

OVERVIEW STUDIES OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON EMPLOYEE GREEN BEHAVIOR IN HOSPITALITY

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on analyzing the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and employee green behavior (EGB) in the hospitality industry. We reviewed 75 academic articles from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and domestic sources. By applying thematic and narrative analysis methods, the study clarifies the dominant theoretical frameworks, methodological strategies, and existing gaps in this field. Results show that Social Exchange Theory and Social Identity Theory are the two most commonly used theoretical foundations for explaining the CSR-EGB relationship, emphasizing both reciprocal mechanisms and identity-based mechanisms. However, these perspectives do not fully explain how hospitality employees respond to CSR initiatives. Although recent studies have explored additional theoretical frameworks—such as the Stimulus-Organism-Response model, Conservation of Resources theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and motivation-based approaches—to explain the link between CSR and green behavior, this work remains fragmented. Most studies rely on cross-sectional surveys, with very few longitudinal or mixed-method research. In Vietnam, research has concentrated on urban hotels, leaving ecologically sensitive coastal areas underexplored. This paper shows these gaps and proposes a more integrated, context-driven research approach.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, employee green behavior, sustainable hospitality, review, green practices, green tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has drawn growing attention from both researchers and practitioners as firms increasingly recognize its social, environmental, and economic value. CSR is widely understood as a strategic approach through which organizations pursue business objectives while fulfilling moral responsibilities and making voluntary contributions to society and the environment [1]. By doing so, CSR aims to strengthen positive organizational impacts while limiting adverse effects on the broader social and ecological context [2]. In the context of the emerging global economy, where green growth and sustainable development have become central priorities, CSR plays a crucial role in aligning business practices with environmental and societal expectations.

The hotel sector represents a particularly important setting for CSR implementation. Previous studies suggest that CSR supports hotel performance and long-term sustainability [3, 4, 5]. At the same time, hotel operations place substantial pressure on natural resources and are closely linked to challenges such as climate change and water scarcity [6]. In response to

these growing pressures, CSR has come to be viewed as a practical means of limiting environmental harm while generating value for both businesses and society [7].

Building on this context, CSR in hospitality has evolved beyond a symbolic or reputational function and become embedded in everyday organizational practices. Given the sector's close interaction with local communities and its resource-intensive nature, CSR initiatives typically focus on environmental protection, employee welfare, and community engagement [6, 7]. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends not only on formal policies or strategic commitments but also on how CSR is enacted through employees' daily actions and discretionary behaviors at work [2].

Within this context, Employee Green Behaviour (EGB) plays a central role in turning CSR commitments into actual environmental outcomes. EGB refers to voluntary, employee-driven actions that support workplace sustainability, such as conserving resources, participating in environmental initiatives, and encouraging green practices among colleagues [2]. These behaviors are especially important in hospitality, where employees work at the frontline of service delivery and directly shape hotels' environmental impacts [3].

Although the benefits of CSR for employees are widely acknowledged, hospitality research has tended to emphasize attitudes such as engagement, trust, well-being, and commitment, while paying far less attention to employees' actual green behaviors [2, 5, 8]. In addition, employee green behaviour is often treated as a single, undifferentiated construct, which obscures the variety of sustainability-related actions employees may perform and limits insight into how specific CSR practices shape these behaviors [2].

Although academic interest in CSR within the hotel sector has increased [4], the literature remains fragmented and comparatively underdeveloped. Existing reviews are limited in scope and tend to provide only a partial picture of sustainability-related research in hospitality [4, 5, 9]. Furthermore, prior studies largely rely on traditional systematic literature review approaches, with limited use of complementary analytical techniques, thereby constraining a more comprehensive understanding of the field.

In response to these gaps, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of research on CSR and Employee Green Behaviour in the hospitality industry, with particular attention to the Vietnamese context. The study is guided by three research questions:

RQ1. What theoretical perspectives have been used to understand how CSR influences employees' green behaviour in the hospitality industry?

RQ2. Which research methods have researchers applied to investigate these links?

RQ3. What important gaps still exist, particularly in the Vietnamese hospitality context?

Unlike prior studies that mainly provide descriptive reviews of CSR in hospitality, this study adopts an integrative perspective by synthesizing relational, identity-based, and psychological mechanisms underlying employee green behavior. In addition, the study highlights underexplored contexts, particularly coastal hospitality destinations in Vietnam, where environmental challenges are significant but research remains limited.

Therefore, conducting an overview of studies on CSR and EGB in hospitality - both globally and in Vietnam - is a necessary step. This study aims to review existing literature on CSR and employee green behavior in hospitality by identifying key theoretical perspectives, research trends, and emerging gaps. Such an overview contributes to academic knowledge and provides useful implications for hotel managers, policymakers, and tourism stakeholders.

2. CONCEPTS

2.1. Corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a central concept in business ethics and hospitality research, as organizations are increasingly expected to contribute to sustainable development while creating value for multiple stakeholders. CSR is commonly understood as a set of voluntary organizational actions that go beyond profit-seeking and legal compliance to address broader social, economic, and environmental responsibilities [10, 11]. Over time, CSR has evolved from a charity-oriented view into a more strategic and embedded approach integrated into everyday business operations and long-term planning [12, 13]. In the hospitality industry, CSR is especially relevant because hotels rely heavily on natural resources, operate in close interaction with local communities, and are expected to respond to growing environmental and social concerns while maintaining long-term business viability [11, 14]. In this sense, CSR provides an important organizational context for understanding how employees interpret and respond to sustainability-related values and practices.

2.1. Employee Green Behavior

Robertson and Barling [15] define employee green behavior (EGB) as environmentally friendly actions that employees perform to support their organization's sustainability objectives. Ones and Dilchert [16] also note that EGB encompasses not only formal behaviors such as complying with environmental policies, but also voluntary actions like conserving energy or recycling during work. EGB is defined as a multidimensional construct involving private, public, and organizational green actions that individuals voluntarily perform [2]. It represents employees' physical and psychological engagement in ecological initiatives at work, including energy-saving, resource conservation, and eco-initiatives [17].

De Roeck and Farooq [18] suggest that EGB develops from organizational culture, leadership approaches, and how strongly employees feel their workplace genuinely values environmental concerns. The behavior evolves through ongoing interaction between personal motivations and workplace influences such as CSR programs, green leadership, and organizational climate. Notably, creating effective EGB goes beyond implementing environmental policies – organizations need to give employees the autonomy and encouragement to personally engage with environmental protection as part of their everyday responsibilities.

In hospitality settings, EGB is particularly important because employees' daily service routines directly influence resource use, waste generation, and the environmental footprint of hotel operations.

2.3. Hospitality industry

Hospitality provides a particularly important context for examining the relationship between CSR and EGB. Hotels are highly resource-intensive organizations that consume large amounts of energy, water, food materials, and cleaning supplies, while also generating waste through daily operations [19, 20]. At the same time, hospitality is a people-centered service industry in which employees play a frontline role in shaping service quality and operational outcomes [22]. Because of this dual environmental and human dimension, the implementation of CSR in hotels depends not only on formal corporate policies but also on employees' everyday behaviors [21, 23]. This makes hospitality an especially suitable context for understanding how CSR can be translated into actual green behavior at the employee level. In other words, hospitality is not only a sector where CSR is increasingly necessary, but also one in which employee green behavior becomes essential for turning sustainability commitments into practice.

Taken together, these concepts provide the conceptual basis for understanding why CSR and employee green behavior are closely connected in hospitality settings, and why this relationship deserves further synthesis and critical review.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

A comprehensive search was conducted using two leading academic databases, Scopus and Web of Science, which offer extensive peer-reviewed coverage in the fields of business and hospitality management. The search used broader keyword combinations, including (“corporate social responsibility” OR “CSR”), (“green behavior” OR “pro-environmental behavior”), and (“hospitality” OR “hotel” OR “tourism”). However, to ensure relevance, the final selection was refined through screening criteria, resulting in 75 studies.

Inclusion criteria required that studies:

- focused on CSR practices within the hospitality sector;
- explored employee-level green or pro-environmental behaviours;
- were published in peer-reviewed journals;
- were available in English.

Studies were excluded if they:

- focused solely on consumer perspectives of CSR;
- addressed CSR from purely financial or marketing viewpoints without reference to employee behaviour;
- were conference proceedings, opinion articles, or unpublished dissertations.

The initial search identified 296 documents from Scopus and 218 from Web of Science. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 34 relevant articles were retained from Scopus and 27 from Web of Science (including one unique to Web of Science), resulting in 35 unique articles from these databases.

To further enhance coverage and reduce publication bias, supplementary searches were conducted in Google Scholar, the National Agency for Science and Technology Information (NASTI), and top-ranked Vietnamese academic journals. These additional sources yielded 13 more academic articles and one relevant government report. In total, 75 documents were included in the final sample. The study follows a PRISMA-inspired screening approach, including identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages, to enhance transparency in the study selection process. Table 1 summarises the full search and selection process.

Table 1. Document Search Summary for CSR and EGB in Hospitality

Content Focus	Keywords Used	Relevant Articles	Source
Initial database search for CSR-EGB in hospitality	(“corporate social responsibility” OR “CSR”) AND (“green behavior” OR “pro-environmental behavior”) AND (“hospitality” OR “hotel” OR “tourism”)	296	Scopus
Initial database search for CSR-EGB in hospitality	(“corporate social responsibility” OR “CSR”) AND (“green behavior” OR “pro-environmental behavior”) AND (“hospitality” OR “hotel” OR “tourism”)	218	Web of Science
After manual screening (Scopus)	Manual review of titles, abstracts, and full texts	34	Scopus

After manual screening (Web of Science)	Manual review of titles, abstracts, and full texts	27	Web of Science
Unique relevant articles retained	Final number after removing duplicates and overlaps	34 (Scopus) + 1 (WoS only)	Combined
Supplementary academic articles found	Same keywords applied for cross-verification	10	Google Scholar
Supplementary academic articles found	Same keywords applied for national database search	2	NASTI
Supplementary academic articles found	Search through indexed Vietnamese hospitality journals	1	Vietnamese Academic Journals
Relevant grey literature	Environmental and policy-based government publication	1	Government Report
Total	-	75	-

Sources: Compiled by the author

3.2. Data Extraction and Coding

Each publication was carefully reviewed to extract data on:

- study aims and research questions;
- theoretical frameworks employed;
- research methodologies (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method);
- sampling strategies;
- study context (geographic location, hotel type, employee type).

A thematic coding procedure was applied to categorise the studies according to their conceptual contributions, such as theoretical models, mediating or moderating variables, methodological characteristics, and regional focus. Special attention was paid to identifying studies conducted in Vietnam to better align the findings with the country's policy landscape, including the National Green Growth Strategy (2021–2030) and Resolution 08-NQ/TW on tourism development. The coding framework was developed based on key dimensions including theoretical perspectives, research methods, study contexts, and explanatory mechanisms.

3.3. Synthesis Approach

The extracted data were synthesised narratively, supported by descriptive statistics to illustrate the distribution of theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, and study contexts. Thematic clusters were developed to group the research into major areas, including CSR drivers of EGB, mediating mechanisms, barriers and moderators, and contextual factors influencing employee green behaviour. By applying this transparent and systematic process, this review offers a rigorous and comprehensive overview of the CSR–EGB literature in hospitality, providing a valuable reference for both academic research and industry practice.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Regarding the research area

Research on CSR and EGB in the hospitality industry has been carried out in a range of geographic settings, though it is clearly concentrated in Asia (based on Table 2). Nearly two-thirds of the studies (63.5%) focus on Asian contexts, most notably China, South Korea, and Vietnam. Europe and North America together account for 21.6% of the literature, with

attention largely directed toward hotel sectors in the UK, Germany, and the United States. Fewer studies have examined the Middle East and Africa (10.8%), while cross-regional or multinational perspectives remain rare, representing only 4.1% of the total sample. One study was carried out across two countries, combining insights from both developed and emerging markets. It is important to note that Table 2 reflects only empirical studies—excluding theoretical articles, conceptual papers, and non-location-specific publications. This geographic analysis covers 52 studies from the broader set of 75 reviewed. The pattern shows a clear concentration of CSR–EGB research in fast-growing Asian tourism markets, where environmental pressure and sustainability concerns are especially strong. This concentration suggests that CSR–EGB research is strongly driven by rapidly developing tourism markets, while other regions remain relatively underexplored.

Table 2. Geographic Distribution of Empirical Studies on CSR and EGB in Hospitality

Region	Countries Represented	Number of Studies	Percentage (%)
Asia	China, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand	33	63.5%
Europe	UK, Germany, Spain, Italy	7	13.5%
North America	United States, Canada	4	8.1%
Middle East	UAE, Saudi Arabia	3	5.4%
Africa	South Africa	2	3.7%
Cross-regional / Multinational	Global hotel chains (e.g., Marriott, IHG)	2	4.1%
Total	-	52	100%

Sources: Compiled by the author

4.2. Research methodology

Researchers have used a variety of research methods to explore the relationship between CSR and EGB in the hospitality industry. Among these, the quantitative research method, particularly through questionnaire surveys, was the most commonly employed (53.3%). This was followed by the qualitative method (interviews and case studies), which accounted for 28.0%. The mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques, was used less frequently, representing 18.7% of the studies reviewed at Table 3. This distribution shows that researchers predominantly rely on measurable data to examine CSR–EGB dynamics, although there is increasing interest in contextual and exploratory insights through qualitative or integrative methods. This dominance of quantitative approaches may limit deeper understanding of the underlying psychological mechanisms linking CSR and employee green behavior.

Table 3. Research Methods Used in Studies on CSR and EGB in Hospitality

Research Method	Description	Number of Studies	Percentage (%)
Quantitative Method	Questionnaire surveys, statistical analysis	40	53.3%
Qualitative Method	Interviews, case studies, thematic analysis	21	28.0%
Mixed Method	Combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches	14	18.7%
Total	—	75	100%

Sources: Compiled by the author

4.3. Theoretical Framework

Research on CSR and EGB in hospitality has mainly examined how employees respond to CSR at work. Much of this research draws on Social Exchange Theory and Social Identity Theory. From an exchange perspective, employees are more likely to engage in green behavior when CSR is seen as a sincere organizational commitment that builds trust, well-being, and commitment [2, 24]. From an identity perspective, CSR can help shape a green organizational identity that employees internalize, encouraging behavior that aligns with environmental values [2, 25].

More recent work uses the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework to show how CSR shapes employees’ internal experiences – such as emotions, a sense of meaning, or well-being –which in turn influence green behavior or green innovation [2, 24, 26]. Other approaches are used less often but add useful insight, particularly in explaining how personal resources, learning, and motivation support employees’ green actions [25, 27, 28].

Even so, the literature is still fragmented. CSR is often treated in broad terms, and many studies rely on a single theoretical lens or a narrow set of mediators within specific national contexts [2, 24]. This suggests a need for approaches that bring together relational, identity, and emotional processes to better explain employee green behavior in hospitality settings.

The studies summarized in Table 4 show an increasing interest in explaining CSR through multiple theoretical lenses, highlighting its role not only as a policy tool but also as a psychological and organizational mechanism influencing employee green behavior in hospitality. In terms of research content, the reviewed studies mainly focus on three key themes: CSR as a driver of employee green behavior, the mediating role of psychological mechanisms, and the influence of contextual factors such as organizational and national settings. This suggests that current research is concentrated around a limited set of dominant topics, while other dimensions remain underexplored.

At the same time, the literature remains theoretically fragmented, as different perspectives are often applied independently rather than in an integrated manner. This pattern suggests that current research remains relatively narrow in scope, with limited exploration of dynamic interactions between theoretical perspectives and contextual factors.

Table 4. Theoretical Frameworks used in studies on CSR and EGB in Hospitality

Study	Context	Theory	Key Findings	Identified Gaps
Su and Swanson [2]	CSR, trust, identification, well-being, and green behavior among hotel employees in China	Social Exchange Theory; Social Identity Theory; S–O–R	CSR improves trust, identification, well-being, and green behavior, with partial mediation by trust and identification	CSR is treated as single-dimensional; lacks relational variables; limited cross-cultural validation; psychological mechanisms underexplored
Ahmed, Zehou [24]	CSR, environmental triggers (concern, awareness, knowledge), employee well-being & green behavior in	S–O–R; Social Exchange Theory	CSR and environmental triggers influence employee well-being; well-being significantly predicts green behavior; well-being mediates several CSR– and	CSR treated as a single-dimensional construct; only one mediator examined; limited generalizability due to single-city sample; does not test broader psychological or

	Pakistan's hotel sector		environment–green behavior relationships	organizational mechanisms
Song, Cheng [29]	CSR–well-being–green innovation in Chinese service firms	COR Theory	CSR enhances green innovation via well-being; moral self-efficacy strengthens this effect	Single country; cross-sectional; limited mediators/moderators; lacks multi-level validation
Thomas and Albishri [25]	Environmental CSR & OCB-E in Indian luxury hotels	Social Cognitive Theory	CSR enhances OCB-E through environmental commitment and green work engagement; gender moderates only the CSR–OCB-E link	Single-country & single-sector; cross-sectional; only environmental CSR included; limited boundary conditions
Silva, Moreira [27]	CSR–GHRM–sustainability performance in Portuguese hotels	Social Cognitive Theory; Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Framework	CSR strengthens GHRM, and GHRM enhances sustainability performance; GHRM mediates CSR–sustainability link	Cross-sectional; single-country; CSR undifferentiated; limited psychological mechanisms
Jiang, Bibi [26]	Instrumental & volunteer CSR, meaningfulness, positive emotions, and green innovation in Chinese hotels	S-O-R; Self-Determination Theory; Satisfaction Theory	ICSR and VCSR promote GIB; MGF and PE act as mediators; PSP strengthens effects at low CSR levels	Single-country; cross-sectional; limited measurement breadth; CSR only two-dimensional; lacks broader psychological mechanisms
Farooq and Salam [30]	CSR–desire to have significant impact through work (DSIW) among employees in Malaysia	Social Exchange Theory; Social Information Processing Theory; Social Identity Theory; Social Learning Theory	CSR increases DSIW through engagement, pride, and identification (partial & sequential mediation)	Limited generalizability; single-country context; lacks cross-cultural validation; focuses on specific mediating mechanisms
Nazir and Islam [8]	CSR–meaningfulness–compassion–engagement in luxury hotels (India)	Sense-Making Theory	CSR enhances engagement through partial mediation of meaningfulness and compassion	Single-city sample; CSR measured as a single construct; limited mediators; cross-sectional self-report data

Sources: Compiled by the author

4.4. Research gaps

Building on the patterns identified in the reviewed studies, several important gaps in CSR–EGB research can be highlighted. Much of the literature still relies on Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Social Identity Theory (SIT), explaining CSR–EGB links mainly through reciprocity and identity alignment [2, 30]. While useful, these approaches tend to treat such

mechanisms in isolation and pay limited attention to how relational exchanges, identity processes, and employees' internal psychological states interact in practice.

Some recent studies draw on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework to examine how CSR shapes employees' psychological states, such as trust, well-being, and a sense of meaning. Even so, this work is often limited to single mediating paths and cross-sectional designs, which makes it difficult to understand how CSR translates into employee green behavior over time [24, 26].

CSR is often treated in broad terms, and much of the existing evidence comes from single-country studies, especially in Asian hospitality contexts [2, 25, 27]. At the same time, psychological and organizational mechanisms are typically examined in isolation, with limited attempts to connect perspectives such as Conservation of Resources theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Self-Determination Theory [25, 26, 29]. Taken together, these patterns suggest the need for more integrated and context-aware approaches to understanding employee green behavior in hospitality.

In addition, most studies treat employees as a homogeneous group or focus primarily on management-level responses, without clearly identifying which roles or departments—such as frontline staff with greater environmental impact—are most relevant in specific hospitality contexts. The hospitality sector is highly heterogeneous, and the lack of differentiation across employee roles limits the understanding of how CSR is enacted in practice.

Most existing studies on CSR and employee green behavior are concentrated in East Asia and several developed Western countries. In Vietnam, previous research has mainly focused on CSR–EGB relationships in large hotel chains and luxury segments [28, 31, 32]. However, studies that look at specific destinations such as Nha Trang, Binh Thuan, Phu Quoc, or the Central Highlands—are still quite limited. These locations are environmentally sensitive and closely linked to sustainability outcomes, yet they have not received much research attention so far.

CSR is generally recognized as an important driver of employee green behavior. However, the way this relationship is explained in the literature is still somewhat fragmented. Many studies rely on a single theoretical perspective, with limited attention to how different psychological processes interact. This may help explain why findings across studies are not always consistent, especially when examining how CSR initiatives are translated into actual employee behavior in real hospitality contexts.

5. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

By consolidating theoretical, methodological, and contextual patterns, this study provides a clearer foundation for future CSR–EGB research in hospitality, particularly in emerging and underexplored destinations. This literature review examines the relationship between CSR and EGB in hospitality and shows both theoretical consensus and existing gaps. While existing studies confirm CSR's role in promoting environmental behavior, their heavy reliance on SET and SIT offers only a partial picture of how this works. The review also calls for future research to integrate multiple theoretical perspectives, by using more varied methods, and paying closer attention to local contexts. For emerging markets such as Vietnam, this study is crucial to understanding how employees actually perceive and act on CSR initiatives in different hospitality settings. Advancing research in this direction can strengthen both theory and practice, helping develop sustainability strategies that work in real-world conditions.

This study has certain limitations. First, the literature search almost focused on English-language databases, potentially excluding relevant studies in other languages, particularly Vietnamese research not indexed internationally. Second, this review examined only peer-reviewed journal articles, leaving out grey literature such as technical reports, policy papers,

and industry publications. These sources might hold valuable insights into CSR and EGB practices in hospitality. Third, despite efforts to categorise studies comprehensively, the selection and classification process relied on the authors' subjective judgement, which could introduce bias. Finally, this review did not examine firm-specific characteristics, such as hotel size, ownership structure, or CSR maturity levels, which may influence how findings apply to particular business contexts. Future research should consider these aspects to strengthen generalisability and practical application.

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