

Determinants of Sustainability Management Implementation in the Indonesian Hotel Industry: A Comparative Analysis of Operational Characteristics

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Abstract. *This study aims to examine the level of sustainability management implementation within the Indonesian hotel industry by considering various operational characteristics that may influence sustainability practices. Employing a quantitative descriptive research design, the study collected data from 35 hotels across Indonesia through structured questionnaires administered to hotel managers. Sustainability implementation was assessed using five key dimensions, namely environmental responsibility, social responsibility, economic sustainability, internal sustainability policies, and guest participation. The collected data were analyzed descriptively across six operational categories: management type, group affiliation, hotel classification, geographic location, domicile, and operational age. The findings reveal that hotels operating under international affiliations, franchise management systems, five-star classifications, and with operational ages of less than five years demonstrate the highest levels of sustainability implementation. In contrast, hotels managed through contract management arrangements, locally affiliated establishments, and those located in residential areas exhibit comparatively lower sustainability performance. These findings provide valuable practical implications for hotel managers, industry stakeholders, and policymakers in developing more effective sustainability strategies, strengthening regulatory frameworks, and promoting sustainable competitiveness within the Indonesian hospitality industry.*

Keywords: Sustainability Management, ESG, Hospitality Industry, Green Hotel, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is recognized as a strategic sector within the global economy and tourism industry. However, it also contributes significantly to energy consumption, water usage, waste generation, and carbon emissions. Research conducted by Jones et al. (2016) revealed that the hospitality sector accounts for nearly 1% of global carbon emissions, a figure projected to increase alongside the continued growth of the tourism industry. As awareness of sustainability issues continues to rise, hotels are increasingly required to integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into their management systems (Chan, 2011).

Global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of integrating ESG aspects across all economic sectors, including tourism (UNWTO, 2017). Hotels are expected to become part of the solution in achieving sustainable tourism by minimizing environmental impacts, empowering local communities, and strengthening economic contributions (Ruiz-Fernández et al.,

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2024). Recent studies indicate that sustainability practices not only generate positive environmental outcomes but also improve corporate financial performance. Febriantoko et al. (2025) found that ESG disclosure significantly influences firm value and financial performance within the Indonesian hospitality sector.

In Indonesia, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has promoted the adoption of environmentally friendly green standards as benchmarks for tourism business management practices aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of national tourism. The government's targets include reducing carbon emissions by 31.89 percent and decreasing per capita food waste by 35 percent by 2030 (Kemenparekraf, 2024). Furthermore, the implementation of the Blue, Green, Circular Economy (BGCE) framework has become a central pillar of sustainable tourism development as outlined in the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2025–2045 and the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029 (Bappenas, 2023).

Previous studies have identified various factors influencing the implementation of sustainability practices within the hospitality industry. Acampora et al. (2022), through a systematic literature review, found that existing studies primarily focus on three major areas: consumer behavior toward green hotels, hotel environmental management practices, and hotel sustainability performance. Ruiz-Fernández et al. (2024) examined international hotel chains and identified the degree of internationalization, dynamic capabilities, and commitment to the SDGs as the main drivers of sustainability performance. Similarly, Singh et al. (2020) investigated green strategies in the Indian hospitality industry and concluded that top management support is a critical determinant of successful green practice implementation.

Within the Southeast Asian context, Sujarittanonta and Visuthismajarn (2019) examined sustainable hotel practices in Thailand and found that the adoption of sustainability practices positively affects operational efficiency. Tang and Tan (2015) explored sustainability initiatives in the Malaysian hospitality industry and highlighted that government support and industry certification play significant roles in encouraging green practice adoption. Meanwhile, Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) identified high initial investment costs and limited managerial awareness as the primary barriers to the implementation of green practices in Vietnam's hospitality sector.

Despite the growing body of literature, substantial gaps remain regarding the implementation of sustainability practices in the Indonesian hospitality industry. Although several hotels have adopted environmental, social, and economic sustainability policies, the effectiveness and consistency of their implementation remain uneven. In addition, empirical studies comparing sustainability implementation levels based on managerial and operational hotel characteristics are still limited.

This study offers several novelties compared to previous research. First, it is among the first studies in Indonesia to systematically compare sustainability management implementation across six operational hotel characteristics simultaneously: management type, group affiliation, hotel classification level, geographical location, hotel domicile, and operational age. Second, this study integrates five measurable sustainability dimensions into a single analytical framework. Third, this research employs a perception-based survey approach involving hotel management directly as the primary respondents.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study aims to identify and analyze the level of sustainability management implementation in Indonesian hotels based on their operational characteristics and to determine the most dominant sustainability dimensions within each hotel category. Specifically, this study seeks to address the following research questions: (a) How is the level of sustainability management implementation in the Indonesian hospitality industry based on hotel management type, business group affiliation, hotel classification level, geographical location, hotel domicile, and operational age? (b) Which sustainability dimensions are most dominantly implemented within each hotel category?

This study contributes to the development of stakeholder theory and the resource-based view within the context of sustainability in the hospitality industry in developing countries. Furthermore, it provides practical insights for hospitality practitioners, regulators, and tourism industry observers in designing and implementing more effective and sustainable tourism strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainability Management and ESG in the Hospitality Industry

Sustainability management in the hospitality industry refers to the integration of environmental, social, and governance principles into all aspects of hotel operations. Research conducted by Febriantoko et al. (2025) emphasizes that sustainability implementation has become increasingly important due to growing pressure from stakeholders and society demanding more socially and environmentally responsible business practices. The increasing preference of global tourists toward sustainability, with approximately 75% of travelers willing to pay more for environmentally friendly services, further strengthens the relevance of adopting green practices within the hospitality industry (Acampora et al., 2022).

Research conducted by Merli et al. (2019) through a systematic literature review identified that studies related to green hotels have developed rapidly, primarily focusing on consumer behavior, environmental management practices, and sustainability performance. Meanwhile, Alonso-Almeida (2012) found that hotels in Europe have widely adopted energy and water efficiency practices; however, they continue to face challenges related to high initial investment costs.

Dimensions of Sustainability

This study measures the implementation of sustainability management through five dimensions developed based on relevant literature, as presented in Table 1 below.

Tabel 1. Research Variables and Indicators

Dimension	Variable
Environment (Bohdanowicz & Martinac, 2007)	1. The hotel has a structured waste management program. 2. We partner with local suppliers who adhere to eco-friendly principles. 3. The hotel uses energy-efficient equipment. 4. The hotel utilizes renewable energy sources (solar panels, etc.). 5. Efforts to reduce water usage
Social (Mensah, 2006)	1. The hotel provides regular training on sustainability to its employees. 2. The hotel fosters strong relationships with the local community through CSR programs. 3. The hotel promotes local culture to guests. 4. There is no discrimination in hiring and promotion practices. 5. Employee well-being is a top priority for management.
Economy (Jones et al., 2016)	1. The hotel has a long-term strategy for operational cost efficiency. 2. Sustainability investments have a positive impact on guest satisfaction. 3. We are able to maintain profitability even while implementing green initiatives. 4. The hotel has strategic partnerships with local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). 5. The implementation of sustainable practices enhances our competitive advantage.

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Dimension	Variable
Internal Management Policy (Hsieh, 2012; Chan, 2011)	1. The hotel has a written sustainability policy. 2. There is a dedicated unit or team responsible for sustainability issues. 3. We report on our sustainability performance on a regular basis. 4. Senior management is directly involved in decision-making related to sustainability. 5. The hotel adheres to environmental certification standards (e.g., Green Globe, ISO 14001)
Guest Participation (Han et al., 2010)	1. We provide guests with information about the hotel’s sustainability practices. 2. Guests are encouraged to conserve water and energy during their stay. 3. Guests are given the option to skip daily towel and linen changes. 4. There is a program for guest participation in eco-friendly activities. 5. Guest feedback on sustainability is used to improve our services

Source: Compiled from various sources

Factors Influencing Sustainability Implementation

Previous literature has identified that the adoption of sustainability practices in hotels is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, management commitment and organizational capacity play significant roles in determining the successful implementation of sustainability initiatives (Hsieh, 2012; Chan, 2011). Tarigan et al. (2020) found that top management attention enhances the implementation of green purchasing and supplier collaboration, which subsequently improves green performance. Similarly, Singh et al. (2020) confirmed that top management support is a critical factor in the successful implementation of green practices within Indian hotels.

From an external perspective, international market pressure and the expectations of global consumers have been proven to be strong drivers encouraging hotels to adopt sustainability standards (Garay & Font, 2012). The implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices not only enhances corporate image but also strengthens customer loyalty (Kim & Kim, 2018; Font & Lynes, 2018). Several studies further emphasize that sustainability should not merely be viewed as a moral obligation, but also as a source of competitive advantage. Mihalič (2000) and Iraldo et al. (2017) found that destinations and hotels implementing environmentally friendly practices are more capable of competing in international markets.

Supporting Theories

This study is grounded in two major theoretical perspectives: Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and the Resource-Based View Theory (Barney, 1991). Stakeholder theory suggests that organizational success depends on the ability to manage relationships with various stakeholders effectively. In the context of hotel sustainability, pressure from environmentally conscious global tourists encourages hotels to adopt green practices. Meanwhile, the Resource-Based View theory argues that organizational competitive advantage is determined by the resources and capabilities possessed by the organization. Hotels with greater resources,

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such as international affiliations, higher star classifications, and younger operational age, tend to have stronger capabilities to implement sustainability practices effectively (Ruiz-Fernández et al., 2024).

Sustainability Practices in the Southeast Asian and Indonesian Context

Within Southeast Asia, studies indicate that countries such as Thailand and Malaysia have adopted sustainability practices more rapidly compared to Indonesia (Tang & Tan, 2015; Sujarittanonta & Visuthismajarn, 2019). At the national level, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has introduced the Wonderful Indonesia Award (WIA) Green Hotel category as an instrument to accelerate environmentally responsible practices, including waste management, energy efficiency, and sustainable food management (Kemenparekraf, 2024).

Research conducted by Rainanto (2023) demonstrated that the implementation of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) in hotels in East Java has a significant relationship with economic and social performance, although not directly with environmental performance. Furthermore, a study by Puspitayanti et al. (2024) at Jimbaran Puri, A Belmond Hotel Bali, revealed that the implementation of green practices achieved a high score, with green action identified as the most dominant indicator.

Research Gap and Research Novelty

Based on the literature review, several research gaps can be identified. First, the majority of previous studies focus only on one or two hotel characteristics. To date, no study has systematically compared sustainability implementation across six operational hotel characteristics simultaneously. Second, most studies conducted in Indonesia rely on single case studies or geographically limited survey approaches. Third, research integrating five sustainability dimensions within a single analytical framework remains limited. This study addresses these gaps by providing a comparative analysis based on six operational variables, integrating five measurable sustainability dimensions, and employing a perception-based survey approach involving hotel management directly as the primary respondents.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a survey method to analyze and describe the level of sustainability management implementation within the Indonesian hospitality industry based on various operational hotel characteristics. The quantitative descriptive approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to provide a systematic overview of sustainability practices implemented by hotels without manipulating the research variables. The population of this study consisted of all hotels operating in Indonesia. The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, which was selected to ensure that respondents possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding sustainability management practices within their respective hotels. The inclusion criteria included: (a) hotels operating in Indonesia, (b) hotels with managers or management staff capable of providing information regarding sustainability implementation, and (c) hotels willing to participate in the study. Based on these criteria, a total of 35 hotels were successfully recruited as research respondents.

The research instrument was developed based on a comprehensive literature review concerning sustainability management in the hospitality industry. The questionnaire consisted of five sustainability dimensions with a total of 25 indicators designed to measure the implementation level of sustainability practices in hotels. A five-point Likert scale was employed to measure respondents' perceptions, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Data collection was conducted through the distribution of online questionnaires using Google Forms. The questionnaires were disseminated through professional networks and hospitality associations in Indonesia during the 2024–2025 research period. The questionnaire was divided into three major sections. The first section contained demographic information about respondents and hotel characteristics. The second section included questions regarding sustainability management implementation across the five dimensions. The final section provided space for additional comments and responses from participants. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive analysis

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techniques. Microsoft Excel was utilized to calculate the average scores of each indicator and sustainability dimension across different hotel categories. The analysis procedures included grouping the raw data based on six hotel characteristics, calculating the mean score for each indicator, determining the average score of each sustainability dimension, generating the overall sustainability score, and comparing implementation levels among hotel categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

Based on the survey results obtained from 35 respondents working in the hospitality industry, an overview of the respondents' profiles was identified, as presented in Table 1 below.

Tabel 1. Respondent Description

Gender	Number	%	Location	Number	%
Man	16	46%	Java	27	77%
Female	19	54%	Outside Java	8	33%
Total	35	100%	Total	35	100%

Domicile	Number	%	Departmen	Number	%
Provincial Capital	26	75%	<i>Assistant Dir. of Sales</i>	8	23%
Kabupaten	5	14%	<i>Senior Sales Manager</i>	9	26%
Madya City	4	11%	<i>Sales Manager</i>	18	51%
Total	35	100%	Total	35	100%

Source: Data compiled by the author (2026)

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents were female (54%), located in Java (77%), employed as Sales Managers (51%), and working in hotels situated in provincial capital cities (75%).

Sustainability Implementation Based on Hotel Management Type

The findings of this study indicate that hotels operating under cooperation arrangements with parent companies achieved the highest scores in the Environmental (4.83), Social (4.83), and Economic (4.83) dimensions. Franchise hotels demonstrated superior performance in the Internal Policy (4.77) and Guest Participation (4.74) dimensions. In contrast, hotels operating under contract management systems recorded the lowest sustainability implementation scores across most dimensions. Detailed results are presented in Table 2.

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Tabel 2. Sustainability by Type of Hotel Management

Dimension	Contract Management	Franchise	Parent Company Collaboration
Environment	4,43	4,69	4,83
Social	4,78	4,89	4,83
Economy	4,60	4,71	4,83
Internal Policy	4,45	4,77	4,51
Guest Participation	4,57	4,74	4,54
On average	4,57	4,76	4,71

Source: Data compiled by the author (2026)

This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Tarigan et al. (2020), which emphasizes the importance of top management attention in the implementation of green practices. The level of involvement and structural support provided by franchise and parent company systems contributes to a more comprehensive adoption of sustainability principles. In contrast, hotels operating under contract management systems face challenges due to the fragmentation of responsibilities between hotel owners and operators, which may hinder the consistent implementation of sustainability initiatives.

Sustainability Implementation Based on Group Affiliation

Hotels affiliated with international chains recorded higher scores across all sustainability dimensions compared to those affiliated with local groups. Detailed results are presented in Table 3.

Tabel 3. Sustainability by Hotel Group Affiliation

Dimension	International	Local
Environment	4,72	4,40
Social	4,94	4,67
Economy	4,74	4,57
Internal Policy	4,66	4,43
Guest Participation	4,75	4,37
On average	4,76	4,49

Source: Data compiled by the author (2026)

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International affiliation brings global standards, structured reporting systems, and best practices in sustainability implementation. This finding is consistent with Ruiz-Fernández et al. (2024), who argue that international hotel chains possess stronger dynamic capabilities in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such capabilities enable hotels to adopt more standardized sustainability frameworks and ensure consistency across operational units.

Sustainability Implementation Based on Hotel Classification Level

Five-star hotels demonstrate stronger sustainability implementation compared to four-star hotels. Detailed results are presented in Table 4.

Tabel 4. Sustainability by Hotel Category

Dimension	4 Stars	5 Stars
Environment	4,35	4,74
Social	4,73	4,90
Economy	4,49	4,78
Internal Policy	4,51	4,63
Guest Participation	4,42	4,73
On average	4,50	4,76

Source: Data compiled by the author (2026)

Five-star hotels possess greater resources, stronger reputational capital, and higher market expectations to implement Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices comprehensively. This is consistent with the findings of Alonso-Almeida (2012), who reported that higher-category hotels tend to be more proactive in adopting energy and water efficiency practices as part of their sustainability strategies.

Sustainability Implementation Based on Geographical Location

The sustainability scores between hotels located in Java and those outside Java are relatively comparable, although with different patterns across dimensions. Detailed results are presented in Table 5.

Tabel 5. Sustainability by Hotel Location

Dimension	Java	Outside Java
Environment	4,66	4,48
Social	4,81	4,98
Economy	4,68	4,70

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Dimension	Java	Outside Java
Internal Policy	4,59	4,60
Guest Participation	4,64	4,58
On average	4,68	4,67

Source: Data compiled by the author (2026)

Hotels outside Java, particularly in tourist destinations such as Bali, are more integrated with local communities, resulting in higher social scores. This finding reflects practices in tourist destinations that prioritize the preservation of local culture as part of their sustainability strategies (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008).

Sustainability Implementation by Location

Hotels in tourist areas scored the highest, while residential areas scored the lowest. The complete data is presented in Table 6.

Tabel 6. Sustainability by Hotel Location

Dimension	Business District	Tourist Area	Residential Area
Environment	4,69	4,66	4,24
Social	4,89	4,94	4,48
Economy	4,68	4,78	4,52
Internal Policy	4,53	4,74	4,56
Guest Participation	4,71	4,60	4,36
On average	4,70	4,74	4,43

Source: Data compiled by the author (2026)

Hotels in tourist areas are facing demands from global travelers and the need to remain competitive, prompting them to adopt more progressive sustainability practices. Mihalič's (2000) research confirms that destinations with eco-friendly practices are better able to compete in the international market.

Sustainability Initiatives by Hotel Age

New hotels that have been in operation for less than 5 years had the highest average score. The complete data is presented in Table 7.

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Tabel 7. Sustainability Based on Hotel Age

Dimensi	<5 Years	5-10 Years	>10 Years
Environment	4,87	4,48	4,50
Social	4,95	4,85	4,72
Economy	4,85	4,63	4,56
Internal Policy	4,78	4,62	4,34
Guest Participation	4,87	4,48	4,54
On average	4,86	4,61	4,53

Source: Data compiled by the author (2026)

New hotels are better able to adapt to sustainability trends because they can integrate green technology from the outset. Research by Febriantoko et al. (2025) confirms that younger companies demonstrate a more significant ESG impact on corporate value.

General Discussion

A comprehensive analysis of the six tables presented above indicates that group affiliation, hotel age, geographical location, and hotel star classification significantly influence the level of sustainability implementation within the hospitality industry. A systemic approach and strong managerial commitment emerge as critical factors determining the successful adoption of environmental, social, and economic sustainability policies. The findings suggest that organizational structure and global affiliation play an important role in shaping sustainability performance. Newly established hotels tend to be more prepared to adopt green technologies and modern reporting systems compared to older hotels, which may face structural constraints and entrenched organizational cultures (Mensah, 2006; Mihalič, 2000). Guest involvement and internal policy implementation also play important roles; however, these aspects tend to be less optimal in hotels with limited access to resources and institutional support. Overall, the social dimension represents the strongest aspect of sustainability implementation in Indonesian hotels. The high scores in the social dimension indicate that hotels in Indonesia have generally performed well in implementing CSR programs, empowering local workers, promoting local culture, and ensuring employee welfare. In contrast, the environmental dimension and guest participation remain key challenges, particularly in four-star hotels, contract-managed hotels, locally affiliated hotels, and hotels located in residential areas. These findings highlight the need for more balanced sustainability strategies that strengthen environmental practices and enhance guest engagement alongside existing social initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that the implementation of sustainability management within the Indonesian hospitality industry is generally at a relatively high level, particularly in the social and economic dimensions of sustainability. Based on the findings of this research, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the implementation of sustainability management varies according to hotel characteristics. Hotels with international affiliations, franchise management systems, five-star classifications, locations within tourism

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destinations, and operational ages of less than five years consistently achieved higher sustainability scores. In contrast, hotels operating under contract management systems, those affiliated with local groups, and hotels located in residential areas demonstrated lower levels of sustainability implementation.

Second, the social dimension emerged as the strongest aspect of sustainability implementation among Indonesian hotels, particularly in internationally affiliated hotels, which recorded a score of 4.94, and hotels located outside Java, which achieved the highest score of 4.98. However, the environmental dimension and guest participation remain significant challenges, especially among four-star hotels, hotels managed under contract systems, and hotels situated in residential areas. These findings indicate that environmental sustainability practices and customer engagement initiatives have not yet been implemented optimally across all hotel categories.

Third, organizational structure and global affiliation were identified as key determinants in the successful adoption of sustainability practices. Newly established hotels with operational ages of less than five years tend to be more adaptive in adopting green technologies and sustainable operational systems compared to older hotels, which often encounter structural limitations and higher retrofit costs. This finding suggests that organizational flexibility, access to international standards, and technological readiness play crucial roles in enhancing sustainability performance within the hospitality sector.

Limitations and recommendations

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the relatively limited number of respondents, consisting of only 35 hotels, implies that the generalization of the findings should be interpreted with caution. Second, the data collected in this study were based on the perceptions and subjective assessments of respondents, without direct verification through document analysis or field observations. Third, this study did not measure the actual outcomes of sustainability implementation, such as environmental or financial performance indicators. Fourth, this research employed a cross-sectional design, which only captures the condition of sustainability implementation at a single point in time and does not reflect changes or developments over an extended period.

Research Implications

This study contributes to the development of stakeholder theory and the resource-based view within the context of sustainability practices in the hospitality industry in developing countries. From a practical perspective, the findings provide benchmarking references for hotel management in evaluating sustainability performance. In addition, the study offers empirical evidence for policymakers and regulators in formulating sustainability-related policies and regulations. Furthermore, the results may serve as valuable input for hospitality associations in designing assistance programs, sustainability training, and industry development initiatives aimed at improving sustainable hotel management practices.

Suggestions for Future Research

Several recommendations can be proposed for future research. First, future studies are encouraged to adopt a longitudinal approach in order to examine the development and consistency of sustainability implementation over time. Second, qualitative studies are needed to explore more deeply the barriers, challenges, and motivations experienced by hotel management in implementing sustainability practices. Third, future research should incorporate direct impact measurements using quantitative indicators such as energy consumption, carbon emissions, water usage efficiency, and waste reduction levels. Finally, comparative studies across ASEAN countries are recommended to analyze differences in sustainability policies, implementation strategies, and hospitality industry practices among Southeast Asian countries.

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