

APPENDIX GA36d

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	LEUNG MAN YAN, IVY	Student number:	ID 2124405
Programme:	DBA		
Module:	Qualitative Research Methods		
Module code:	HKBM7003	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	100%
Lecturer:	Dr. Tamara Savelyeva	Internal Verifier:	
Assignment Title:	Research Article	Word count (or equivalent):	7,500 words
Submission deadline:	October 31, 2022	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	
Submission method:	Refer to guidelines		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Refer to guidelines		

PART 1 – Overall Abstract

Title of the research:

ESG Strategies: The role of human resources management in hotel

Abstract

The United Nation report entitled ‘Who Cares Wins’ firstly introduced the term ‘Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)’ in 2004. Since then, ESG issues has often been incorporated in company business strategy. The focus of ESG strategic planning and implementation varies from industry to industry. On the whole, business organizations need to firstly raise their recognition and attention to the ESG concept, so that they can fully recognise that the essence of ESG is to help them improve their corporate management and meet future challenges, thereby reaping long-term benefits. Among many industries, the hotel industry contributes to the economy and employment in the tourism sector (Dogru et al., 2020).

On the other hand, senior management thinks that it is necessary to implement ESG, and one of the key stakeholders of implementing ESG is employee. Therefore the perception and the involvement of employees are very important to the success of ESG implementation. As HR is the key function to serve the internal customers i.e. employees, therefore the HR management to a certain extend shall affect or assist the successful implementation of ESG strategies. There are many research related to “Green HR Management”, but there is little research about “ESG HR Management”.

The main purpose of this study is to review the ESG strategy of hotels, as the hotel industry can implement ESG activities and practices to resolve many important issues, which have the impact on greenhouse gas emissions, corporate sustainability and safety etc.. The first potential issue is that there is a lack of buy in of staff may lead to difficulties in implementing ESG. Stakeholders can be viewed as ‘any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of

corporation's purpose (Freeman, 1984: vi). Stakeholders can be further categorized as primary or secondary. According to Clarkson (1995), stakeholders who have a formal, official or contractual relationship with a firm are the firm's primary stakeholders whereas those who are not engaged in transactions with the firm and not essential for the firm's survival are secondary stakeholders. The main stakeholders in the hotel industry normally include hotel owners, investors, employees, corporate executives, customers, suppliers, consultants, legal actors, the local government and the community or society (Benavides-Velasco et al., 2014; Darnall et al., 2008; Gadenne et al., 2009; Lo, 2013; Torres et al., 2014).

Therefore it is worth looking into the buy in of employees during the implementation of the ESG initiatives which is not only restricted to green or environmental initiatives. Another potential issue is that there is a lack of clarity of the role of HR in ESG strategies. The implementation of ESG is a top down approach and the senior leaders shall assign the work to the departments concerned. However, there is lack of the clarity of roles of human resources departments and the human resources professionals. In this research shall list a set of activities associated with the initiation, implementation, and continuous maintenance to the implementation of ESG. Researches of Green HR are well studied, but as the scope of ESG is bigger than green initiatives and the concept of ESG is established later than green, therefore research that is creating the proper noun and definition of "ESG HR" is not notified and the role of HR in ESG is not well established. The researcher will conduct semi-structured in-depth guest interviews as a sample and data collection instrument.

The planning and implementation of ESG in the hotel industry is often referred to as uncharted territory in the academic world because of the limited knowledge about which ESG activities and practices should be undertaken and which factors play an important role in determining the processes and outcomes of ESG for the industry. The main purpose of this study is to review the ESG strategy of Marriott hotel through the lens of Yu's 3 H model. The model is found to be a useful analytical tool in planning and implementing the ESG strategy, which is one of the important company business strategies. It is found that the three main domains of 3 H model namely (1) Heart, (2) Head, and (3) Hand can be used to plan and implement the hotel's ESG strategy. By looking at the planning and implementation of ESG from the perspective of 3 H model, this study

contributes to the existing knowledge of environmental management, CSR and ESG literature in a particularly important area by identifying the elements and processes of ESG planning and implementation based on the model.

The thesis is important for both hotels and human resources professionals. The findings of this study can help them to understand what appropriate measures or activities can be designed and implemented to achieve the intended goal of ESG through the 3 H model. In addition, the findings can also serve as a reference for the hotel industry. It will be valuable for a hotel company to better understand the planning and implementation of ESG so that adequate strategy can be formulated to react. Quantitative and qualitative are the two known research methodological approaches (Howe, & Eisenhart, 1990). To understand the subjective reality and summarize knowledge from experiences and constructs of the researchers and participants, it is common and preferable to adopt constructivist philosophical paradigm with qualitative research approach (Adom et al., 2016). This paper will adopt a qualitative approach to explore the views of ESG from the hoteliers and HR in hotels and hotel employees. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are very suitable for studying the under-researched phenomenon used in qualitative hospitality research approaches (Manoharan, Jones, Jiang, Singal, 2021), for instance, seeking to explore new ESG human resources practices and new ideas. On the other hand, secondary data will be used to collect facts regarding ESG and the selected hotel for the review and analysis. The legal requirements of ESG will be collected and considered for the review of this study, as the purpose of this thesis is to review the role of human resources in ESG in a hotel.

Keywords: ESG, Human Resources, Stakeholders, Senior Management, Hong Kong, Hotel Industry, 3H Model

Reference: please refer to Part 3

PART 2 – Evaluation of a current research article

The selected article:

“Yusoff, Y. M., Othman, N. Z., Fernando, Y., Amran, A., Surienty, L., & Ramayah, T. (2015). Conceptualization of green human resource management: an exploratory study from Malaysian-based multinational companies. *International Journal of Business Management & Economic Research*, 6(3), 158-166.”

1. Summary of the article

The researchers of this paper indicated that the role of human resources (HR) in the development and deployment of green initiatives in multi-national companies were not fully researched and studied. Therefore the purpose of the paper is to examine the understanding of human resource senior executive in multinational companies in operating green initiatives in Malaysia. In addition, the study aims to identify the similarities and differences between literature review on the concept and practice of green HRM in Malaysia and Western countries. With the findings, the researchers wanted to provide valuable insights for HR managers/practitioners and academicians, especially teams academics in business schools. For academics, the exploratory study could serve as a foundation for subsequent quantitative research.

There are five key contents in the article:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Preliminary Findings
- Discussion and Conclusion

The researchers summarize that the strategic green HR management in areas includes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Electronic HRM (E-HRM), Work-Life Balance (WLB), Green

Policies and Extra Care Program.

2. Critique of the paper are as follows:

2.1 Selection of semi-structured face to face interviews

Quantitative and qualitative are the two known research methodological approaches (Howe, & Eisenhart, 1990). Most of the quantitative research will be involved in investigating phenomena through hypothesis testing and numerical data processing (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). To understand the subjective reality and summarize knowledge from experiences and constructs of the researchers and participants, it is common and preferable to adopt constructivist philosophical paradigm with qualitative research approach (Adom et al., 2016). A researcher may use a qualitative research approach to observe, interview analyses and interprets phenomena (Basias & Pollalis 2018).

In this article, the researchers stated that semi-structured face to face interviews would be used for data collection. However, justification of selecting the semi-structured interview method and how to ensure the reliability were not given and clearly explained. On the other hand, the researchers did not state the procedure for developing and validating the coding schemes for data collection (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pederson, 2013). The analytical approach was not clearly explained so that we could hardly understand how the themes were developed.

2.2 Sampling Size

Face to face semi-structure interviews with the head of human resources of four multinational companies were conducted. However, references were not provided to support the sampling size. Further explanations about the sample size of four could be provided to justify that the four samples collected is sufficient while the data collected are saturated for establishing “the conceptual and empirical understanding about the nature of Green Human Resources Management in multinational companies in Malaysia”.

On the other hand, as the purpose of the research is to study the Green HRM in multinational companies in Malaysia, therefore, the researchers should explain the significance and the weight of the four multinational companies selected in the study. However, apart from the brief introductions of the four companies; no information about the total revenue, total number of employees, environmental initiatives, environmental performances, contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Malaysia, and the importance of the four companies in the economy of Malaysia. Therefore the researchers may consider to adjust, likely to increase the sampling size of the research.

2.3 Snowball approach is not adopted

The researchers indicated in the article that they had difficulties in finding more respondents. It is recommended that snowball sampling technique is applicable. This method shall be effective to invite and identify interview participants where one human resources practitioner gives the name of a second and continues in the same way (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). On the other hand, it is not uncommon that the head of human resources have built good business connections with other human resources professionals. With the snowball sampling, it's believed the sample size could be increased.

Therefore, the researchers shall at least indicate that the efforts paid to find more respondents.

2.4 The background of the respondents

The background of the respondents was not presented, and the readers only know that they are head of human resources. To ensure that the respondents are able to provide relevant information, background of the respondents such as:

- The direct report of the respondent: if the respondent reports to the Board or Chief Executive Officer, then the respondent shall be able to provide more strategic and

directional information and details

- The service years of the respondent: to ensure that the respondent has good knowledge of the company served
- The organization chart of the respondent: to understand if there are any dedicated department or section is responsible for any green initiatives
- Brief employment and education background of the respondent (if available): to indicate if the respondent has any Green HRM experience

2.5 *Development of Interview Questions*

There is no information provided about the how the interview questions were developed in order to fit for the purpose of research.

2.6 *Observing during face to face interviews*

There are several advantages of using qualitative approach, including the opportunity to collect data with a depth not usually available from completing survey questionnaires. Also it provides opportunities for observers and researchers to fully understand participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Victoroff & Hogan, 2006).

The researchers sent the questions to the respondents two weeks ago before the interviews, and it was a good practice to ensure that the respondents have the idea of the scope. However, the researchers have not indicated that how to verify that the data is correct without over preparation.

For example, there is no indication in the article that how the researchers identify and play the role of observers. Therefore, the non-verbal information such as body languages on the spot were not collected and presented.

2.7 *Confirmation of transcripts with the respondents*

In qualitative research, interviewee transcript review (ITR) as a technique for improving the rigour

of interview-based, qualitative research (Hagens, Dobrow & Chafe, 2009). ITR is a process that the researchers can provide the verbatim transcripts to the respondents to verify the accuracy of information provided, correct mistakes and provide clarifications. There are pros and cons of deploying ITR. The pros are increasing the accuracy of the transcripts and in some cases the respondents may provide further information. However, one of the potential disadvantages can be the removal of important information provided by the respondents in the interviews.

In this article as there are only four respondents, and therefore the accuracy and the depth of information provided are very important. It is recommended that the researchers can conduct ITR to improve the quality and accuracy of the data.

2.8 Lack of Data triangulation for the interview

Triangulation is the application of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to examine the validity through the collecting and cross checking of information from different sources. The researcher shall indicate the process or considerations of maximizing objectivity by proposing triangulated data sources and rigorous data collection methods (Kwok, 2012) in alignment with their concepts advocated.

In this article, the researchers can also collect information and opinion from different stakeholders of the companies in order to triangulate the data accuracy and get more information from different perspectives. It is obvious that the stakeholders play an important role in ensuring companies to manage their environmental related activities appropriately (McElroy and van Engelen, 2012). It reflects the importance of investigating how an organization can develop working-relationship with its relevant stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers and regulators etc. when implementing green related strategies. According to Buysse and Verbeke (2003), among different stakeholders, an organization will actively work with its internal and external stakeholders with the aim to achieve a common goal. The scholars further indicated that a company's employees can be considered as its internal stakeholder whereas customers, investors, suppliers, regulators, communities and other business partners etc. are external stakeholders.

Reference

1. Adom, D., Attah, A. Y., & Ankrah, K. (2016). Constructivism Philosophical Pradigm: Implication for Research, Teaching and Learning. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(10), 1–9. www.eajournals.org
2. Basias, N., & Pollalis, Y. (2018). Quantitative and qualitative research in business & technology: Justifying a suitable research methodology. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, 7, 91-105.
3. Bird, C. M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2), 226–248.
4. Buysse, K. and Verbeke, A. (2003), “Proactive environmental strategies: A stakeholder management perspective”, *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 453-470.
5. Campbell, J. L., Quincy, C., Osserman, J., & Pederson, O. K. (2013). Coding in-depth semistructured interviews: Problems of unitization and intercoder reliability and agreement. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 42, 294–320.
6. Cohen, N., & Arieli, T. (2011). Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(4), 423–435.
7. Casado-Díaz, A. B., Sellers-Rubio, R., Rodriguez-Sanchez, C., & Sancho-Esper, F. (2020).
8. Howe, K., & Eisenhart, M. (1990). Standards for qualitative (and quantitative) research: A prolegomenon. *Educational researcher*, 19(4), 2-9.
9. Hagens, V., Dobrow, M. J., & Chafe, R. (2009). Interviewee transcript review: assessing the impact on qualitative research. *BMC medical research methodology*, 9(1), 1-8.
10. Kwok, L. (2012). Exploratory-triangulation design in mixed methods studies: A case of examining graduating seniors who meet hospitality recruiters’ selection criteria. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 12(3), 125–138.
11. McElroy, M.W. and van Engelen, J.M. (2012), *Corporate Sustainability Management: The Art and Science of Managing Non-financial Performance*, Routledge.
12. Orlikowski, W. J., & Baroudi, J. J. (1991). Studying information technology in organizations: Research approaches and assumptions. *Information Systems Research*, 2(1), 1–28.
13. Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5 Pt 2), 1189–1208.
14. Victoroff, K. Z., & Hogan, S. (2006). Students’ Perceptions of Effective Learning Experiences in Dental School: A Qualitative Study Using a Critical Incident Technique. *Journal of Dental Education*, 70(2), 124–132.
15. Yusoff, Y. M., Othman, N. Z., Fernando, Y., Amran, A., Surienty, L., & Ramayah, T. (2015). Conceptualization of green human resource management: an exploratory study from Malaysian-based multinational companies. *International Journal of Business Management & Economic Research*, 6(3), 158-166.

PART 3 – Research Proposal

ESG Strategies: The role of human resources management in hotel

1. Background

The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited (“Exchange”) fosters an effective governance structure of environmental, social and governance (ESG) related matters; and therefore new requirements has become effective to ensure that the board of the listed companies shall identify and evaluate ESG risks and opportunities (Lu, 2016). Therefore, business firms are not immune to such changes. They face immense pressure for example, from the investors to pay attention to carbon neutrality and need to manage the opportunities and risks attributable to ESG factors. In fact, the environmental awareness of many companies has been increasing as a result of different environmental problems, environmental laws and increasing pressure from the market and the stakeholders.

Dated back to 1990s, capital began to emphasize issues such as racial, gender equality, labour rights were well recognized in the business world (Ruggie, 2013). On the other hand, Enron’s bankruptcy filing because of serious integrity issues and corporate scandals had raised the attention of US government and investors about the sustainability of business (Johnson, 2003). Then Al Gore published his book “An inconvenient truth” in year 2006 had further raised the discussion not just in US, but the awareness of global warming and the effect globally (Gore, 2006). In 2006, UN Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) firstly introduced the concept of ESG and further promoted its practice globally, resulting in the rapid global development of ESG.

Stakeholders play an important role in ensuring companies to manage their ESG activities appropriately (McElroy and van Engelen, 2012). It reflects the importance of investigating how an organization can develop working-relationship with its relevant stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers and regulators etc. when implementing ESG strategy.

According to Buysse and Verbeke (2003), among different stakeholders, an organization will actively work with its internal and external stakeholders with the aim to achieve a common goal. The scholars further indicated that a company’s employees can be considered as its internal stakeholder whereas customers, investors, suppliers, regulators, communities and other business partners etc. are external stakeholders. Employee as one of the key stakeholders, the perspective from the employee is important to the success of ESG implementation.

Human Resources (HR) as a key functions to serve the employee, there must be a role for the HR in implementing ESG strategies. There are Green Human Resources (Ahmad, 2015) which proven that the role of Human Resources (HR) is important to the

implementation of environmental protection related strategies. Green HR has an influence on the organization's environmental performance indirectly; and at the same time the leadership of the organization plays an important role to affect the HR practices and the green innovation of the organization will be affected accordingly (Singh et al., 2020).

2. Problems and Potential Issues

2.1. Definition of Problems

The hotel industry contributes to the economy and employment in the tourism sector (Dogru et al., 2020). On the other hand, to maintain the operations hotels has to use a large amount of energy and water for heating, cooling, and lighting, which lead to unfavourable influences the environment. Because of the resource-intensive nature, the hotels bring significantly impacts the natural environment (Rahman et al., 2015).

Senior management thinks that it is necessary to implement ESG, and one of the key stakeholders of implementing ESG is employee. Therefore the perception and the involvement of employees are very important to the success of ESG implementation. As HR is the key function to serve the internal customers i.e. employees, therefore the HR management to a certain extend shall affect or assist the successful implementation of ESG strategies. There are many research related to "Green HR Management", but there is little research about "ESG HR Management".

The main purpose of this study is to review the ESG strategy of hotels, as the hotel industry can implement ESG activities and practices to resolve many important issues, which have the impact on greenhouse gas emissions, corporate sustainability and safety etc.

2.2. Potential issues

2.2.1. lack of buy in of staff may lead to difficulties in implementing ESG

Stakeholders can be viewed as 'any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of corporation's purpose (Freeman, 1984: vi). Stakeholders can be further categorized as primary or secondary. According to Clarkson (1995), stakeholders who have a formal, official or contractual relationship with a firm are the firm's primary stakeholders whereas those who are not engaged in transactions with the firm and not essential for the firm's survival are secondary stakeholders.

The main stakeholders in the hotel industry normally include hotel owners, investors, employees, corporate executives, customers, suppliers, consultants, legal actors, the local

government and the community or society (Benavides-Velasco et al., 2014; Darnall et al., 2008; Gadenne et al., 2009; Lo, 2013; Torres et al., 2014).

Hotel services and operations are very labour intensive and because the service can be heterogeneous and differ from customer and situations (Ramphal & Nicolaides, 2014). The service quality will very much depends on the performance of hotel employees.

For implementing green initiatives, there is a significant increase of workload for hotel employees, which may lead to dissatisfaction and effect the engagement of staff (Luo & Fan, 2019). Therefore it is worth looking into the buy in of employees during the implementation of the ESG initiatives which is not only restricted to green or environmental initiatives.

2.2.2. Lack of clarity of the role of HR in ESG strategies

The implementation of ESG is a top down approach and the senior leaders shall assign the work to the departments concerned. However, there is lack of the clarity of roles of human resources departments and the human resources professionals. In this research shall list a set of activities associated with the initiation, implementation, and continuous maintenance to the implementation of ESG.

Researches of Green HR is well studied, but as the scope of ESG is bigger than green initiatives and the concept of ESG is established later than green, therefore research that is creating the proper noun and definition of “ESG HR” is not notified and the role of HR in ESG is not well established.

3. Literature Review

3.1. What is ESG?

The United Nation report entitled ‘Who Cares Wins’ firstly introduced the term ‘Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)’ in 2004. Since then, ESG issues has often been incorporated in company business strategy. Different from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which is normally related to corporations’ activities focusing on more socially responsible and being a better corporate citizen (Gillan, Koch and Starks, 2021), ESG refers to the activities and practices of an organization, which are respectively related to the environmental responsibility, social responsibility and corporate governance responsibility of corporations (Gao, Meng, Gu, Liu, and Farrukh, 2021).

Environmental responsibility has become an important consideration when a business organization develops its strategy because of the increasingly serious environmental problems such as the climate change, plastic pollution, air and water pollution, and carbon emission etc.. For instance, in the hotel industry, hotels incorporate environmental management into their business strategy as a result of the pressure from their stakeholders such as green travellers who normally select environmentally-friendly hotels to stay;

business partners who prefer doing business with environmentally-friendly companies; and environmental groups and communities who care about and monitor company environmental performance (Hu, Liu, Yuen, Lim and Hu, 2019). In the hotel industry, hotel companies are also under pressure to change the policy as a result of EU hotel policy in order to achieve the EU's overall environmental goals (Dyrhauge, 2013).

Social responsibility is normally evaluated by different aspects such as working condition, health and safety, labour management, and human rights (Muñoz-Torres, Fernández-Izquierdo, Rivera-Lirio, and Escrig-Olmedo, 2019). Turban and Greening (1997) indicated that companies, which are willing to spend effort to build up good relationship with their stakeholders such as employees and the wider community, have competitive advantage while operating their businesses.

There are several ESG evaluation systems available to measure an organization's contribution to ESG. Such systems include those developed by Thomson Reuters and Goldman Sachs etc.. According to Yu, Guo and Luu (2018), when reporting ESG data, some organizations normally report greenhouse gas emissions, hazardous waste environmental fine etc. (environmental dimension), the employee turnover rate, community involvement and spending (social dimension) and board duration and size etc. (governance dimension) The scholars further indicated that firms with greater asset size, better liquidity and good past financial performance will be more transparent in EGS issues.

3.2.The Impact of COVID-19 on ESG

3.2.1. Environmental dimension

There are many impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the environment in accordance with a 2020 report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The reports stated that the pandemic has slowed down pollutant emissions and the use of natural resource. Because of the lockdown in many countries, the reduction use of air traffic and automobiles etc. has

decreased the emission of carbon dioxide (Nassos, 2020). But, the pandemic has triggered an increased use of plastics and an increase in illegal waste-dumping. UNECE also stated that more people have turned to unsustainable harvesting of natural resources because of the loss of their livelihoods. The organization further warned that pressure on the environment will resume once the pandemic eases.

3.2.2. Social dimension

Due to Covid-19, some companies have engaged in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in order to help overcome the crisis. For instance, some hotels have provided accommodations to healthcare workers (Shin, Sharma, Nicolau and Kang, 2021). However, many workers have lost their jobs due to the impact of Covid-19 on different business sectors (von Wachter, 2020)

3.2.3. Governance dimension

Khatib et al. (2021) found that COVID-19 has affected all firm characteristics including firm performance and governance structure. The scholar in their research concluded that board meetings and audit committee have negative influence on a firm performance pre and post-COVID-19.

3.3. Stakeholder theory

Stakeholders play an important role in ensuring companies to manage their ESG activities appropriately (McElroy and van Engelen, 2012). It reflects the importance of investigating how an organization can develop working-relationship with its relevant stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers and regulators etc. when implementing ESG strategy. According to Buysse and Verbeke (2003), among different stakeholders, an organization will actively work with its internal and external stakeholders with the aim to achieve a common goal. The scholars further indicated that a company's employees can be considered as its internal stakeholder whereas customers, investors, suppliers, regulators, communities and other business partners etc. are external stakeholders. Hotels have different stakeholders including guests, business partners, communities investors, media, regulators, suppliers and employees etc. (Chen et al., 2022) to deal with when implementing its business strategies such as the ESG strategy.

3.4. 3H model

The 3H model was introduced by Yu (2021) to help understand the management of different issues about people and organization holistically. In Yu's 3H model, There are three main domains in the 3H model namely (1) Heart, (2) Head and (3) Hand. Yu (2019) argued that by integrating all these three H domains together synergy can be created to better manage the planning process of a company strategy in order to achieve the

established strategic goals. In the Heart domain, motivating people to work together to achieve an organizational goals is a key part of the domain. In addition to motivation, leadership and values are also the main constructs in the Heart domain (Cheung and Yu, 2021). In the “Head” domain, the mind of a strategic planners is emphasized. The planners need to process different important skills such as strategic thinking, planning, creative and analytical skills (Cheung and Yu, 2021). The ‘Hand’ domain means people competences to achieve a company’s established plans (Cheung and Yu, 2021) such as the hotel ESG strategy in this study. In hotel, a people industry, hotel management needs to reply on its internal and external stakeholders such as the hotel employees, suppliers or even customers etc. to achieve its respective strategic objectives and goals.

The Yu’s 3H model was adopted by other scholars to investigate the strategic planning of different organizations. For instance, Cheung and Yu (2020) adopted the framework to examine the strategic planning of the Hong Kong Police Force. Therefore, Yu’s 3H model can help provide a guideline for analyzing the hotel’s ESG strategy.

3.5. Human Resources Function

Training plays a positive role in promoting communication between the company and the employees, as well as between the management and the employees, and can effectively enhance the loyalty of the employees to the company, thus achieving a win-win situation of mutual development between the employees and the company. Compared with traditional remuneration incentives, most workers are beginning to attach importance to their own professional skills and comprehensive quality improvement. Therefore, it is very necessary to set up a scientific and reasonable training platform, establish a perfect and sound training system, create a strong training atmosphere in the enterprise and form a good corporate culture in order to better promote the development of the enterprise. To develop a company with high performance and morale, management should continue to improve their training systems, actively guide employees to participate in all sorts of training in alignment with the company’s Vision, Mission and Core Values. (Klemm, Sanderson and Luffman, 1991). The alignment of Vision, Mission and Core Values with ESG is another important topic to be studied.

The training system shall include full coverage of training as far as possible, and not leave a single employee behind. This will further stimulate the enthusiasm of the employees, increase their motivation and enhance their subjective initiative, and achieve the goal of a win-win situation for both the employees and the enterprise. Therefore the role of training in ESG can be further studied.

On the other hand, there is an increase attention to Green Human Resources Management (Renwick, Redman and Maguire, 2013), which is a new management concept and management model formed by applying the “green” concept to the field of human resources management (Farooq, Zhang, Talwar and Dhir, 2022). Its main task is to adopt management methods that are in line with the “green” concept. The human attitude and the ecological harmony of the employees are taken care, so as to bring the enterprise the comprehensive benefits of unified economic, social and ecological benefits, and to realise the common and sustainable development of the enterprise and the employees.

4. Research Method

4.1 Reasons of using Qualitative Research

Quantitative and qualitative are the two known research methodological approaches (Howe, & Eisenhart, 1990). Most of the quantitative research will be involved in investigating phenomena through hypothesis testing and numerical data processing (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). To understand the subjective reality and summarize knowledge from experiences and constructs of the researchers and participants, it is common and preferable to adopt constructivist philosophical paradigm with qualitative research approach (Adom et al., 2016). A researcher may use a qualitative research approach to observe, interview analyses and interprets phenomena (Basias & Pollalis 2018). Qualitative research has also drawn attention of the researcher in tourism, hospitality and hotel studies (Tribe & Xiao, 2011). Because of the above justifications, the thesis will adopt a qualitative approach to explore the views of ESG from the hoteliers and HR in hotels and hotel employees. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are very suitable for studying the under-researched phenomenon used in qualitative hospitality research approaches (Manoharan, Jones, Jiang, Singal, 2021), for instance, seeking to explore new ESG human resources practices and new ideas.

On the other hand, secondary data will be used to collect facts regarding ESG and the selected hotel for the review and analysis. The legal requirements of ESG will be collected and considered for the review of this study, as the purpose of this thesis is to review the role of human resources in ESG in a hotel. For example, sustainability reports and government released documents including environmental policy statement, employment policy, sustainability, report or other internal report etc. will be used.

After careful consideration, the Marriott Hotel will be selected for conducting the research because of the following reasons:

- one of the largest hotel employers in the world
- its international reputation
- its significant contributions in implementing ESG in hotel industry

Marriott International, Inc. (“Marriott”) is an American company, founded by J. Willard Marriott and his wife Alice Marriott, that operates, franchises, and licenses lodging including hotels and residential with its headquarters located at Bethesda, Maryland USA. (<https://marriott.gcs-web.com/>).

Most of the hotels will appoint the Human Resources Department to handle the cultural issues (Watson, D’Annunzio-Green 1996), like the changing in company structure, performance appraisal, performance-related pay, training programmes and counselling are under the umbrella

of human resources management, and all the mentioned functions can be related to the development and deployment of ESG strategically and practically in alignment of organizational culture and individual performance.

4.2 Research Questions

This research will try to answer the following research questions to close the identified issues, problems and gaps. The qualitative research questions are provisional, and will be improved through the research processes (Agee, 2009)

- How ESG is aligned with the hotels' vision, mission and core values?
- How ESG can help to boost employee and guest satisfaction?
- What are the expected role and responsibilities of human resources department in developing and deploying ESG strategies and actions?

4.3 Data triangulation

Triangulation is the application of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to examine the validity through the collecting and cross checking of information from different sources. The researcher shall indicate the process or considerations of maximizing objectivity by proposing triangulated data sources and rigorous data collection methods (Kwok, 2012) in alignment with their concepts advocated.

In this article, the researcher will collect information and opinion from different stakeholders of the hotel in order to triangulate the data accuracy and get more information from different perspectives about ESG. As mentioned in the previous section of this paper, it is obvious that the stakeholders play an important role in ensuring companies to manage their environmental related activities appropriately (McElroy and van Engelen, 2012). Therefore, apart from collecting information from senior management and human resources, interviews will be conducted with general staff as well to understand their expectations of human resources in developing and deploying ESG strategies and related activities.

4.4 Sample Size and Sampling Strategies

To obtain an appropriate sample size is the basic requirement in research in order to get accurate, credible, dependable and confirmable analysis and findings (Marshall, Cardon, Podder, Fontenot, 2013). Therefore, according to the research objectives, what the researcher wants to know, and the study population's size and diversity, it is necessary to determine what and how

many subjects to select (Morse, 2000).

The sampling standard can be varied among researchers. In this research, the researcher will apply data saturation theory to determine sample sizes (Morse, 1995) in order to achieve data saturation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). The following group of hotel employees will be invited to attend the interviews:

Title	Number of Respondent(s)
1. General Manager	1
2. Hotel Manager, if any	1
3. Head of Sales & Marketing	1
4. Head of Food & Beverage	1
5. Head of Rooms Division	1
6. Head of Housekeeping	1
7. Head of Engineering	1
8. Head of Finance	1
9. Head of Purchasing, if any (or at hotel group level)	1
10. Head of Information Technology	1
11. Head of Human Resources	1
12. Human Resources staff	all
13. Environmental Management Manager, if any	1
14. Chief Steward	1
15. Hygiene Manager, if any	1
16. Quality Manager, if any	1
17. EMS related projects in charge, if any	all
18. Management Trainee/ Operations Trainee, if any	all
19. Rank & File staff from Housekeeping	1
20. Rank & File staff from Banquet	1
21. Rank & File staff from Food & Beverage	1

4.5 *Date collection procedures*

The researcher reflection indicated that she is familiar with hotel operations. She has solid hotel experience not only in human resources, but also she had experience in new hotel opening and implementation of total quality management by applying the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria (Lee & Ooi, 2015). The researcher shall be able to connect to the senior management of the targeted hotel group, and obtain a permission for conducting research.

However, because of Covid-19 and the business challenges of the hotel industry in Hong Kong, there is still difficult in securing the research interviews. Therefore, a snowball sampling technique may be applicable as this can be useful to find interview respondents by referral (Cohen & Arieli, 2011).

For hotel management, a full set of questionnaire and procedures will be shared in a meeting in

person for explaining the process of the research interviews. Questions will be sent to the department heads and head of human resources, and the rest of the staff will only know the questions on the spot of interviews.

Consent forms of taking recording will be shared with the human resources department in advance in order to ensure that the respondents understand how the researcher will use the information collected.

Before rolling out the whole series of interviews, the researcher will conduct a pilot interview with the same study group following the same procedure. Based on the pilot result, revisions in the interview questions, its structure and the dialogue approach of the researcher will take place accordingly. The researcher will be the observer in this case.

Before the actual interview, a briefing will be conducted by the researcher about the semi-structured interview questions, research objectives, followed by their written/verbal consent to audio-recording and note-taking.

4.6 Data Analysis

Real life stories and lived experience of people are frequently presented in qualitative research with multiple perspectives of truth and data (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015). On the other hand, a theme represents a patterned response that captures something important concerning the research question and objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is the always be applied for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns and themes within rich data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis helps break and aggregate the data collection involving describing, organizing, presenting, and interpreting pattern (Ryan, 2015). This study will use the inductive thematic analysis method based on the academic research foundations and research questions.

4.7 Data quality

In qualitative research, interviewee transcript review (ITR) as a technique for improving the rigour of interview-based, qualitative research (Hagens, Dobrow & Chafe, 2009). ITR is a process that the researchers can provide the verbatim transcripts to the respondents to verify the accuracy of information provided, correct mistakes and provide clarifications. There are pros and cons of deploying ITR. The pros are increasing the accuracy of the transcripts and in some cases the respondents may provide further information. However, one of the potential disadvantages can be the removal of important information provided by the respondents in the interviews.

In this research, to improve the quality and accuracy of data, the transcript will be sent to the

department heads and hotel general managers for verification.

In hotels, However, for rank and file staff, the transcript will not be shared because reading transcript may be a challenge for them in terms of time. On the other hand, most of the rank and file staff may not be able to understand all the words in writing because of the education level.

5. Conclusion

The focus of ESG strategic planning and implementation varies from industry to industry. On the whole, business organizations need to firstly raise their recognition and attention to the ESG concept, so that they can fully recognise that the essence of ESG is to help them improve their corporate management and meet future challenges, thereby reaping long-term benefits. On the other hand, it is necessary that in implementing and promoting ESG strategic planning, business organizations should fully leverage the combined resources from the ESG related stakeholders across the industry to jointly promote sustainable development.

The planning and implementation of ESG in the hotel industry is often referred to as uncharted territory in the academic world because of the limited knowledge about which ESG activities and practices should be undertaken and which factors play an important role in determining the processes and outcomes of ESG for the industry. The main purpose of this study is to review the ESG strategy of Marriott hotel through the lens of Yu's 3 H model. The model is found to be a useful analytical tool in planning and implementing the ESG strategy, which is one of the important company business strategies. It is found that the three main domains of 3 H model namely (1) Heart, (2) Head, and (3) Hand can be used to plan and implement the hotel's ESG strategy.

By looking at the planning and implementation of ESG from the perspective of 3 H model, this study contributes to the existing knowledge of environmental management, CSR and ESG literature in a particularly important area by identifying the elements and processes of EGS planning and implementation based on the model.

The thesis is important for both hotels and human resources professionals. The findings of this study can help them to understand what appropriate measures or activities can be designed and implemented to achieve the intended goal of ESG through the 3 H model. In addition, the findings can also serve as a reference for the hotel industry. It will be valuable for a hotel company to better understand the planning and implementation of ESG so that adequate strategy can be formulated to react.

References

1. Adom, D., Attah, A. Y., & Ankrah, K. (2016). Constructivism Philosophical Pradigm:

- Implication for Research, Teaching and Learning. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(10), 1–9.
2. Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4), 431–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512>
 3. Ahmad, S. (2015). Green human resource management: Policies and practices. *Cogent business & management*, 2(1), 1030817.
 4. Basias, N., & Pollalis, Y. (2018). Quantitative and qualitative research in business & technology: Justifying a suitable research methodology. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, 7, 91-105.
 5. Benavides-Velasco, C.A., Quintana-Garcia, Marchante-Lara, M. (2014), “Total quality management, corporate social responsibility and performance in the hotel industry”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 41, pp.77-87.
 6. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
 7. Buysse, K. and Verbeke, A. (2003), “Proactive environmental strategies: A stakeholder management perspective”, *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 453-470.
 8. Casado-Díaz, A. B., Sellers-Rubio, R., Rodriguez-Sanchez, C., & Sancho-Esper, F. (2020). Predictors of willingness to pay a price premium for hotels’ water-saving initiatives. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 37(7), 773–784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2020.1812469>
 9. Chan, E.S.W. and Hawkins, R. (2010), “Attitude towards EMSs in an international hotel: An exploratory case study”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 641-651.
 10. Chen, C. D., Su, C. H. J., & Chen, M. H. (2022). Are ESG-committed hotels financially resilient to the COVID-19 pandemic? An autoregressive jump intensity trend model. *Tourism Management*, 104581.
 11. Cheung, H.Y. and Yu, E. (2020), “A review of the strategic planning process in the Hong Kong Police Force”, *Public Administration and Policy*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 245-258.
 12. Clarkson, M.B.E. (1995), “A stakeholder framework for analysing and evaluating corporate social performance”, *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20 No.1, pp.92-117.
 13. Cohen, N., & Arieli, T. (2011). Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(4), 423–435.
 14. Darnall, N., Henriques, I., Sadorsky, P. (2008), “Do environmental management systems improve business performance in an international setting? *Journal of International Management*, Vol. 14, pp.364-376.
 15. Dogru, T., McGinley, S., & Kim, W. G. (2020). The effect of hotel investments on employment in the tourism, leisure and hospitality industries. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(5), 1941–1965. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2019-0913>
 16. Dyrhaug, H. (2013), “Modal shift to environmentally friendly rail”, *EU Hotel Policy- Making*, pp. 132-147.
 17. Farooq, R., Zhang, Z., Talwar, S. and Dhir, A. (2022), “Do green human resource management

and self-efficacy facilitate green creativity? A study of luxury hotels and resorts”, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 824-845.

18. Freeman, R. (1984), *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, Pitman, Boston.
19. Gadenne, D., Kennedy, J., McKeiver, C. (2009), “An empirical study of environmental awareness and practices in SME’s”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 84 No.1, pp.45-63.
20. Gao, S., Meng, F., Gu, Z., Liu, Z. and Farrukh, M. (2021), “Mapping & clustering analysis on environmental, social & governance field a bibliometric analysis using Scopus”, *Sustainability*, Vol. 13, 7304.
21. Gillan, S.L., Koch, A. and Starks, L.T. (2021), “Firms and social responsibility: A review of ESG and CSR research in corporate finance”, *Journal of Corporate Finance*, Vol. 66, 101889.
22. Gore, A. (2006), *An inconvenient truth: The planetary emergency of global warming and what we can do about it*. Rodale.
23. Han, H., Lee, J. S., Trang, H. L. T., & Kim, W. (2018). Water conservation and waste reduction management for increasing guest loyalty and green hotel practices. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 75, 58–66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.03.012>
24. Hoobler, J.M., Masterson, C.R., Nkomo, S.M. and Michel, E.J. (2016), “The business case for women leaders: Meta-analysis, research critique, and path forward”, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 2473-2499.
25. Howe, K., & Eisenhart, M. (1990). Standards for qualitative (and quantitative) research: A prolegomenon. *Educational researcher*, 19(4), 2-9.
26. Hu, J., Liu, Y.L., Yuen, T.W.W., Lim, M.K. and Hu, J. (2019), “Do green practices really attract customers? The sharing economy from the sustainable supply chain management perspective”, *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, Vol. 149, pp. 177-187.
27. Johnson, C. E. (2003), “Enron’s ethical collapse: Lessons for leadership educators”, *Faculty Publications – College of Business*, 87, available at <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfsb/87>
28. Klemm, M., Sanderson, S. and Luffman, G. (1991), “Mission statements: Selling corporate values to employees”, *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 24 No. 3), pp. 73-78.
29. Lee, L. and Chen, L.F. (2018), “Boosting employee retention through CSR: A configurational analysis”, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol. 25 No.5, pp. 948-960.
30. Lee, V. H., & Ooi, K. B. (2015). Applying the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria: An approach to strengthen organisational memory and process innovation. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 26(11-12), 1373-1386.
31. Lo, Y.H. (2013), “Stakeholder management in the Chinese hotel industry: the antecedents and impacts”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 24 No.4, pp.470-490.
32. Lo, K. Y. and Kwan, C. L. (2017), “The effect of environmental, social, governance and sustainability initiatives on stock value—Examining market response to initiatives undertaken by listed companies”, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol.24 No. 6, pp. 606-619.
33. Lu, H. (2016), “The ‘legalisation’ of corporate social responsibility: Hong Kong experience on ESG reporting”, *Asia Pacific Law Review*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 123-148.
34. Luan, C.J. and Tang, M.J. (2007), “Where is independent director efficacy?”, *Corporate Governance*, Vol. 15, pp. 636-643.
35. Luo, J. M., & Fan, Y. (2019). The impact of green certification to hotel green practices: A case

- study on the green hotel award in Macau. *Journal of Hospitality*, 1(3-4), 121-135.
36. Maslow, A.H. (1943), "A theory of human motivation", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 370-396.
 37. Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., & Fontenot, R. (2013). Does sample size matter in qualitative research?: A review of qualitative interviews in is research. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 54(1), 11–22.
 38. McElroy, M.W. and van Engelen, J.M. (2012), *Corporate Sustainability Management: The Art and Science of Managing Non-financial Performance*, Routledge.
 39. Manoharan, A., Jones, J., Jiang, Z., & Singal, M. (2021). Career optimism of culturally and linguistically diverse hotel workers in the pandemic age. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93(2), 102796.
 40. Morse, J. (1995). The significance of saturation. In *Qualitative Health Research* (Vol. 5, Issue 2, pp. 147–149). Sage PublicationsSage CA: Thousand Oaks, CA.
 41. Morse, J. (2000). What Factors Should Be Considered? *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(1), 3–5.
 42. Mullins, L.J. (1999), *Management and Organisational Behavior* (5th Ed.), Boston: Irwin.
 43. Muñoz-Torres, M.J., Fernández-Izquierdo M.Á., Rivera-Lirio, J.M. and Escrig-Olmedo, E. (2019). "Can environmental, social, and governance rating agencies favor business models that promote a more sustainable development?", *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 439-452.
 44. Orlikowski, W. J., & Baroudi, J. J. (1991). Studying information technology in organizations: Research approaches and assumptions. *Information Systems Research*, 2(1), 1–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2.1.1>
 45. Ozkeser, B. (2019), "Impact of training on employee motivation in human resources management", *Procedia Computer Science*, Vol. 158, pp. 802-810.
 46. Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5 Pt 2), 1189–1208.
 47. Pfeffer, J. (1994), *Competitive Advantage through People*. Boston: Mass.
 48. Rahman, I., Park, J., & Chi, C. G. Q. (2015). Consequences of "greenwashing": Consumers' reactions to hotels' green initiatives. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(6), 1054–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2014-0202>
 49. Ramphal, R., & Nicolaidis, A. (2014). Service and quality and quality service: satisfying customers in the hospitality industry. In *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* (Vol. 3, Issue 2). <http://www.ajhtl.com>
 50. Renwick, D. W., Redman, T. and Maguire, S. (2013), "Green human resource management: A review and research agenda", *International journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 1-14.
 51. Robbins, S. (1994). *Essential of Organisational Behaviour*, (fourth edition). Prentice Hall International, Inc.
 52. Ruggie, J. G. (2013), *Just business: Multinational corporations and human rights (Norton global ethics series)*, WW Norton & Company.
 53. Ryan, C. (2015). Trends in hospitality management research: A personal reflection. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 340–361.
 54. Shin, H., Sharma, A., Nicolau, J.L. and Kang, J. (2021), "The impact of hotel CSR for strategic philanthropy on booking behavior and hotel performance during the COVID 19 pandemic", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 85, 104322.

55. Singh, S. K., Del Giudice, M., Chierici, R., & Graziano, D. (2020). Green innovation and environmental performance: The role of green transformational leadership and green human resource management. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 150, 119762. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2019.119762>
56. Torres, E.N., Adler, H., Behnke, C. (2014), “Stars, diamonds, and other shiny things: the use of expert and consumer feedback in the hotel industry”, *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism*, Vol. 21, pp. 34-43.
57. Tribe, J., & Xiao, H. (2011). Developments in tourism social science. In *Annals of Tourism Research* (Vol. 38, Issue 1, pp. 7–26). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2010.11.012>
58. Turban, D.B. and Greening, D.W. (1997), “Corporate social performance and organizational attractiveness to prospective employees”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 658-672.
59. UNECE (2020, Aug 29). COVID-19, the environment and climate change. Retrieved from <https://www.unece.org/runcwelcome/issue-based-coalitions/environment-and-climate-change/covid-19-and-environment.html>.
60. Wallace, M. I. and Ng, K. C. (2016), “Development and application of underground space use in Hong Kong”, *Tunnelling and Underground Space Technology*, Vol. 55, pp. 257-279.
61. Watson, S., & D’Annunzio-Green, N. (1996). Implementing cultural change through human resources: the elusive organization alchemy?. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.
62. Wilson, E., & Hollinshead, K. (2015). Qualitative tourism research: Opportunities in the emergent soft sciences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 54(9), 30–47.
63. WTTC. (2018). Travel & tourism global economic impact & issues 2018. World Travel Tour. Counc. 11.
64. von Wachter, T. (2020), “Lost generations: Long-term effects of the COVID-19 crisis on job losers and labour market entrants, and options for policy”, *Fiscal Studies*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 549-590.
65. Xie, J., Nozawa, W., Yagi, M., Flujii, H. and Managi, S. (2019), “Do ESG activities improve corporate financial performance?” *Business Strategy and the Environment*, Vol. 28, pp. 286-300.
66. Yu, E. (2021), “An analysis of China’s strategy in combating the coronavirus pandemic with the 3H framework”, *Public Administration and Policy*, Vol.24 No. 1, pp.76-91.
67. Yu, E.P.Y., Guo, C.Q. and Luu, B.V. (2018), “ESG transparency and firm value”, *Business Strategy and the Environment*, Vol. 27, pp. 987-1004.