



# **Examining how sustainable and community engagement practices used by hotels and resorts in Fiji influences guests' behaviour**

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# Introduction

- Sustainable and community engagement practices shape hotel/resort reputation & guest perceptions
- Guests' reactions to green initiatives are mixed—experience often outweighs sustainability
- Fijian context: balancing cultural, economic, and ecological sustainability is increasingly challenging



# Literature Review: Sustainability & Guest Behaviour

- ❑ Prior studies: sustainability affects satisfaction, revisit intentions, WOM
- ❑ Willingness to pay a premium (WTPP) for sustainability is often context-dependent & inconsistent
- ❑ Limited investigation into integrated sustainability–community engagement packages in hospitality



# Literature Review: Community Engagement

- ❑ Community-led cultural activities enhance authenticity & memorability
- ❑ Engagement can elevate perceived value and emotional connection
- ❑ Scarcity of studies in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Fiji & wider South Pacific



# Need for the Study

- ❑ No empirical research specifically on Fiji/South Pacific addressing WTPP & revisit intentions
- ❑ Conflicting evidence on guests' WTPP for sustainable/community initiatives
- ❑ Stakeholders and hotel/resort Operators need evidence to align initiatives with guest expectations & comfort



# Gaps Identified

- ❑ Lack of Fiji-centric evidence on sustainability–community engagement impacts on behaviour
- ❑ Unclear whether (and how much) guests will pay a premium for such practices
- ❑ Limited insight into which practices guests value most vs. those that reduce comfort



# Methodology: Design & Sampling

- Qualitative approach: 34 in-depth semi-structured interviews
- 20 guests + 14 hotel/resort managers responsible for sustainability programs
- Non-random purposive sampling; data saturation used to determine sample size



# Methodology: Site Visits & Instruments

- ❑ Hotels/resorts drawn from 90 ETIC-classified eco/sustainable properties
- ❑ Locations: Suva, Pacific Harbour, Coral Coast, Rakiraki, Nadi
- ❑ Two interview instruments: managers & guests; 30–60 minutes each; one-month fieldwork

# Field Research





# Data Handling & Analysis

- ❑ ATLAS.ti v9.1.2 for transcription, coding, and analysis
- ❑ Schmidt's (2004) coding method; pre-established categories for sustainability & community practices
- ❑ Unique coding system developed to map themes to behavioural intentions (revisit, WTPP)



# Results & Findings

- Community development & engagement emerged as the strongest driver of positive perceptions
- Authentic cultural activities (e.g., indigenous dances, yaqona rituals) seen as memorable, and worth paying more for by the guests.
- Guests link community involvement to enhanced overall tourism experience



# Results & Findings

- ❑ Mixed reactions to energy & water conservation (e.g., low water pressure vs. appreciation for rainwater harvesting, low-flow fittings).
- ❑ Positive perceptions of rooftop gardens, solar-powered amenities, linen recycling.
- ❑ Visible recycling initiatives strongly supported; many guests willing to pay premium for such practices.



# Implications, Limitations & Future Research

- ❑ **Implications:** tailor & clearly communicate sustainability/community initiatives; stress shared value, not guest burden
- ❑ **Managerial focus:** balance environmental goals with guest comfort; deploy strong emotional & educational messaging
- ❑ **Limitations:** qualitative & non-random sample; Fiji-centric context limits generalizability
- ❑ **Future research:** quantify WTPP, test pricing/communication frames, compare across SIDS & other regions

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