

# EMPLOYEES ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN HOTELS: A STUDY OF RAJASTHAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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## ABSTRACTS

With increasing environmental awareness among people the hotel industry is also taking initiatives to incorporate environmentally sound measures in their daily operations. This can be effectively done by adapting an Environmental Management Plan for these hotels. However the role of employees in adapting and delivering what is expected depends on their attitude towards environmental management practices adapted by these hotels. It thus becomes imperative to identify antecedents which affect employees' attitude towards environment. The present study deals with employees associated with the Rajasthan hospitality industry. Three hundred employees from twelve five star hotels in Rajasthan were chosen for the study purpose. Environmental savings, environmental awareness, paid positions, rewards and environmental audits were identified primary antecedents of framing an environmental attitude among employees. There was found to be a high correlation between environmental savings and environmental awareness (0.828), environmental audits and environmental awareness (0.860), paid positions and environmental awareness (0.715) and between paid positions and reward (0.792). There was a low correlation between rewards and savings (0.2.80) and paid positions and savings (0.384.). There was found to be a medium correlation between reward and environmental awareness (0.508). The study concludes that attitudes do influence the environmental practices in the hotels. Various factors such as provision of rewards and paid position in the hotels can improve the overall functioning of the employees and enhance the environmental performance of these hotels.

**KEY WORDS :** Environmental attitude, Employees, Environmental Awareness, Environmental practices, Environmental performance

## INTRODUCTION

Attitudes have been considered as important antecedents of an individual behavior. An attitude has been defined as an enduring evaluation, positive or negative, of people, objects, or ideas (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Environmental attitudes primarily reflect an individual's concern for the surroundings of which he himself is an integral part. The hospitality industry also draws a lot of resources from the environment. Hence it is increasingly becoming concerned to maintain a harmonious relationship with its environment. The hospitality industry is thus taking initiatives to use resources in ways that are sustainable. However a lot of this

effort depends on the behavior of the employees who are the prime agents interacting with the resources around them during the service delivery process. It thus becomes imperative to minimize the resource use without compromising on the guest delight. The present study explores the attitude of employees towards environmental management practices in hotels in Rajasthan and also attempts to evaluate the association between the various variables responsible for this behavior.

### Review of Literature

As rising environmental threats (e.g. natural resource depletion, increasing population and pollution rates, greenhouse effect) to ecosystems

deteriorate natural area benefits the relevance of environmental attitudes and behavior becomes progressively pertinent (Kaiser *et al.*, 1999; Milfont and Duckitt, 2004) both with the American Public (Gagnon-Thompson and Barton, 1994) as well as people around the world (Speth and Haas, 2006; Wapner, 1995). Some scholars have reported a significant positive relationship between the environmental attitudes and environmentally responsible behaviors (Choi & Fielding, 2013; Milfont and Duckitt, 2004; Roberts and Bacon, 1997; Stern Dietz & Guagnano, 1995) while others report a non-significant (Cottrell, 2003; Wearing *et al.*, 2002) or low-modest association (Tarrant and Cordell, 1997). This ambiguous outcome of an indeterminate environmental attitude-behavior relationship suggests a continued need to contribute to this body of work to attempt to ease out relevant details and specific instances for varied situations (Kil *et al.*, 2014).

Dief and Font (2012) have done a considerable work on the contextual variables of Personal and Organizational environmental values. The study provided a new insight on the individual and organizational analysis on the adoption of environmental management by various hotels. It stated that various contextual variables as chain affiliation, hotel star rating and size are important determinants of a firm's environmental behavior. However, there has been a lacuna in respect of the framework required globally for carrying out various environmental initiatives.

Bohdanowicz and Martinac (2003) in their study assessed the attitudes of stakeholders in chain hotels in Europe. They discussed that the greatest barrier to preventing hoteliers from becoming green is the belief that environmental measures are expensive and that heavy investments are required for modifications in technology, management and behavior. However, investments are profitable in the long run as demonstrated in the study. They also stressed the need for training among the hotel companies with environmental organizations.

Bohdanowicz *et al.* (2004) in their study on Swedish, Polish and Croatian Hoteliers stated that livelihood of tourism and the hotel industry depends on the availability of a clean environment. Swedish and Croatian hoteliers had a greater level of environmental awareness as compared to the Polish hotelier. Proecological solutions were also less implemented in Poland. Thus a great need exists for increasing environmental initiatives among the

hoteliers and general public.

A study on corporate greening in the context of Indian Hotel Industry (Roopa and Rajan, 2012) identified the factors which motivated the hotel industry to adopt green practices. They suggested that Green is not always the best seller in the Indian Market. Hence a long term planning is required in this direction. The results also suggested that Indian customers are not much enlightened about the green ideology as their western counterparts. The media, public groups and green consumers need to team up with the hotel industry to bring about awareness among the customers. They also stressed that a stringent government regulation needs to be put in place to bring about effective changes.

Kim and Yoon (2010) studied the various hotels in Korea and analyzed the various underlying causes for the General Manager's concern for the environmental management practices. They reported that most of the actions towards resource use and efficiency were promoted because of cost reduction motives followed by guest relations and the revenue generated from environmentally conscious guests. The study suggested that Korean General Managers should pay more attention to creation of environmental awareness among its employees.

Studies on Egyptian hotels by Eldemerdash and Mohamed (2013) depicted that employees face various issues in the implementation of environmental practices in hotels some of which are related to cost issues, skilled manpower and consumer attitudes towards green hotels.

Mensah and Blankson (2014) studied budget and four star hotels in Accra and reported that since larger hotels have more resource availability hence they had a greater degree of commitment towards environmental management practices. Budget hotels on the other hand require a collaborative effort for the inclusion of sustainable environmental management practices in their organizational processes and practices. Similar studies by Mensah and Blankson (2013) on hotels in Ghana explored the various factors responsible for environmental performance of hotels. The study indicated that hotels with larger size and better class and those with membership of hotel trade association performed superior than the smaller ones with non membership of hotel trade association. The study also reported similar trends that larger hotels in view of the more financial and technical resources benefit more from economies of scale and make

significant savings on their resource use. This then can act as a motivator to further enhance their environmental performance.

Kim and Choi (2013) examined the perception of employees towards green practices in hotels in Florida. The study concluded that there was a strong association between employee commitment levels and their perception of hotels green practices. The study also laid emphasis on incorporation of regular environmental training sessions for the employees in these organizations.

Studies by Priego *et al.* (2011) studied Spanish hotels and reported that hotels consider certification systems as a better deal to attract more environmentally conscious customers. On this basis the study carved four groups of hotels: Strategic hotels, Followers, Green washers and Laggards. The market based regulation emerged as the prime factor for switching towards EMS practices in the hotels. Studies by Zientara and Zamojska (2018) analyzed the organizational citizenship behavior in hotels in Poland. They explored that a weak green organizational climate was prevalent which implied that the organizational commitment towards EMS was not strong enough. The organizational climate also had an effect on the behavior of employees towards green practices. Hence to increase employee involvement in green practices pro environmental action is required from the top management.

Research by Kasim (2009) suggested developing countries like Malaysia are still laid back when it comes to adoption of EMS in their hotels. There was found to be tendency of being politically correct by the managers in relation to environmental issues. The study recommends that hotels who want to expand internationally should lay emphasis on the triple bottom line of environment, economic and social responsibility. The small budget hotels should also ensure preventive measures to improve its image among stakeholders. Research by Teng *et al.* (2015) explored the stakeholder perception of hotels in Taiwan. Environmental issues in these hotels were identified as themes related to the government regulatory requirements. The research frame included the owners, customers, government agencies and NGO's as participants in the study. The research suggests a need for communication and collaboration among the various stakeholders. The study also reflects the various dimensions provided by the various stakeholder groups to identify the barriers and constraints in implementation of EM

practices. Sourvinou and Filmonau (2018) indicated that employee engagement in EMS can increase the levels of job satisfaction and result in increased organizational commitment among the staff members. It emphasized the incorporation of regular trainings and incentivisation to increase the participation rates of the employees.

Rezapouraghdam *et al.* (2018) evaluated the workplace spirituality and proposed a theoretical model to analyze its effectiveness. The study concluded that workplace spirituality was strongly related to organizational citizenship behavior for the environment and connectedness to nature. Environmental awareness was related to boosting the pro environmental behavior of employees. Luo and Deng (2008) found that in general human's positive attitudes towards natural environments affected their outdoor recreation motivations. Other studies (e.g. Dunlap and Heffernan, 1975; Tarrant and Green, 1999; Thapa, 2010) demonstrated that environmental attitudes can vary by different recreational activities. Various theories as theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) Value belief norm theory (Kaiser *et al.*, 2005; Stern, 2000) theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) have fostered the attitude-behavior relationship. These theories indicate that individuals with eco-friendly attitudes are more likely to be motivated to experience natural environments and have a propensity to behave in a more environmentally responsible manner (Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Luo and Deng, 2008).

We can thus establish from the above studies that attitudes do play a considerable role in framing an individual's behavior. Organizations can hence motivate employees to adapt a positive attitude towards organizational environmental practices and processes.

### Research Model

In view of the above research studies the research model used for the study is depicted in Figure 1. The model communicates that five variables: Environmental savings, environmental audits, rewards, environmental awareness and paid positions affect the attitude of employees towards environmental management (EM) practices in the hotels.

Environmental savings represent the cost reduction aspect of environmental management. It is an important indicator as most of the hotels place an emphasis on cost dimensions of operation.

Investment in environmental protective measures stems from the concern for costs associated with maintaining a healthy environment. The next construct of environmental audits represent a legitimate aspect of environmental protection. Rewards act as motivators to bring about a change in attitude towards environment. Paid Positions are also created to satisfy the stakeholders associated with the functioning of the hotels. All these factors lead to creation of environmental attitude of employees. This attitude in affects the environmental management practices in the hotels.

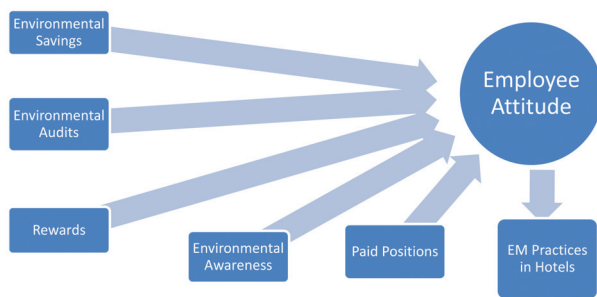


Fig. 1.

**Hypothesis**

The hypothesis from the above research model can be stated as follows:

- H1: Environmental savings have a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees.
- H2: Environmental audit has a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees
- H3: Rewards have a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees
- H4: Environmental Awareness has a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees
- H5: Paid Positions have a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees
- H6: Environmental savings, Environmental audits, Rewards Environmental Awareness, Paid Positions all in together have a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees

**Research Design**

The study is exploratory in nature and attempts to identify the underlying factors responsible for promoting positive attitudes towards environmental practices in the hotels. When this study was undertaken the state of Rajasthan had 17 five star hotels listed with the Ministry of Tourism. We chose 12 hotels for the study based on the random number generation table. Out of these considering an

average of 250 employees per hotel i.e. approx. 3000 employees working in the hotel industry the sample size required at a confidence interval of 5% and confidence level of 95% was of 333. We selected 25 employees from each hotel based on their involvement in the EM practices in the hotels and also their agreeableness to fill out the questionnaire. The employees were mostly from engineering department in hotels where a proper environmental cell was not functioning.

The tool used to carry out the survey was a standardized questionnaire. The questionnaire dealt with the environmental management plan in the hotels and the concern of employees towards these practices. The items in the questionnaire were borrowed from the study by Dief and Font (2010). Correlation analysis was carried out to analyze the factors having a major effect on the attitudes of employees. The study was done during the period February –April, 2017.

**Data Collection**

The data was collected for the various demographic variables as Age and tenure in the hotels. These were considered as moderating variables and their association with the attitudes of employees was not considered in the study.

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of respondents for EMP

No. of Respondents	300
Category	Employees
Age	
25-30	158
30-35	57
35-40	85
Tenure in hotel industry	
1-5 years	94
5-10 years	123
More than 10 years	83

The descriptive Statistics has been represented below and suggests the mean values to be between 3.3 to 3.6. The standard deviation was higher than one for environmental savings and environmental audits (1.13 and 1.99).

The correlation table has been shown below:

The table clearly suggests that there was a high correlation between environmental savings and environmental awareness (0.828), environmental audits and environmental awareness (0.860), paid positions and environmental awareness (0.715) and between paid positions and reward (0.792). There

was a low correlation between rewards and savings (0.2.80) and paid positions and savings (0.384.). There was found to be a medium correlation between reward and environmental awareness (0.508).

The Environmental Management Plan was a part of the organization's environmental value dimensions. The results signify the environmental management plan in the hotels and the concern of employees towards these practices. The mean score was slightly lower than that obtained by survey respondents in Louisiana by Zhong, (2003). The findings are in agreement with a study of Calabrese *et al.* (2008) at Tehran where the respondents showed concern towards environmental management practices in the hotels. It was found that environmental savings and environmental awareness were highly correlated. The results are similar to those obtained by Hinds *et al.* (2002) suggested that increased knowledge about the environment is believed to change environmental attitudes and both knowledge and attitudes are assumed to influence environmental policy.

A high correlation was also found between paid positions and environmental awareness and between paid positions and reward. Similar results were obtained by Shoukry *et al.* (2012) who concluded that awareness and commitment are indicators of environmental protection. This is because of the fact that they describe worker's knowledge and understanding of environmental impacts. There was a low correlation between rewards and savings and paid positions and savings. There was found to be a medium correlation between reward and environmental awareness. The findings concurred with Kirk (2008) who indicated that employee training and environmental education need to be addressed more thoroughly. This implied the need to create more environmental awareness and strengthen organizational monitoring systems to control green practices.

The sample statistics has been shown below and suggest a standards deviation of more than one for environmental savings and audits. z-test was conducted to analyze the sample characteristics.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of EMS descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Env. Savings	300	2.00	5.00	3.6067	1.13854
Env. Audits	300	2.00	35.00	3.6600	1.99608
Reward	300	2.00	5.00	3.4433	0.91446
Env. Awareness	300	2.00	5.00	3.6200	0.75110
Paid Positions	300	2.00	5.00	3.3967	0.67887
Valid N (list wise)	300				

**Table 3.** Correlation of EMS correlations

		Env Savings	Env Awareness	Env Audits	Reward	Paid Positions
Env. Savings	Pearson Correlation	1	.			
Env. Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0.828**	1			
Env. Audits	Pearson Correlation	0.794**	0.860	1		
Reward	Pearson Correlation	0.280**	0.508**	-0.455	1	
Paid Positions	Pearson Correlation	0.384**	0.715	-0.041	0.792**	1

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

**Table 4.** One sample statistics one-sample statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Env. Savings	300	3.6067	1.13854	0.06573
Env. Audits	300	3.6600	1.99608	0.11524
Reward	300	3.4433	0.91446	0.05280
Env. Awareness	300	3.6200	0.75110	0.04336
Paid Positions	300	3.3967	0.67887	0.03919

**Table 5.** Z Test Z -Test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Env. Savings	9.229	299	0.000	0.60667	0.4773	0.7360
Env. Audits	5.727	299	0.040	0.66000	0.4332	0.8868
Reward	8.397	299	0.000	0.44333	0.3394	0.5472
Env. Awareness	14.297	299	0.030	0.62000	0.5347	0.7053
Paid Positions	10.121	299	0.020	0.39667	0.3195	0.4738

**Table 6.** Hypothesis Testing

H1:	Environmental savings have a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees.	Accepted
H2:	Environmental audit has a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees	Accepted
H3:	H3: Rewards have a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees	Accepted
H4:	H4: Environmental Awareness has a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees	Accepted
H5:	H5: Paid Positions have a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees	Accepted
H6:	H6: Environmental savings, Environmental audits, Rewards Environmental Awareness, Paid Positions all in together have a significant effect on environmental attitudes of employees	Accepted

The p values obtained are less than .05 in all the cases, which means that the sample mean is significantly different from the hypothesized mean. Hence in view of not enough evidence to support the null hypothesis we accept the alternate hypothesis. Environmental savings, environmental audits, rewards, awareness and paid positions all have a significant effect on the environmental attitude of the employees. Hence organizations could incorporate these measures in their written and documented environmental policy to enhance the contribution from the employees.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The impact of various environmental attitudes on the practices followed in the hotel industry has been analyzed in the study. The study concludes that attitudes do influence the practices in the hotels. Various factors such as provision of rewards and paid position in the hotels can improve the overall functioning of the employees and enhance the environmental performance of these hotels. Study reported by Arimura *et al.* (2008) also suggested that voluntary environmental actions are meant to improve the impact of business operations on the environment but this also provides other benefits to the participating firm by improving cost effectiveness, improving flexibility and promoting technology innovation. Thus improving the internal actions to minimize their impact on the environment not only reduces the impact on environment but also improves the organizational system and control.

Thus not only the policy framework for ensuing commitment towards the environment is a necessary function but also enhancing positive outlook of employees towards these policies is also an essential function which should be recognized by hotel management. There thus arises a need to propose guidelines for enhancing positive employee attitude and commitment for transforming these hotel properties from grey to green.

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