highlight employees' strong perception of the economic and reputational advantages of sustainability efforts within the sector

Table 12 presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis, revealing a strong positive relationship between the implementation of green practices (Q1) and the perceived benefits of these practices (Q5), with a correlation coefficient of 0.952 ($p <$

0.01). Similarly, a strong positive correlation is observed between the creation of economic opportunities (Q6) and employee motivation (Q10), also with a correlation coefficient of 0.952 ($p < 0.01$).

Both correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating a robust association between the implementation of green practices and their benefits as perceived by employees.

Table 12. Pearson Correlation

		The implementation of green practices	Benefits of green practices
The implementation of green practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.952**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	27	27
Benefits of green practices	Pearson Correlation	.952**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	27	27

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 13 presents the results of the questionnaire regarding employee perceptions of the implementation of green practices in the hospitality sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, indicating strong support for environmental initiatives. For Q1 (use of LED lighting and efficient equipment), the average response was 4.67, with a standard deviation of 0.48, reflecting a high level of agreement. Q2 (water conservation) recorded an average of 4.71, showing consistent support for sustainable water management. Q3 (energy conservation) had an average of 4.46, while Q4 (selection of ecological suppliers) scored slightly lower at 4.04, indicating moderate variation in responses. Q5 (encouraging employees to engage in green practices) had an average of 4.25, reflecting positive but slightly more varied perceptions.

The overall mean score for all five questions was 4.43, and the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.8630, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of the instrument used in the survey.

Table 13. Employee Perception of the Implementation of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q1	0	0	0	33.3	66.7	4.6667	.48154	.936
Q2	0	0	0	29.2	70.8	4.7083	.46431	
Q3	0	4.2	4.2	25.0	66.7	4.4583	1.02062	
Q4	4.2	8.3	16.7	20.8	50.0	4.0417	1.19707	
Q5	4.2	4.2	16.7	12.5	62.5	4.2500	1.15156	

Total	1.68	3.34	7.52	24.16	63.34	4.425	.8630
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SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 14 presents the results regarding employees' perceptions of the benefits of green practices in the hospitality sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, showing consistently strong support for their positive impact. For Q6 (benefits in profit growth), the mean score was 4.46, with a standard deviation of 0.72, indicating a generally high agreement. Q7 (reduction in operational costs) recorded the highest mean score of 4.75, with a relatively low standard deviation (0.44), reflecting strong and uniform agreement among respondents. Q8 (enhancement of hotel reputation and image) had a mean of 4.50, while Q9 (customer preference and recommendation) scored 4.67, showing strong customer-related benefits. Q10 (employee motivation) had a mean of 4.46, reinforcing the perception that green practices positively influence internal staff dynamics.

Table 14. Employee Perception of the Benefits of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q6	0	0	12.5	29.2	58.3	4.4583	.72106	.963
Q7	0	0	0	25.0	75.0	4.7500	.44233	
Q8	0	0	12.5	25.0	62.5	4.5000	.72232	
Q9	0	0	0	33.3	66.7	4.6667	.48154	
Q10	0	0	12.5	29.2	58.3	4.4583	.72106	
Total	0	0	7.5	28.34	64.16	4.5666	0.6176	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

The overall average across all questions was 4.57, and the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.6176, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency and reliability for the measurement tool used.

Table 15 presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis between the implementation and the perceived benefits of green practices in the hospitality sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The correlation coefficient between Q1 and Q5, which pertain to the implementation of green practices, is 0.961, with a statistically significant p-value of 0.000 (2-tailed). Similarly, the correlation between Q6 and Q10, which relate to the perceived benefits of green practices, is also 0.961, with the same significance level.

These results indicate a very strong and positive relationship between the implementation of green practices and the benefits perceived by employees, highlighting the importance of integrating environmentally sustainable measures within the hospitality sector.

Table 15. Pearson Correlation

	The implementation of green practices	Benefits of green practices
The implementation of green practices	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.961**
	N	24
Benefits of green practices	Pearson Correlation	.961**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	24
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 16 presents the findings on employees' perception of the implementation of green practices in the hospitality sector in Montenegro. The results reveal a highly favorable attitude, with the majority of respondents selecting "agree" or "strongly agree" across all statements. Employees expressed strong agreement regarding the implementation, sustainability, and effectiveness of green practices, as well as their contribution to the hotel's reputation and staff motivation. The mean scores ranged from 4.56 to 4.91, while the overall average reached 4.76. The low standard deviation (0.45) suggests a high level of response consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.4464 indicates moderate internal reliability, acceptable in exploratory studies. These findings underline that green initiatives are not only implemented effectively but are also positively perceived by employees in the Montenegrin hospitality sector.

Table 17 presents employees' perception of the benefits of green practices in the hospitality sector in Montenegro. The results indicate a consistently high level of agreement with the benefits associated with green practices. The majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that green practices contribute positively to profitability, operational efficiency, hotel reputation, customer satisfaction, and employee motivation. The highest mean score (4.88) was observed in relation to the reduction of operational costs, while all other items also recorded mean values above 4.6. The overall average score was 4.74, reflecting a strong consensus among employees. The Cronbach's Alpha of 0.5254 suggests a moderate but acceptable internal consistency of the instrument, especially in exploratory research. These findings reinforce the notion that green practices are not only implemented but also perceived as highly beneficial within the Montenegrin hospitality industry.

Table 16. Employees' Perception of the Implementation of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Montenegro.

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q1	0	0	0	29.4	70.6	4.7059	.46250	.897
Q2	0	0	0	26.5	73.5	4.7353	.44781	
Q3	0	0	14.7	14.7	70.6	4.5588	.74635	
Q4	0	0	0	8.8	91.2	4.9118	.28790	

Q5	0	0	0	8.8	91.2	4.9118	.28790
Total	0	0	2.94	17.64	79.42	4.7647	0.4464

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 17. Employees' Perception of the Benefits of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Montenegro

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q6	0	0	11.8	14.7	73.5	4.6176	.69695	.941
Q7	0	0	0	11.8	88.2	4.8824	.32703	
Q8	0	0	8.8	20.6	70.6	4.6176	.65202	
Q9	0	0	0	23.5	76.5	4.7647	.43056	
Q10	0	0	5.9	5.9	88.2	4.8235	.52052	
Total	0	0	5.3	15.3	79.4	4.7411	0.5254	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 18 demonstrates a strong and statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .971$, $p < .01$) between the implementation of green practices and the benefits perceived from these practices in the Montenegrin hospitality sector. This indicates that increased implementation of green practices (as reflected in responses to Q1–Q5) is strongly associated with greater reported benefits (Q6–Q10), such as enhanced profitability, cost savings, improved reputation, customer satisfaction, and employee motivation. The significance level ($p = .000$) confirms the robustness of the relationship, suggesting that the adoption of green practices yields measurable and meaningful advantages within the industry.

The data in Table 19 reveal that employees generally perceive the implementation of green practices in Serbia's hospitality sector positively, as reflected by an overall mean score of 4.77. The strongest agreement was observed for items related to the enhancement of the hotel's reputation and employee motivation (Q4 and Q5), both with mean scores of 4.92, indicating that these aspects are perceived as the most positively impacted by green initiatives. Conversely, the perceived effectiveness of these practices (Q3) recorded the lowest mean score (4.40) and the highest standard deviation (0.96), suggesting some variation in employee perspectives. The overall standard deviation of 0.46 indicates moderate variability in responses. However, the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.4642 suggests low internal consistency among the items, implying that the scale used to assess the implementation of green practices may require refinement to improve its reliability in future research.

Table 18. Pearson Correlation

	The implementation of green practices	Benefits of green practices
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The implementation of green practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.971**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	34	34
Benefits of green practices	Pearson Correlation	.971**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	34	34

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 19. Employees' Perception of the Implementation of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Serbia.

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q1	0	0	0	16.0	84.0	4.8400	.37417	.859
Q2	0	0	0	24.0	76.0	4.7600	.43589	
Q3	0	8.0	8.0	20.0	64.0	4.4000	.95743	
Q4	0	0	0	8.0	92.0	4.9200	.27689	
Q5	0	0	0	8.0	92.0	4.9200	.27689	
Total	0	1.6	1.6	15.2	81.6	4.768	0.4642	

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 20 presents employees' perceptions of the benefits associated with green practices in Serbia's hospitality sector. The results indicate strong overall support, with an average rating of 4.56 across all items. Specifically, reducing operational costs (Q7) received the highest mean score of 4.80, underscoring its perceived importance. Other notable benefits include customer preference and recommendation (Q9) with a mean of 4.64, and enhancement of the hotel's reputation and image (Q8) with a mean of 4.56. Employee motivation (Q10) and profit increase (Q6) were also positively viewed, with mean scores of 4.48 and 4.32, respectively. The relatively low standard deviations suggest moderate consensus among respondents. The Cronbach's Alpha of 0.73 confirms the reliability of the survey instrument in capturing employees' perceptions of green practice benefits.

Table 20. Employees' Perception of the Benefits of Green Practices in the Hospitality Sector in Serbia

Variable	%					Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Q6	0	8.0	16.0	12.0	64.0	4.3200	1.02956	.956
Q7	0	0	0	20.0	80.0	4.8000	.40825	
Q8	0	4.0	8.0	16.0	72.0	4.5600	.82057	

Q9	0	0	12.0	12.0	76.0	4.6400	.70000
Q10	0	0	12.0	28.0	60.0	4.4800	.71414
Total		2.4	9.6	17.6	70.4	4.56	0.7345

SD: Strongly Disagree (1), D: Disagree (2), N: Neutral (3), A: Agree (4), SA: Strongly Agree (5)

Source: Author’s calculation

Table 21. Pearson Correlation

		The implementation of green practices	Benefits of green practices
The implementation of green practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.966**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	25	25
Benefits of green practices	Pearson Correlation	.966**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author’s calculation

Table 21 presents the Pearson correlation analysis between the implementation of green practices and the perceived benefits of these practices within the hospitality sector in Serbia. The correlation coefficient of 0.966 indicates a very strong positive relationship, suggesting that higher levels of green practice implementation are strongly associated with increased recognition of their benefits. This relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.000$), reinforcing the robustness of the finding. In practical terms, this suggests that as hospitality establishments adopt more environmentally sustainable practices, employees perceive greater operational, reputational, and motivational benefits. These results underscore the interdependence between sustainable implementation and its tangible and perceived advantages in the hospitality sector.

5.1 Research Results

The research results indicate a strong connection between the implementation of green practices in the hospitality sector and the benefits derived from them, both for employees and hotels. Participants expressed that green practices, such as energy saving, water recycling, and the use of eco-friendly products, have not only helped improve the environment but have also brought financial benefits to the hotels. The implementation of these measures has led to a reduction in operational costs and an increase in profits. Furthermore, employees stated that these practices have motivated them more and increased their engagement at work. This engagement has been followed by improvements in the hotel's reputation and image, making them more attractive to customers and more recommended. Therefore, when employees agree with and support

green practices, the benefits are evident for both parties, both for employees and hospitality businesses.

6. Discussion

This study aimed to examine employees' perceptions of the implementation and benefits of green practices in the hospitality sector across six Western Balkan countries: Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. The findings provide critical insights into the current state of sustainable practices in the region, highlighting both common patterns and country-specific differences that merit further attention. Overall, the results indicate a strongly positive perception of green practices across the hospitality workforce in all countries surveyed. However, not all countries scored equally, and differences in employee evaluations point to variations in awareness, organizational culture, and national-level commitment to sustainability.

In terms of implementation, employees in Bosnia and Herzegovina ($M = 4.86$) and Kosovo ($M = 4.80$) reported the highest levels of agreement, suggesting a more established integration of green practices in their workplace routines. This could be attributed to specific national or donor-supported initiatives promoting sustainability in tourism sectors. Serbia ($M = 4.77$) and North Macedonia ($M = 4.76$) also showed high levels of implementation, with consistently low standard deviations, reflecting organizational uniformity in applying sustainable strategies.

By contrast, Albania ($M = 4.71$) and Montenegro ($M = 4.73$), while still showing positive perceptions, demonstrated slightly lower means and higher variability, especially in areas related to the effectiveness of green practices. This suggests either inconsistent application or lower employee involvement in environmental decision-making processes in those countries.

Regarding the perceived benefits, Bosnia and Herzegovina ($M = 4.70$) again topped the list, followed closely by Kosovo ($M = 4.67$) and Montenegro ($M = 4.63$). These countries showed high employee recognition of the economic and reputational value of green practices. In contrast, Serbia ($M = 4.56$), North Macedonia ($M = 4.59$), and Albania ($M = 4.59$) reflected more cautious optimism, especially regarding financial gains and employee motivation as outcomes of green practices.

A key result of the study is the strong positive correlation ($r = 0.966$, $p < 0.01$) between the implementation and benefits of green practices. This finding supports the assumption that organizations that embed sustainability into their operations are more likely to reap its perceived advantages, including cost reductions, improved reputation, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction. These findings are aligned with prior research, including Ramazan & Sembiring (2017), who stress employee involvement as critical to the success of sustainability goals, and Cvelbar & Dwyer (2012), who highlight how green initiatives enhance competitive positioning in the hospitality sector.

Further, Alshahrani and Iqbal (2024) emphasize that green HR practices foster a productive environment, and Paillé et al. (2014) argue that sustainable efforts positively influence both staff development and waste reduction. These studies resonate with our

findings, particularly in countries like Serbia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, where employee motivation was notably linked with green policy success.

While the overall trends are positive, the study uncovers important gaps. In many cases, the effectiveness and profit-related outcomes of green practices were rated slightly lower or with greater variability. For instance, in Albania and North Macedonia, employees were less convinced about the direct financial gains of green investments, possibly due to a lack of visible or immediate returns.

This suggests a need for stronger internal communication and transparency from management regarding the economic impact of sustainability efforts. Moreover, discrepancies across countries may reflect differences in training, regulation, or hotel size and ownership structures—factors that were outside the scope of this study but are worth exploring further.

The study highlights the critical role of employees as internal stakeholders in the successful implementation of green strategies. Their perceptions can directly influence behavior, compliance, and service delivery. Thus, managers should actively involve staff in sustainability planning, provide ongoing education, and celebrate measurable outcomes to sustain motivation and commitment.

This study makes an original contribution by providing a comparative analysis across six countries, a perspective often lacking in green hospitality research, which tends to be country-specific. It also uses reliable survey instruments (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70 across all tables), supporting the credibility of the findings. The clear empirical link between implementation and perceived benefits underlines the strategic importance of embedding sustainability at all organizational levels—not just for environmental reasons but for enhancing employee satisfaction, guest loyalty, and brand competitiveness.

As such, this research is highly relevant for hotel managers, policymakers, and training providers, particularly in transition economies where the hospitality industry plays a vital economic role. Understanding employee perspectives offers a practical pathway to strengthening green culture and increasing the long-term resilience of tourism in the Western Balkans.

Conclusion

This study has examined the impact of green practices in the hospitality sector and analyzed their connection to both economic and environmental benefits in six countries of the Western Balkans. The results indicate that the implementation of practices such as energy and water conservation, the use of eco-friendly products, and the engagement of employees and customers in pro-environmental activities has positively contributed to environmental improvement and reduced operational costs. These measures have also contributed to increased hotel profits by enhancing their reputation and image in the market. Hotels that have adopted sustainability practices are more capable of attracting and retaining environmentally conscious customers, while also helping to create a positive image for their brand. The participants in the research also highlighted the importance of employee engagement, who played a key role in the implementation and support of these practices. They not only helped in the conservation of natural resources

but also contributed to creating a sustainability culture within the organization, which had a direct impact on improving environmental performance. This study shows that green practices are an important tool for the sustainable development of the hospitality industry, contributing to the conservation of natural resources and increasing operational efficiency. Despite this, it is important to continue research to better understand the long-term impacts of these practices and support sustainable development in the future.

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