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NAVIGATING SUSTAINABILITY AND CUSTOMERS ENGAGEMENT IN LUXURY HOSPITALITY

CASE STUDY ABOUT “NIMB HOTEL”

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Abstract

Sustainability has been increasingly shaping the luxury hospitality industry within the last few years. It can be challenging in many cases for luxury hotels to combine their environmental attention to customers' needs when travelling to a five-star luxury hotel, seeking for quality comfort and services aligned with the price they pay. Consequently, luxury hotels need to find out innovative strategies to give solutions to this existing fracture between comfort and luxury. At the same time, luxury hotels need to adapt to new needs and behaviours of the society, which makes appear sustainability in luxury hospitality as a side and non-relevant aspect for many customers. Not all the hotels have implemented yet innovative tools to bridge this gap between the way customers perceive comfort, luxury and sustainability, by allowing the combination of comfort and sustainability at the same level, which is the case of Nimb Hotel. Nimb Hotel is the subject of this case study, and the author suggests possible strategies that Nimb could implement in the future for educating more sustainability conscious traveller when staying at Nimb Hotel. Nimb is already implementing sustainable practices and it is certificated by the Green Key, however, it has been highlighted by the researcher during interviews carried out for the purpose of this research, that further action should be taken to further educate customers on sustainability, since it emerged a lack of awareness about the topic from their side and a willingness to see more promotions to educate customer from different cultures that can have different believes in sustainability. To meet the objective of this research, as well as find the impact of promoting sustainability to customers in a case study within the luxury hospitality sector, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach inquiry. Notably 9 semi-structured interviews have been carried out with literature content. Nimb Hotel, the subject of this case study, appears to be able to grant social and economic benefits to formers and potential customers, and be even more attentive to customers' needs and be at the same path with sustainability as Maria Oldenbjerg declared when interviewed. Findings identified a connection between sustainability and the need of creating a bridge between customers' needs, hotel management and the promotion of sustainability awareness and knowledge to customers. Data indicates new possible opportunities for Nimb and shed light on the key role of an effective communication between staff members and consumers to educate and drive them towards sustainable choices, as well as promoting marketing campaigns, enhancing the respect of the overall environmental conservation along with a deeper awareness for all customers notwithstanding their different cultural backgrounds or knowledge about sustainability. Recommendations for further studies have been advanced by the author to counter the limitations present in this project.

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1. Introduction

Luxury hospitality and small luxury hotels as the case study chosen for this thesis, stand at a pivotal moment in terms of sustainability within the last few years, facing the dual imperatives of luxury and sustainability, as well as trying to integrate sustainability practices into their daily operations without contrasting customers' expectations and trying to mingle customers' concept of luxury with sustainability, making it challenging for the hotel management to deal with sustainability and consumption at the same level. This generally results as a multifaceted issue demanding further attention by scientific research and the industry as well (Molina-Collado et al., 2022). This imperative arises from several interconnected factors, each underscoring the significance of sustainability within the sector.

Within this framework, research by Scott, D., et al., (2012) show that addressing sustainability concerns in luxury hotels has become paramount not only to mitigate negative impacts such as energy consumption, water usage, and waste generation but also to generate positive and successful results such as environmental conservation, meeting institutional goals and spread awareness to customers.

Consumer preferences are not always aligning with the adoption of sustainability practices within luxury hospitality, they are often afraid that part of their comfort could be put aside in favour of green practices. Studies by Kim et al., (2013) demonstrate a growing importance placed by modern travellers on eco-friendly luxury hotels and services. Nevertheless, other researchers affirm an existing discrepancy between customers' expectations and requests when staying in luxury hotels with the sustainable practices implemented, given by customers' prioritization of comfort, luxury and extravagance over green practices that do not trigger customers to fully engage in sustainability when staying in luxury hotels. In addition, they often perceive the irrelevance or partial irrelevance towards sustainability services, not conceived as a principal aspect to consider while travelling but as a side aspect that cannot cover the same importance that price and comfort cover (Baker M, et al. 2014).

Notwithstanding different studies and ideas regarding consumers' behaviours, Nimb Hotel, which is the case study for this project, is compelled to adopt environmentally responsible practices to remain competitive, meeting and developing greener expectations that do not mismatch with the perception of comfort and luxury that their customers have.

Hence, the regulatory landscape also plays a crucial role in shaping sustainability initiatives. For instance, sustainability certifications, significantly influence hotels' environmental strategies and operational practices (Font, X. et al., 2018). Beyond regulatory compliance, cutting-edge sustainability initiatives like marketing advertisements, promotions and the affirmation of technology offer tangible benefits for luxury hotels in order to reduce sustainable gaps between the hotel management and customers, which will be further analysed within this manuscript.

1.1 Research Question

The question that addresses the need to accomplish the objectives of the study is the following:

- Which innovative strategies could enhance customers engagement in sustainable choices and practices without giving up on their comforts in a luxury hospitality context? - Case study about Nimb Hotel

1.2 Case study description

The author perceived the project as a case study since the early stages of the content creation. The term “case study” refers to the detailed examination of a single example of a class or phenomena. Generally, it cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation providing hypotheses, which may be tested systematically (Flyvbjerg, B., 2011). It has also been defined as “*a particular design of research, where the focus is on an in-depth study on one or a limited number of cases. However, its use is rather messier or more complex*” (Tight, 2017, p. 5).” This definition underlines the concept of complexity, which has been explained as the creation of different approaches involved in a case study (Gerring, 2017). In fact, a case study can be an individual as well as a community, a group, an institution, or a business. The diverse array of options available in crafting a case study has the potential to impact the validity or reliability of the study, a concern that holds significance for both researchers, professionals, and academics (Riege, 2003).

Although case studies are acknowledged as complex and time-consuming endeavours (Merriam & Tisedll, 2015), their effective utilization is believed to hold significant potential for validity and reliability. This, in turn, can foster confidence not only in the collected data but also in the successful

application and utilization of the results in managerial decision-making as emphasized by Riege (2003, p.84). Consequently, this could impact the future corporate managerial decisions of Nimb Hotel.

1.2.1 Context

In order to give a basic context concerning the hotel selection process, the author decided to analyse his former workplace where he was an employee for one year and a half, moreover, considering the researcher's interest in sustainability and knowing that Nimb Hotel is highly engaged in sustainability, the author found insightful and challenging to take as a case one of the most sustainable hotels in Denmark, in order to analyse a missing aspect not fully covered by Nimb, which is finding out new strategies to engage their customers towards more sustainable choices and practices.

The author changed his starting idea of focusing on the hospitality sector as such, because it would have been too broad and dispersive. Therefore, the final decision was to focus on what could be done to engage even more customers in sustainability in a small luxury hotel. Thanks to each person who agreed to be part of this paper, it was possible to discuss relevant questions and gain insights on their sustainable actions and opinions.

1.2.2 Nimb Hotel's introduction

Nimb Hotel is a Danish five-star luxury boutique hotel, located in the heart of Copenhagen, Denmark, well-known for its location in the Tivoli Gardens, one of the most popular sightseeing as well as amusement attractions in the capital city of Denmark. The hotel, constructed as a historic building from 1909, was built in a Moorish-inspired Historicist style. In 2009, Condé Nast Traveller ranked it as fortieth on their list as one of the best hotels in the world. Consequently, in October 2015, Nimb was awarded "Hotel of the Year" by Small Luxury Hotels (SLH) from 520 hotels across 82 countries around the world (Oldenbjerg M., interview, 2024). The hotel targets a wide range of customers, from business to tourists, discovering Copenhagen's beauties or in search for a relaxing and pleasant holiday, hosting culinary visitors as well. Hence, Nimb Bistro boasts of a gastronomic universe attracting inside and outside guests.

Nimb has sustainability strictly incorporated in their everyday initiatives and operations, and as reported on Nimb's website, one of the biggest aims of the hotel is showing that luxury and sustainability can go hand in hand.

” At Nimb, we feel that we have proven that luxury and sustainability can go hand in hand, while still managing to take into account guests' needs and wants in terms of unique guest experiences. Of course, there is always room for improvement, which is why sustainability will continue to have our highest priority. We are convinced that we all have a responsibility to carry and fulfill this promise! (Ustrup M., & Oldenbjerg M., Nimb Hotel website, n.d).

1.2.3 Decision of the topic

The choice of the case study lies in the previous job experience that the researcher had at Nimb Hotel as a Concierge staff member from January 2023 until March 2024. The willingness to work for Nimb Hotel was due to the interest in the concierge duties and luxury hotels environment. This dissertation has the role of helping Nimb Hotel in gaining new insights in order to meet its potential, its authenticity and welcome them in order to develop new strategies aiming at engaging their customers towards sustainable choices and practices. Nevertheless, the work is also expected to be an academic contribution, giving open access to important knowledge about sustainability within luxury hospitality research and its application in a small luxury hotel.

The researcher Matteo Landucci, MA student in “Tourism” at Aalborg University - Copenhagen, noticed the potential of Nimb Hotel after having moved to the Danish capital and decided to start his career by working there. Along with the researcher’s master studies in tourism and sustainability, it was interesting and insightful to analyse what could be done more at Nimb Hotel to engage more their customers in sustainability. After having discussed with the Hotel Director of Nimb Hotel, Maria Oldenbjerg, the researcher decided to start his thesis to contribute to improve sustainability knowledge and commitment in one of the most well-known hotels in Denmark and the Nordics. Maria Oldenbjerg was intrigued by the idea to contribute to the creation of a thesis made by one of her employees and supported the author for the completion of this manuscript.

1.2.4 Aim of the study

Drawing upon the scholarly perspectives reported in the next chapter, this dissertation aims at researching and analysing the multifaceted sustainable barriers in the luxury hospitality industry referring to possible methods that could trigger customers to be more engaged in sustainable practices in a luxury hotel by taking as a case study Nimb Hotel. By examining current practices, identifying challenges, and proposing innovative solutions, when possible, this manuscript seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on sustainable tourism and luxury hospitality management, offering actionable insights for industry practitioners, policy makers, and researchers alike. In addition, a combination of primary and secondary data will make it possible to reveal the solutions to demolish existing barriers

for a complete sustainability compliance and awareness from customers when staying in luxury hotels and thus fostering a major and innovative customer engagement towards sustainability, that Nimb Hotel, could welcome and adopt as part of their strategies.

2. Literature Review:

Within this chapter, the author elucidates and interrelates concepts regarding sustainability within luxury hospitality, consumption, consumers preferences and hotel management within luxury hospitality research, presenting key aspects and theories pertinent to the author's project and relevant to the analysis part, which will base the foundation to answer the research question. This will facilitate an exploration of the innovative strategies that Nimb could implement in order to engage their customers towards sustainable choices without compromising their luxurious stay. Consequently, the author culminates the literature review by focusing on the customer aspect, which will undergo detailed analysis in the subsequent analytical phases of the project.

2.1 Sustainability in hospitality research

The term “sustainability” has been facing consistent obstacles from academics in order to be defined with a non-contradictory and unilateral meaning. Hence, different interpretations and explanation of the word have made it challenging to solve the complex and interconnected nature underlying this concept. The author selected interpretations closer to the purpose of this project in relation to sustainability within luxury hospitality research.

It is generally reported from scholars and researchers that the general concept of sustainability refers to the integration of a set of social-environmental criteria or qualities into human actions. These actions are related to products or processes that implies any kind of relationship between human beings and the ecosystem (Salas-Zapata et al., 2019).

In order to guarantee peace and prosperity for the planet, for current and future generations, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, with the purpose of enlarging and strengthening the already established Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which expired at the end of 2015 and were replaced from the SDGs. The main concept of the SDGs is combining economic and social development with environmental sustainability addressing both industrialised and developing countries to transform societies towards more sustainable paths (Biermann et al., 2017).

The concept of sustainability has been universally associated with three interconnected pillars, respectively environmental, social, and economic (Purvis et al., 2018). The emergence of these pillars derives from various scholars in early academic literature who divided the concept into three categories that cannot be considered separately, but instead, they coexist together.

Sustainability is a broad topic, involving also luxury hospitality and tourism research. Thus, researchers have welcomed the concept of sustainability in luxury hospitality research as well due to the considerable role of tourism in the global economy, contributing to the increase in GDP and job placements worldwide (Niñerola et al., 2019). However, tourism can also have adverse long-term effects on the environment and local communities, and sustainability in luxury hospitality represents a worldwide challenge. Hence, luxury hospitality presents a dual nature that requires careful planning, management and monitoring to formulate a development strategy aligned with sustainable principles. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism sector achieves sustainability when it considers both present and future economic, social, and environmental consequences, while also addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities (Niñerola et al., 2019).

Within tourism, luxury hospitality represents the third largest market share in the global luxury goods industry (Peng & Chen, 2019). To uphold this ranking in today's luxury hospitality market, luxury hotels must consider the increasing importance consumers place on sustainability (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2016). According to the 2019 Fairmont Luxury Insights Report, titled "Gateway to Home – Hotels as the Heart of Their Communities", 78% of luxury travellers consider it essential for hotels to implement environmentally sustainable practices (Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, 2019). While luxury hotel management has responded to these concerns by taking concrete steps towards sustainability and showcasing these efforts on their official websites, they appear hesitant to incorporate sustainability into their marketing communication such as when promoting hotel rooms or to push customers towards sustainable booking choices. Instead, they typically focus on promoting their offerings by highlighting the high level of service related to comfortable rooms, prime location, or amenities rather than emphasizing sustainability to the customer (Amatulli, C., et al., 2021).

As Jones, Hillier, & Comfort (2016) noted, in the luxury hospitality industry there is a growing trend towards integrating sustainability into both marketing messages and the customer experiences. However, conspicuous consumption remains the primary focus of attention.

Overall, companies' competitiveness increasingly depends on their ability to respond to the challenges of sustainable development (Papadas, Avlonitis, Carrigan, & Piha, 2019). In the luxury

hospitality sector, in particular, sustainability now represents a key driver of success for most companies, but on the other hand, Amatulli, C., et al., (2021) stated that environmentally friendly practices could lower consumers' perceptions about luxury hotels' value offering. Hence, it is imperative for managers working in luxury hotels to comprehend the significance of sustainability in their communication strategies (Toelkes, 2018). Although heightened tourism activities bring about positive economic impact engendering also adverse effects on destination sustainability (Scott, 2011), particularly concerning environmental impact as well as the generation of food waste by luxury hotels (Amatulli, C., et al., 2021).

In the luxury hospitality context, research on sustainability has been significant for years. Scholars have delved into sustainability-related practices carried out and designed by luxury hotels management (Sourvinou & Filimonau, 2018), discovering that hotels primarily focus on actions related to water conservation, energy efficiency, and waste reduction (Sourvinou & Filimonau, 2018). Whereas other studies have examined consumers' perceptions of hotels 'sustainable initiatives (Moyeen, Kamal, & Yousuf, 2019). Recently, Kim et al. (2020) investigated pro-environmental behaviour in the luxury hospitality sector, highlighting the significance of the choice decision mode in determining the selection of a sustainable hotel over a less sustainable one. Additionally, customers' personal characteristics, such as their inclination towards pro-environmental actions, have been found to positively influence their preference for sustainable hotels (Amatulli, C., et al., 2021).

Furthermore, various studies have indicated that travellers often exhibit strong intentions to stay in environmentally friendly luxury hotels and are willing to pay a more consistent amount of money for green products and services (Han & Yoon, 2015). In addition, consumers' income level positively affects their preference for sustainable hotels, considering variables like the hotel size, the cultural context, the employees' attitudes, and the social media strategies, which have been found to impact the efficacy of sustainability strategies (Amatulli, C., et al., 2021).

In the realm of luxury hospitality, studies carried out by Baker et al., (2014) have showed that much of the prior research on sustainability contends that luxury and sustainable development are fundamentally at odds. The prevailing argument posits that sustainability poses a challenge to the economic performance of luxury hospitality firms. Baker et al., (2014) stated also that a luxury hotel's decision to address green issues can compromise the comfort and luxury aspects of the luxury hospitality experience. Undoubtedly, providing luxurious experiences to guests is paramount in this industry. Consequently, the hedonic and symbolic value of the hotel's offerings can significantly influence consumers' emotions and purchase intentions (Baker et al., 2014). Therefore, luxury hotels managers may adopt practices that could potentially harm the natural environment, such as replacing

towels in customers' rooms even if they are unused. Indeed, status consumption plays a pivotal role in luxury hospitality, despite some differences between the contexts of luxury hospitality services and luxury goods.

It has been stated in studies carried out by Line & Hanks (2016) that the concept of luxury in hospitality typically revolves around the notion of “more” (e.g., more staff, more amenities, more services, more décor), which starkly contrasts with the concept of “less” (e.g., less consumption, less waste, and the use of fewer resources) often associated with green behaviours. Thus, given this perspective, luxury hotels managers may express concerns that adopting environmentally friendly behaviours could diminish their hotels' perceived luxury value and brand image (Amatulli, C., et al., 2021). Line & Hanks (2016) delved into this issue by examining the influence of two types of environmental beliefs and luxury beliefs about green hotels defined as the extent to which an individual believes that using green hotels results in a reduction of luxury value, on consumers' attitudes and behaviours regarding the purchase of sustainable hospitality services. Building on the notion of a trade - off between luxury beliefs and the potential benefits of environmentally responsible consumption, researchers discovered that luxury beliefs are negatively correlated with consumers' attitudes toward staying at a green hotel, their intention to visit a green hotel, and their willingness to pay a considerable amount of money for a green hotel (Amatulli, C., et al., 2021).

Other studies showed that communicating sustainability could indeed have a positive impact on the response of luxury hospitality consumers. This viewpoint aligns with the suggestion carried out by Peng et al., (2019), according to which luxury hotels have compelling reasons to operate in an environmentally friendly manner. Firstly, certain customer segments such as millennials, women, and well-educated consumers are increasingly seeking sustainable travel options. Secondly, advancements in technology are driving green practices that can improve hotels' cost efficiency and generate revenues.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

A great number of businesses, luxury hotels included, have started to embrace Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in recent years. The term CSR refers to a strategy undertaken by companies that aims not only at growing profits, but also at taking a positive and active social role in the world (Beal, 2013). Even though the concept of CSR has a broader meaning, for the purpose of this project, it is important to correlate CSR with sustainability in the luxury hospitality industry. CSR plays a significant role in luxury hospitality, consisting in hotels implementing programmes aligned with the

vision and values of the company (Beal, 2013). The same way of doing business is seen at Nimb Hotel. Hence, they take their CSR programme as part of doing business to cover an active social role that reflects on sustainability as well. This is more evident during the decision-making process, where significant emphasis is often placed on environmental issues and fostering collegial support (Oldenbjerg M., Nimb Hotel website, 2024).

While CSR has been a significant concern since 1950 (Bowen, 1953), only recently have scholars begun to focus on its application within luxury hotels. There is still considerable room for further research in this area, particularly given the high interest among stakeholders in the social, environmental, and economic performance of hotels (Beal, 2013). Media, government, and non-governmental organizations have also shown increasing interest, placing additional pressure on hotel companies to address CSR related issues. However, despite efforts made by the sector, it still positions itself behind other industries in this regard (Conrady & Buck, 2012). The conceptual convergence of CSR with sustainability lies in their mutual emphasis on balancing economic prosperity, social and ethical integrity, and environmental responsibility (Bansal & Song, 2017).

2.3 Consumer preferences in the context of luxury tourism

Luxury hospitality, characterized by exclusive experiences and personalized services is driven by consumer preferences that shape the landscape of high-end travels and stays (Amatulli et al., 2017). Understanding these preferences is essential for hospitality professionals and marketers to cater to the desires and expectations of discerning travellers.

Consumer preferences in luxury hospitality are influenced by various factors, including exclusivity, personalization, quality, authenticity, status, prestige, wellness, and sustainability (Athwal et al., 2019). Exclusivity and personalization are key drivers, with luxury travellers seeking bespoke experiences tailored to their individual preferences. Quality and authenticity are paramount, with travellers expecting top-notch amenities and immersive cultural encounters.

Status and prestige also play a significant role, as luxury travellers may seek experiences that enhance their social standing and showcase their wealth (Lee, 2017). Furthermore, the rising importance of wellness and sustainability in luxury hospitality has led to increased demand for eco-conscious accommodation and wellness-focused experiences (Line & Hanks, 2016).

Emerging trends in luxury hospitality preferences include experiential travels, digital nomadism, and sustainable luxury (Peng & Chen, 2019). In terms of sustainability, travellers are seeking eco-

conscious options and opportunities to contribute to local communities and conservation efforts. In order to welcome these needs, which are even more on the page within the recent years for hospitality professionals and marketers, understanding and responding to consumer preferences is crucial to achieve success in the luxury hospitality sector. By aligning offerings with consumer desires and staying attuned to emerging trends, luxury hotels can enhance guest satisfaction, drive loyalty, and maintain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

2.4 Barriers to sustainable practices implementation: a managerial perspective

Since external factors can influence sustainable implementations in the luxury hospitality sector, it is necessary to divide between the managerial perspective and the customer one, considering that different power relations influence the overall dynamics and tend to create different dynamics and challenges than ends up influencing customers perceptions (Baratta, et al.,2018). Within a managerial asset, Baratta, et al., stated that the environmental behaviours adopted in the luxury hospitality industry, generally ranks from waste management, energy efficiency, social responsibility, and sustainable purchasing (Baratta, et al.,2018).

- *Waste Management* encompasses the separate collection of waste as well as the implementation of recycling initiatives (Bohdanowicz and Zientara, 2008). It also includes efforts to minimize waste production, such as replacing single-use packaging with refillable dispensers (Mahachi et al., 2015).
- *Energy Efficiency* deals with the reduction of energy usage by promoting the utilization of renewable energy sources. Generally, in luxury hospitality, energy-saving measures are commonly employed, such as the deployment of occupancy sensors and LED lighting (Baratta et al., 2018).
- *Social Responsibility* focuses on pursuing goal no.8 of the UN's Global Goals by ensuring decent working conditions and promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth (UNDP, n.d).
- *Sustainable purchasing* involves the adoption of a sustainable gastronomy within the hotel, with local and organic seasonal ingredients and the purchasing of eco-friendly certified products (Aragon-Correa et al., 2015).

The before mentioned practices are great motivations and activities to achieve environmental sustainability in the luxury hospitality industry, even though as stated by Baratta, et al. (2018), it exists a monetary nature that could impede the complete or partial implementation of them. On

one side, the minimization and optimization of resource consumption increase the general organizational efficiency (Cvelbar and Dwyer, 2013), allowing hotels to save costs. On the other side, there may be financial incentives and government grants related to the implementation of environmentally sustainable practices.

Nonetheless, it is within this framework that the first barriers manifest. In fact, barriers to environmental sustainability in luxury hospitality can be classified as direct monetary barriers since the need to face upfront investments to meet sustainability requirements, or higher costs in order to purchase eco-friendly goods or certified products, is often reported as a fundamental direct monetary barrier to sustainability that not all the hotels can face (Baratta, et al.,2018).

In non-monetary terms, the lack of stakeholders' engagement towards environmental practices and the lack of external support from local public administration constitute a major obstacle in some cases. The lack of managerial awareness or recognition toward sustainability represent a personal barrier to sustainability itself, impacting not only on the hotel activities but also on customers' choices (O'Neill and Alonso, 2009).

2.5 Barriers to sustainable practices implementation: a customer perspective

In some luxury hotels, it is recurrent to undergo indirect monetary barriers which focuses on customers behaviours. Hence, this barrier is represented by the fact that not all customers equally value sustainability and even when they are aware of environmental issues, they are generally not likely to pay higher prices, especially in cases when this force them to move back on quality and comfort for their stay (Baratta, et al.,2018). This existing gap between customers' attitudes and purchasing behaviours is a restriction for the implementation of sustainable practices, and managers consequently need to find a balance and innovative solutions to compensate service quality and environmental protection, which is challenging when considering customers' needs (Verma and Chandra, 2019).

Even though the luxury hospitality industry has the potential to save a considerable amount of money by going green because of its high global visibility, it remains challenging for hotel marketers to fill the existing gap between customers' desires and purchasing behaviours as announced at the beginning of the subchapter referring to Baratta et al., (2018).

Considering the statement given by Baker et al. (2014) in their article: *Eco-friendly attitudes, barriers to participation, and differences in behavior at green hotel*; environmental concerns, and

environmentally friendly attitudes, are related also to consumers' intentions to purchase green products. Therefore, customers who are more sustainability educated than others, generally have greater intentions to stay in green hotels. Baker et al. also stated that despite the consumers' awareness of environmental issues, their purchase does not always succeed. Hence, customers' environmentally friendly practices attitudes are generally not always linked to their intentions to pay more money for a green product (Baker et al.,2014).

Notwithstanding the possible attitudes for some eco-oriented consumers to pay more for green products, existing noticeable barriers impede hotel marketers to completely succeed in terms of sustainability. It is within this framework that three main barriers come into the scene impeding sustainability to be fully welcomed by consumers. These barriers in question are perceptions of comfort, perceptions of luxury, and perceptions of cost cutting.

A great number of consumers are not likely to give up whole or part of their comfort in order to meet sustainable criteria when staying in luxury hotels, even though they have environmentally friendly behaviours when they are not travelling (Dolnicar, Crouch, and Long 2008). According to findings reported by Tzschentke et al.,2008, several aspects tend to create a distinction between customers' preferences.

Firstly, the age group seems to be a crucial aspect to be considered, and it can be used sometimes in certain situations to explain reactions and concerns:

"... if you had spoken to me when I was 19 I'd have had visions of Greenpeace and whale fighters!! I think it gradually creeps up on you. Now I even feel guilty for leaving the tap on while brushing my teeth!" (Tzschentke et al.,2008)

Nationality and culture is also a variable that influences customers expectations and their concept of consumption. A report by the UN shows that while only 20% of consumers globally live in the highest income nations, they account for 86% of all private consumption (Adrangi & Kerr, 2022).

In relation to their sustainable consumer behaviour, in a cross-country analysis of the main determinants of "eco-behaviour" by Bonera et al. (2017), it has been written that *"although many authors agree on the role of personal values in explaining the main determinants of eco-behaviour , disagreement about the effects of socio-demographic features exists, particularly about the effect of nationality"*.

Researchers applied Hofstede's (1980) cultural constructs of collectivism theory as well as Kohlberg's (1984) levels of moral development to explain cross-cultural differences in business ethics (Tan &

Chou, 2009 as cited in Bonera et al., 2017). The results from the before mentioned research show that culture plays a huge role in shaping values rather than the national background. Therefore, while overall consumption is affected by nationality, when looking at sustainable practices and ethics, culture is a more relevant factor to consider that influences the willingness to pay more for a green product.

On one isolated case Tzschentke et al. reported a crucial statement from a hotel guest, where their strong environmentalist concerns and their perception of cost-cutting show up:

“...I get irritated at the way some guests waste our electricity, they go out in the evening all the lights are left on, heating full on, windows open and nobody’s there! So wherever we could we’ve put energy saving devices...”

In some cases, the exposure to the values of countries with a different environmental culture from the country of origin tends to awake the desire and the responsibility to contribute (Tzschentke et al., 2008):

...I went to Morocco to work. They have nothing in the desert, it’s very poor compared to us and yet they had so much, their eyes shone and that’s because they treasured what they have. Since I came back I’ve been trying to live with the minimum I need...

Passing onto another consumer response, an interesting remark arises from a Scandinavian guest that insisted not to have towels replaced daily, which commonly goes against the common need for consumers’ needs of having fresh towels and clean sheets daily, source of comfort and great service during the stay of the guest (Tzschentke et al., 2008).

Carrying out sustainable behaviours from a customer perspective could generate a limitation of the luxury perception of the stay. This means that consumers are unwilling to accept a decrease in luxury or amenities as well as pay higher price for green practices. It generally manifests in the lack of inclination to reuse their bed sheets or avoiding soap dispensers in favour of amenity bottles, influencing the consumers’ willingness to pay more for a green hotel (Manaktola and Jauhari 2007).

On the monetary side, the perceptions of cost cutting are a big barrier for customers that should be involved in additional expenses to put into force green activities. Nevertheless, in some cases, customers could perceive the effort to reduce environmental impact as a tool for the hotel to reduce costs at the guests’ expenses and therefore, the perceptions of green initiatives as cost cutting measures exponentially affect their willingness to pay more for a green hotel as well as the intention

to stay in a green hotel, raising a limit for the industry and decreasing consumers expectations (Baker et al.,2014).

2.6 Summing up

The above literature introduced the theoretical framework necessary for this project, which will be reported by the author as a separate chapter subsequently. Sustainability implementation in luxury hospitality can face several barriers and some are trickier than others as outlined within the literature review. Moreover, achieve a clear and universal definition of “sustainability within hospitality research” is challenging due to different interpretations (Salas-Zapata et al., 2019).

Within luxury hospitality industry, it has been reported by academics that barriers to sustainability exist, including monetary constraints and differing customer preferences (Baratta et al., 2018). From a managerial perspective, sustainable practices encompass waste management, energy efficiency, social responsibility, and sustainable purchasing (Bohdanowicz and Zientara, 2008; Aragon-Correa et al., 2015). However, customer perceptions of comfort, luxury, and cost influence their perceptions about these practices (Dolnicar et al., 2008).

Customers’ attitudes towards sustainability vary, with some willing to pay more for green products while others prioritize comfort and cost over a green stay (Baker et al., 2014). Overall, addressing sustainability challenges under a consumer point of view, requires considering the existing consumers perception of luxury that moves around the concept of “more” and “less”, which makes it a challenge in many cases for luxury hotels to be sustainable.

Throughout the literature review chapter, the author underscores the concept of CSR in driving sustainability efforts within luxury hospitality industry. Despite growing awareness, significant gaps persist, necessitating further research and strategic interventions to engage customers towards sustainable choices.

Thus, this project seeks to further investigate and thereby expand the knowledge of how to engage customers even more towards sustainable practices and choices in a small luxury hotel like Nimb Hotel, object of the author’s case study.

3. Theoretical framework

Considering the last sentence stated by the author in the summing up subchapter “*this project seeks to further investigate and thereby expand the knowledge of how to engage customers even more towards sustainable practices and choices in a small luxury hotel like Nimb Hotel*”, the author adopted a theoretical framework to delimitate his data gathering, which allows the author to better analyse the innovative strategies recommended to enhance customer engagement in sustainable choices and practices without giving up on their comforts while staying at Nimb.

The writing process of this project undergoes mainly an abductive approach, and the theoretical framework must be set by the author, underpinning the methodological choices that follows in the next chapter.

The definition of theoretical framework is complex in the research sector; however, this requires a solid knowledge of the theories used within the manuscript that are related to tourism.

To understand how the theoretical framework must be separated from the methodology, the researcher was guided by his supervisor, Martin Trandberg Jensen, according to whom the theoretical concept is relevant to explain how it was possible to collect data and analyse the topic, and therefore, to delimitate the field of analysis. The researcher wants to specify also that his position as a researcher investigating how can customers be more engaged in sustainability at Nimb Hotel needs to be clarified.

3.1 Research positioning

To clarify the scope of this research, it is necessary to clarify the position of the researcher for the completion of this work. The authors place himself in an interesting and neutral situation for the research purpose of this dissertation, since he has been covering both the role of a researcher and the role of a former Concierge staff member at Nimb Hotel that already partially knows which are the strengths pillar in terms of sustainability, consumption and hotel management at Nimb, and foremost which are the existing and missing strategies implemented at Nimb to foster sustainability to Nimb’s customers. Furthermore, as a part time and nightshifts employee, the author was not fully involved into promoting sustainability to customers, but instead, he was mainly involved in basic green practices for staff members and only sometimes for customers. Therefore, as a former employee, the researcher had the chance to deal with the sustainable practices implemented such as sorting waste in the back office, avoiding paper wasting and promote electric transportation to guests in some cases, allowing him to have a stronger and solid knowledge of what he is analysis throughout this thesis. Moreover, one year and a half of working experience at Nimb gave the author the opportunity to analyse a topic he finds extremely interesting, insightful and in need of research as specified by the

interviewees part of this research. Therefore, this could give the researcher plenty of opportunities to use his own personal experience as a former employee to gather valid sources for this research, however this can also compromise the author objectivity, perhaps even on a subconscious level.

3.2 Theoretical concept

The theoretical framework for this thesis is shaped by one major concept that the author found useful to be part of this dissertation, which is collectivism. This theoretical concept is strongly connected to the philosophical approach adopted within this work, relating to social constructivism.

3.3 Collectivism theory

Luxury hospitality is characterized by high couture accommodation and personalized services, framework in which an interplay of collectivistic values interplay. While the industry often emphasizes individual guest experiences, the underlying fabric of luxury hospitality is deeply rooted in collectivism, where guests and staff alike form a collective community centred around values, experiences, and aspirations.

Collectivism theory is rooted in sociology and psychology, according to which, individuals prioritize the needs, goals, and well-being of the group (Triandis, 1995). This perspective underscores the importance of social cohesion, solidarity, and interdependence within communities. In the context of luxury hospitality, collectivism theory suggests that guests and staff form interconnected networks of relationships, where cooperation, trust and support are fundamental. Furthermore, in luxury hospitality, customers' experiences are not merely transactional but rather communal, with guests seeking to connect with others and forge meaningful relationships during their stay with staff members as well. This emphasis on collectivism is evident in communal spaces or during social interactions at the front desk. Luxury hotels often go beyond providing luxurious amenities to cultivate a sense of belonging and community among guests, creating an environment where collective experiences and memories are cherished. Within luxury hotels, staff members play a crucial role in shaping the collective culture and guest experience. Hence, collectivism theory highlights the importance of shared goals among staff members to nourish the satisfaction of customers and the alignment with the sense of belonging (Han et al., 2010). By embracing collectivism, luxury hotels can create an environment where guests feel valued, appreciated and part of larger collective experience. Lastly, collectivism would foster a common satisfaction between customers and staff members that would make it easier to achieve social goals for the hotel (Kang et al., 2012).

4. Methodology:

The methodology section must be perceived as a temporal analysis, where the author will explain the data collection of primary and secondary data, their validity and trustworthiness. The philosophy of science and research design project are also outlined by the researcher in the methodology chapter.

It is relevant to say that this thesis project is based on a qualitative and abductively approach, which has the purpose to emphasize on inference and reasoning. Unlike deductive or inductive approach, the abductive approach involves the generation of explanatory hypotheses to make sense of observed phenomena (Peirce, 2016). In luxury hospitality research, the abductive approach allows the author to move beyond descriptive accounts and uncover the underlying mechanisms and processes shaping customers experiences and organizational practices. By adopting an abductive approach, the researcher navigates a dynamic and iterative process of inquiry, beginning with the identification of phenomena that defy existing theoretical frameworks or empirical evidence. Moreover, through a process of abduction the researcher generates hypotheses to account for these phenomena, drawing on theory, empirical data and contextual insights. These hypotheses are then subjected to empirical testing and refinement through further observation, analysis and theoretical elaboration (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014).

Qualitative approaches are characterized by exploration and typically they involve qualitative interviews and field observations (Harboe, 2013). Harboe also describes qualitative methods as “elaborative”, suggesting that they are thoroughly prepared. Nevertheless, in some social sciences, the term “elaborative” is perceived as synonymous of “theory-developing” (Harboe, 2013). This indicates that while, the researcher may have had theoretical and experiential insights into the topic of this thesis, reaching conclusions necessitated input from specialists, experts, and observations from interviews.

4.1 Philosophy of Science

Being a branch of philosophy, the philosophy of science has been coined as a system of beliefs and assumption based on methods, foundations, and implications of the science (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Within science a variety of disciplines interfere, but it is commonly known that different ontological and epistemological understandings characterise the science (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Since the purpose of this project is the investigation of how to engage customers in sustainability by finding new strategies within luxury hospitality industry, the author referred to both scientific and humanistic disciplines. The adoption of a humanistic approach is due to the need of understanding and interpreting human opinions, intentions, and motives, which will be extremely relevant to the research question of this project.

4.1.1 Ontology

Ontology is “the science of what is, of the kinds and structures of objects, properties, events, processes and relations in every area of reality” (Smith, B., 2012, p. 47). Hofweber defines Ontology as “*the assumptions we make about the kind and nature of reality and what exists*”. Even though, Ontology has been divided into two parts, on one hand the first part refers to what exists and what reality is made of. On the other hand, the second part consists of the general characteristics of existing things in reality, along with the relation between them (Hofweber, 2017).

4.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology has been defined as how reality or knowledge can be studied (Hesse-Biber, 2010). It refers to a wide concept of knowledge in the sense of its limits, nature, sources, and forms (Dretske, 2008). Epistemology delves into examining the various assumptions about the world that shape the process of knowledge production (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

It has been stated by Dretske (2008) that:

“Since perception is an important source of knowledge, memory a common way of storing and retrieving knowledge, and reasoning and inference effective methods for extending knowledge, epistemology embraces many of the topics comprised in cognitive science” (p. 29.

The statement mentioned demonstrates the need of considering the epistemological approach in research. By doing so, not only knowledge is taking into consideration but also understanding, which

is a concept discussed by Grimm et al., (2017), according to which it is possible to know without understanding as reported by the authors.

Considering the nature of this project which is investigating how to engage customers in sustainability through cutting-edge strategies in a case study luxury hotel in Copenhagen, it is necessary to specify that a gap could emerge owing to the kinds of details and information that ends up in the mind of a person, which is considered as an epistemological question by Dretske (2008, p. 34).

4.1.3 Social constructivism

The research process for this project adheres to the social constructivist epistemology based on the fact that knowledge is socially constructed through interaction, discourse, and cultural context. Instead of being objective, reality is perceived as a product of social interactions, with individuals actively constructing their understanding of the world. Therefore, this framework challenges traditional epistemological perspectives by emphasizing the subjective, context-dependent nature of knowledge. Social constructivism suggests that what is considered true or valid is contingent upon social and cultural factors, and it views knowledge as a dynamic process shaped by social interaction and interpretation. It critiques the idea of an objective observer and highlights the biases and perspectives that influence knowledge construction (Gergen, K. J., 2018).

4.2 Research design

Qualitative and quantitative data go through a great range of research processes and methods with the purpose of acquiring knowledge (Snyder, 2019). Quantitative research primarily deals with numerical and objective data, aiming at addressing questions related to “when” or “where”. In contrast, qualitative research delves into subjective phenomena that defy quantitative measurement, such as the varied experiences of individuals navigating grief. Through the medium of language, qualitative research enables researchers to grasp abstract concepts, thoughts as well as experiences. Thus, this method allows researchers to gather insights from topics that lacks comprehensive understandings (Snyder, 2019). As stated in the article by Sekaran & Bougie, 2016 *Research methods for business: A skill building approach*, qualitative methods typically entail conducting interviews with open-ended questions and describing observations using descriptive language allowing to narrow down the research part of the topic in question. On the other hand, quantitative methods involve experiments, recording observations as numerical data, and administering surveys with closed-ended questions.

These methods facilitate researchers in drawing broad conclusions about the target group studied (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

For the completion of this project, it has been used a qualitative method as approach technique. Hence, the author's research involves conducting semi-structured interviews with the Hotel Director, Guest Relations Manager, and 3 staff members of Nimb Concierge, along with 4 former customers of Nimb, relevant for the purpose of this work.

4.3 Data collection

Data collection methods refer to the approaches adopted by the author in order to acquire relevant information in the context of research for the realisation of the project itself. Within the topic taken into analysis, thoughts and points of view expressed by the interviewees are crucial for the analysis by providing primary data relevant for the purpose of this project.

The dissertation is modelled under the gathering of both primary and secondary data by adhering to a specific structure consisting of an Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion (IMRD) structure (Samraj, 2008). Secondary data are gathered when the researcher obtains data that have already been collected by other sources such as data disseminated in scientific journals and research papers, whereas primary data have been gathered directly from the researcher through interviews (Ajayi, 2017). Ali et al., (2011) underlines that methods like "literature analysis and participants' observations" can increase the reliability of the qualitative studies and reduce bias risks. For the purpose of this research, interviews represent the most efficient and useful tool for the author in order to collect primary data. The remaining material part of this project consists of material gathered by websites and academic publications and therefore, classified as secondary data.

4.4 Interviews

In order to obtain the specific and necessary information for the termination of this project, the author organized 9 interviews with 9 participants where the expectation was to get open answers from them, and the expectation has been respected. The researcher relied on Nimb managers, staff members from Nimb Hotel and former customers to validate theories and enrich the content. Thus, the researcher carried out the first interview with a crucial participant for the case study of this manuscript, the Hotel Director of Nimb Hotel, Maria Oldenbjerg, resulting to be fundamental for the purpose of this dissertation, by gathering valuable answers on her sustainability management strategies and plans in

a small luxury hotel. Additionally, the author could hear from her which are the existing barriers to engage consumers in sustainability, and thus, combine sustainability with luxury in a small luxury boutique hotel. It is possible within this manuscript to see if what stated by Maria Oldenbjerg is confirmed or contrasts with the answers given by the other 8 interviewees, respectively the Guests Relations Manager of Nimb, Anna Finderup, 3 Concierge members and 4 former customers of Nimb Hotel. The researcher firstly relied on the Hotel Director of Nimb Hotel, expert and with high expertise in the fields of luxury hospitality, management, and customers relations, resulting a successful participant to validate literature material and enrich the global content at the same time. Since Nimb Hotel was the former workplace of the researcher, it was a choice of the author to contact by e-mail the Hotel Director of Nimb to take part in the interviews process as first interviewee. Maria kindly accepted and found considerably interesting to contribute to the completion of this manuscript, therefore, she agreed in being interviewed, being recorded, and expressed her consent to report her name on the project. The interview was performed in English at Nimb Hotel, where the author had the pleasure to be invited from Maria and take an interview in person to have a better understanding of her ideas and to promote the concept of friendliness and hosting culture that Nimb Hotel has been having for years. All the interviews were based on open-ended questions to ensure a great flow of the discussions and freedom for the interviewees to mention facts that they felt were necessary to say. The interview with Maria lasted approximately 30 minutes and it was anticipated by a request to register and save the audio for the purposes of this research. The respondent agreed to this proposal and showed a high commitment to answer every question that the interviewer posed. Moreover, at the end of the interview, she was curious to hear the researcher point of view regarding sustainability and luxury in hospitality, and how to overcome this complex fracture according to the author educational background and personal knowledge, which was extremely interesting for the researcher to express his opinion to the Hotel Director, and to transmit information to her.

The second interviewee was Anna Finderup, Guests Relations Manager of Nimb Hotel. She found the topic of this project extremely stimulating, in need of research, and crucial for luxury hotels when high demanding requests and expectations from consumers sometimes do not meet sustainable practices. The interview with Anna has been carried out in English on Facebook Messenger after accordance via e-mail and at the beginning of the interview, she agreed on being recorded for the purpose of this manuscript and to report her name as well. She answered to the questions prepared for her, focusing on the interaction between staff and customers when promoting sustainable practices, by giving valuable insights of what Nimb is already doing and if more can be done to involve completely customers into sustainability at Nimb.

As already stated, the interview has been carried out online and lasted around 30 minutes with interactions from the researcher such as “Okay”, “I agree”, “Why” to guarantee a fluid and informal conversation that could give the author the insights needed.

Consequently, the researcher carried out three individual interviews on Facebook Messenger with three different staff members from the concierge in order to gather information regarding their direct experiences with informing customers about sustainable practices at Nimb, whether and how customers perceive sustainability during their stay and whether sustainable management practices stated by Maria Oldenbjerg are reflected at the reception as well among staff members.

The most relevant and crucial part of the interviews to get opinions and real experiences on how to engage consumers towards sustainability in luxury hospitality, was due to the organization of 4 interviews with previous customers of Nimb Hotel that expressed their opinions and considerations about this complex relationship between sustainability and luxury in hospitality. Hence, the researcher found insightful and necessary to get in touch with previous customers who stayed at Nimb Hotel for the completion of this work. This has been possible by finding their contacts on different social networks and Instagram has been the one that brought the results expected. Hence, the author decided to direct message people that posted their luxurious stays, showing their rooms and access to services at Nimb on Instagram with their location registered at “NIMB”, and thus, hypothesising that they could eventually be former customers of the Hotel. This allowed the author to organize anonymous and confidential interviews with those who replied to the messages.

As briefly explained, the researcher decided to find contacts by selecting the location of Nimb Hotel on Instagram and the researcher promptly sent them a direct message with a brief presentation of the case study and a private invitation to give their contribute to it. The researcher also asked whether they agreed on being interviewed for the purpose of this work by guaranteeing absolute privacy, considering the privacy policy existing in Denmark that does not allow to share confidential information of guests from hoteliers. Hence, hotels have a legal and ethical responsibility to protect the privacy of their guests and former guests and they do not release the names of them to anyone unless required to do so by law, such as in the case of a response to a court order or a law enforcement investigation (Danish Data Protection Act No.502 of May 23,2018).

Reaching out to customers has been extremely successful to validate and expand what stated by the previous interviewees staff members of Nimb, and therefore, validate Nimb staff point of view with the one of customers. However, it has been extremely tricky for the author to carry out interviews with them, considering that most of the messages sent have not been considered and some of the

potential interviewees declared themselves unavailable. Nevertheless, the individuals who showed interest in being interviewed are now present in this publication and were able to strongly contribute to the completion of this thesis. Interviews with former customers were performed in English and one of them in Italian on zoom platform and they lasted between 15 and 25 minutes. All the interviews were anticipated by a request to register and save the audios for the purposes of this research. Every respondent agreed to this proposal, and some of them agreed under the condition that privacy was guaranteed to them. Additionally, they all showed commitment to answer every question the author posed.

The selection criteria were based on the individuals' relevance with the topics of the dissertation and, most of all, their availability. It is important to remark that not every interviewee was familiar or had an education about sustainability, therefore for some of them the interview was considered as a challenge for being exhaustive in their contents.

It has been emphasized by qualitative research that the significance of robust data collection methods is fundamental for ensuring the credibility and reliability of findings (Kallio et al.,2016). According to Kallio et al., interviews stand out as the primary means of gathering dependable data in qualitative inquiries, a sentiment echoed in this dissertation, which relies on interview-based data collection. Adhering to the qualitative interview protocols established by Harvard University, the conversations were conducted in informal settings, granting the participant the autonomy to share their narratives authentically (Harvard,n.d.). Nonetheless, the researcher structured the interviews by tailoring a guide based on the interviewees' professional roles, familiarity, and interest in the discussed topics. For the staff members of Nimb concierge, interviews have been structured by considering their potential knowledge regarding sustainability in their workplace and services provided to customers in order to promote sustainability. The author also asked each interviewee which experiences they have had with guests during their career at Nimb, and which struggles they encountered in combining sustainability with a high-class service that adheres to a five stars hotel' standards. Whereas for former guests, the researcher mainly relied on their experiences as guests of Nimb and the general knowledge they have about green practices in luxury hotels along with their expectations as customers. The researcher structured simple interviews that aim at understanding which expectations consumers have in a luxury hotel to see whether sustainability is crucial to them and whether the concepts of "More" and "Less" presented in the literature review are reflected in their statements. This approach, termed semi-structured interviewing, involves a predetermined set of questions that facilitate organic discussions, allowing the participant to delve into topics of personal significance (Clifford et al.,2016, p.143).

The structured interview guide comprised a series of questions presented sequentially with a total amount of 16 questions for Maria Oldenbjerg (Hotel Director), 15 questions for Anna Finderup (Guest Relations Managers), 12 questions for the concierge staff and 15 questions for former customers. Each question has been utilized once the respondents have satisfactorily addressed their arguments and concluded their responses. Drawing on the flexibility inherent in semi-structured interviews, as highlighted by Kallio et al., (2016), the researcher ensured that the guide did not impose on the organic flow of the conversation. Notably, the researcher had prior experience conducting semi-structured interviews for his previous semester projects during his master's in Tourism at Aalborg University. Thus, the researcher decided to opt and employ a familiar method for this research endeavour.

During the interviews, the researcher used active listening techniques - i.e. "Yes!", "Okay!" or asking more about a specific topic – to facilitate a functional exchange of knowledge and ideas, establish rapport and motivating the interlocutor (Doyle, 2020). The Hotel Director, Maria Oldenbjerg, the Guests Relations Manager, Anna Finderup, and the staff member of the Concierge were feeling comfortable and at ease before, during and at the end of the encounter, whereas the former customers were feeling comfortable and interested in the topic on one hand, however they partially struggled to get to a conclusion of their statements and to affirm whether sustainability and luxury in five stars hotel could fit together. All the interviewees showed appreciation to the researcher even after the conversations took place and there was the opportunity to make friendly ties with the respondents as well. Straight after conversations ended, 'Manual keyword extraction' was used by the author to carefully remember the main topics and compare the contents of the interviews. Manual keyword extraction is defined as extremely difficult and time consuming (Lee & Kim, 2008).

The process ultimately facilitated the achievement of data collection and extraction of keywords. Thematic coding occurred during a thorough second listening to the audio recordings of conversations with respondents. In addition, keywords were chosen and documented. This approach enhanced the alignment of interviews with each other, aiding in the formulation of the primary topics for the analysis part.

4.4.1 Interviews guide

Below, the researcher charted two tables with all the individuals that took part in being interviewed, dividing Nimb staff interviewees and former customers interviewees into the respective tables, and thus, including those participants that accepted to be part of this dissertation and significantly contributed to the publication's development. Thematic coding is visibly reported in the tables in the right column labelled "Topics of discussion".

Table 1: List of Nimb staff interviewees

Interviewee	Job position	Topics of discussion
Maria Oldenbjerg	Hotel Director at Nimb Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark.	-Effective role of communication and cultural background
Anna Finderup	Guest Relations Manager at Nimb Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark.	-Effective role of communication and cultural background -Marketing and promotion
Joy Cubilo Ohm	Concierge at Nimb Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark.	-Sustainable transportation and the disruptive role of technology -Marketing and promotion -Effective role of communication and cultural background

Interviewee 4	Concierge at Nimb Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark.	-Sustainable transportation and the disruptive role of technology
Interviewee 5	Concierge at Nimb Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark.	-Effective role of communication and cultural background -Marketing and promotion

Table 2: List of Nimb former customers interviewees

Interviewee N°	Nationality	Topics of discussion
Interviewee 6	Danish	-Comfort over luxury -Effective role of communication and cultural background
Interviewee 7	Italian-American	-Comfort over luxury -Effective role of communication and cultural background

Interviewee 8	Norwegian	-Comfort over luxury -Effective role of communication and cultural background
Interviewee 9	French	-Effective role of communication and cultural background -Comfort over luxury -Marketing and promotion

4.5 Secondary data research

The researcher found academic papers and website articles by using specific phrases in order to find data. Notably, the researcher utilized courses and seminars taken during his master's degree to efficiently locate literature for this publication. The researcher put into practice also cryptography techniques by writing keywords followed by conjunctions to help with the research process. This method was applied on search engines like Google Scholar or Aalborg University library in order to get access to numerous books, articles and dissertations relevant for a useful consultation. Hence, the majority of the bibliography cited in this thesis was discovered by using the before cited search engines.

5. Findings

This section serves as the link between the information gathered from primary and secondary data and the analysis of the case study. The data collected through the interviews have been used to identify specific themes and issues highlighted and connected to the literature review. Through 9 interviews conducted with targeted participants, the findings not only validated the existing literature but also contributed to additional knowledge into the field. The researcher emphasizes that the participants' contribution helped to enhance the credibility, and importantly, the depth knowledge presented in the paper.

Interlocutors are members of the industry and former customers. Interviewees pertaining to the luxury hospitality sector encompassed individuals that hold significant positions in a small-sized enterprise, Nimb Hotel. Maria Oldenbjerg, the Managing Director of Nimb, and Anna Finderup, Guest Relations Manager of Nimb, were extremely useful to gather valuable insights regarding sustainable barriers erasing in luxury hospitality under a managerial point of view and reflecting the overall concept of luxury hospitality at Nimb. Maria Oldenbjerg provided several insights such as the importance of

efficient and responsible communication techniques to adopt for all staff members, point that have been confirmed and expanded by the Guests Relations Manager of Nimb, Anna Finderup, by going deep into a customer-oriented point of view during the interview, elucidating aspects such as cultural backgrounds and the need of further promotion, with crucial points that have been developed by the concierge staff members and former customers of Nimb Hotel as well.

Consequently, concierge staff members were useful to highlight the sustainable services communicated and promoted by them to customers and to shed light into aspects that have been partially covered by Maria and Anna such as the important role of transportation recommendations to customers (Interviewee 4 et al., 2024) as well as the pivotal role that technology and digitalization play nowadays, which can be used to engage customers into sustainability (Joy Cubilo Ohm, interview, 2024). In addition, a particular focus by most of the interviewees has been highlighted on the necessity to create marketing campaigns and promotions to further enhance sustainability awareness to customers (Joy Cubilo Ohm, interview, 2024).

Since the master's thesis represents the transition between novice and expert (Casanave, 2002), the author decided to diversify his portfolio of interviewees and contacted former customers from Nimb Hotel, representing individuals chosen by the researcher to validate the theories of this project, to interrelate existing issues exposed by Hotel Director, Guests Relations Manager and Concierge members of Nimb, to give solutions and recommendations to better combine sustainability and luxury at Nimb Hotel through innovative strategies owing to customers' experiences and needs.

The chapter, covering the area of study of the case, will give the reader precise background knowledge on themes part of the literature review as well as new themes highlighted by the interviewees.

5.1 Effective role of communication and cultural background

Studies made by Kharouf et al. (2014) strengthened the statement made by Interviewee 8 in terms of communication and efficient information to customers. While several studies (Jani & Han, 2014; Kharouf, Lund, & Sekhon, 2014) have demonstrated that achieving guests' loyalty has a positive impact on financial performances and operational outcomes, Martinez & Rodriguez del Bosque (2013) researched on how loyalty is formed within the hospitality sector, and specifically for luxury hotels. When it comes to loyalty, trustworthiness should be built among customers by a clear and sensitive communication as reported by the interviewees. Hence, a hotel can only build trust by first transmitting their trustworthiness to guests through an effective communication. Therefore, trustworthiness is formed in the guest's mind by promoting several important attributes of the trustee;

namely expertise and competence, integrity, and benevolence (Kharouf et al., 2014). In the case of a hotel - guest relationship, the guest must rely on the good intentions of the hotel to perform services competently and in the guest's best interest, allowing to break cultural barrier and to establish a collectivistic environment between customers and hotel management. Moreover, when communicating trustworthiness attributes to their customers, the hotel improves perceived service quality and enhance the social bond between the hotel and their customers, making the relationship more resistant to service failure (Grissmann et al., 2012).

Effective communication is the starting point for building a trustworthy image because it is through this route that hotels can control and send out signals to existing guests about the hotel's desirable attributes (expertise and competence, integrity, benevolence, sustainability practices).

“I think it is really important to establish an efficient way of communicating with guests because it is fundamental for us as staff members to be clear with customers, build trust on them and this would allow us to recommend them sustainable options which is possible if there is trust.”

(Interviewee 5, interview, 2024)

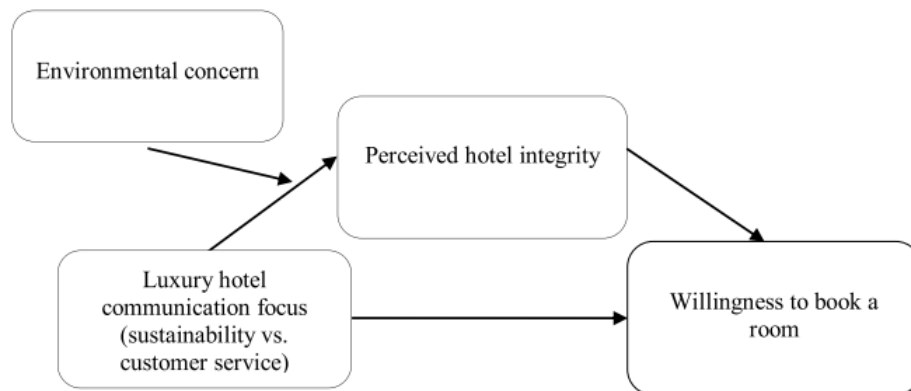


Figure 1. Conceptual model of communication (Amatulli et al., 2021)

Notwithstanding the fundamental role of communication, a great part of the interviewees focused on cultural differences among customers that impede them to fully understand and embrace any sustainability practice or choice, and thus create trust consequently. Academics agree on the fact that cultural values play a crucial role in shaping individuals' attitudes towards sustainability. Research carried out by Hofstede (2001) highlighted the significance of cultural dimensions such as uncertainty avoidance in influencing behaviours related to environmental conservation. Cultures that are characterized by this trait are composed by individuals that exhibit resistance to change and prefer traditional luxury experiences over sustainable alternatives (Smith et al., 2019).

As Han et al affirmed, it is necessary to consider that a luxury hotel cater to affluent clientele who associate luxury with extravagance and indulgence, contrasting with sustainability perceived by consumers as simplicity and frugality by posing a challenge in reconciling customers' desire with the principles of environmental sustainability (Han et al., 2019). Furthermore, cultural values that prioritize consumption could increase their consumeristic perception making it challenging to promote sustainable practices without compromising perceived luxury (Amelung et al., 2014).

It is within this framework that among some of the interviewees there are declarations regarding how cultural differences could influence the perception of sustainability.

“Well I'm an Italian-American living in Italy, I think that in Southern Europe people don't have this huge culture of sustainability, so I think that I will be less willing to compromise and to adapt to this changing to sustainable activities decreasing my luxury and my comfort, so I think that this is something that it's important, but like for instance, Scandinavian people they have a different culture when it comes to sustainability, they are more willing to adapt and change and to reduce their comfort in favour of sustainability. The idea of luxury I think is also different, I think that in most of Southern European countries the idea of luxury is mostly related to comfort and extravagance so also for instance changing the towels every day is something that people expect maybe in the south of Europe, but it's not a big deal for people from Northern Europe. “

(Interviewee 7, interview, 2024)

It is interesting to notice how this previous statement aligns and differs at the same time with a statement made by a Danish interviewee, Interviewee 6, that perceive luxury and sustainability differently from the general “Scandinavian mindset” reported by interviewee 7, experiencing sustainability as a side but important aspect while prioritizing luxury and extravagance.

“Yeah, so it has some influence on me due to my culture of course, not that much, because we, in Denmark, are really fond of saying that we are doing one thing. Well, in reality, we actually are doing the quite opposite, because if it's required for us to do something, then we don't do it. But we still have this small voice at the back of our head that tries to convince us to be greener. I know it from myself, I know it also from a lot of other people when you talk about green, the environment and sustainability. Danish people talk more than act, and that's also why I think if you ask, like me and a lot of other Danish people, if they would choose a sustainable hotel, they will probably say yes, but if they are told they have to do something like live without a certain thing, they will probably say no. As I said, it has influenced me and my background to think about the environment and think about sustainability

in general. So, yes, I say my culture has influence on me, but not that I am a member of some organization or that I could cut out my comforts or concept of extravagance in favour of sustainability.”

(Interviewee 6, interview, 2024)

Interviewee 9 from France also expressed their opinion about sustainability and how distant it is from their generation values and their educational background.

“I think people's culture really influence their way of thinking about these kinds of things, but in my culture, like the way I was raised and the way I grew up, the whole concept of sustainability didn't really play a role in my life before I actually went to other countries for work like Denmark, Germany or the Netherlands. So, I think it's not that deeply embedded in my mind as it is for example in someone's who is the younger generation who was born with this concept.”

(Interviewee 9, interview, 2024)

This gap between different cultural expectations within sustainability goals in a luxury hotel as stated by Kim et al (2018) could be bridged by an effective communication and marketing strategies that aim at tailoring messaging to resonate with diverse cultural preferences and values that can improve customers' receptiveness to sustainable initiatives.

As academia suggests, the author strongly believe that an effective communication and cultural sensitivity in service delivery are essential for customers at Nimb, and it is extremely useful to integrate sustainability seamlessly into the guest experience. Therefore, as stated by Garcia de Leaniz et al., (2020), training programmes that emphasize cultural competence and awareness would enable staff members to navigate diverse cultural dynamics effectively and therefore create a possible solution to break this existing barrier on customers' engagement within sustainability, by understanding and respecting customers' cultural backgrounds so that hotel staff can tailor sustainability to align with their preferences and expectations, fostering greater acceptance and participation to sustainability practices and choices (Garcia de Leaniz et al., 2020). Additionally, this would help enhance a sense of collectivism between staff members and customers.

5.2 Sustainable transportation and the disruptive role of technology

In luxury hospitality, where an efficient communication from staff members plays an essential role to guarantee a high-quality service to customers, their satisfaction should meet the business criteria at the same time. In the case of sustainability, the concierge of Nimb Hotel tends to promote sustainable transportations during their interactions with customers by recommending electric vehicles when organizing transfers for their customers or by recommending biking as a valuable option during concierge services and for guests as well, thus, conciliating green practices with a must do activity for tourists in Copenhagen, one of the most bike-friendly cities all over the world. Hence as stated by interviewee 4 during the interview:

“Every time we have to go somewhere to pick something up for the guests, we take the bike like one of us biking. So, for example if they want some flowers or if they're going to have something you know special, like it could be anything, then we bike to the place. So, we don't use public transport or taxi or anything. And we try to recommend this option to guests as well by explaining them how bike-friendly Copenhagen is and how convenient it is for them in terms of price.”

(Interviewee 4, interview, 2024)

Considering what stated by interviewee 4, it has been declared that biking is a fundamental way of moving around for guests and for staff members when they need to provide services to their customers, nevertheless, it has also been mentioned by Joy Cubilo Ohm that additional way of green transportations would generate similar results.

“We tried really to implement now that it is the type of transportation that we suggest to our guests. So, now we're trying to recommend more electric cars, and it depends again on the demand of the guests, but that's our priority now, since we got the green key. So, as Anna, as well as part of the team, we try our best to, with regards to transportation, we try to suggest electric cars for transfers as much as we could.”

(Joy Cubilo Ohm, interview, 2024)

Among the former customers of Nimb Hotel that have been interviewed for the purpose of this project, most of them did not express any concern regarding green transportation, on the contrary, they focused on the importance of having all the comforts they need and being in a good location that does not allow them to excessively move around the city, and therefore prioritizing their concept of luxury and comfort over sustainability.

“It has to be a great location where you still have the opportunity to jump in the pool or enjoy Nimb Wellness. Sustainability it's not what I looked for because when I go for luxury, i pay a certain amount of money to get this luxury. Sustainability is not the top of my head.”

(Interviewee 6, interview, 2024)

“Beh, quando sono stato al Nimb le mie priorità erano un buon servizio clienti onestamente. Allo stesso tempo, almeno per me la sostenibilità non fa molto parte di quello che cerco, perché certe volte ha doppia sfaccettatura e non sempre riflette l'alta qualità e il lusso che cerco nelle mie vacanze”

(Interviewee 7, interview, 2024)

“I remember a guy from the reception suggested us different options, I guess to promote sustainability, For going back to the airport he suggested us a private transfer but I don't know if it was electric or not, and also biking during our stay, but I didn't want to because me and my husband were too lazy and decided to take the taxi for moving around.”

(Interviewee 8, interview, 2024)

It has been highlighted from one Concierge interviewee, Joy Cubilo Ohm, that the promotion of green transportations to customers is strictly related to the role of technology. Joy stated that technology in luxury hospitality is a cutting-edge and fundamental tool that should be recommended to guests to promote sustainability to customers and establish a social engagement with them, part of the collectivistic theory introduced by the author within this work (Joy Cubilo Ohm, interview, 2024).

The author found insightful what has been stated by Joy:

“Now we are all in technology. So you have, instead of taking a map or the paper map, and then once you used it you just throw it out, you can use the phone, you have like a guiding app. It's, this application you can download, and it gives you the itineraries for walking around Copenhagen and save money on bus guides or transportation. Also, instead of giving papers and papers and papers, I would say you can download it, it takes you a couple of seconds to download it and it's for free. That is a good way of going green with our consumers in my opinion”.

(Joy Cubilo Ohm, interview, 2024)

This important system part of the digitalization process we are all undergoing in 21st century, adapt digital cultures and mindsets, by reaching and nurturing customers helping them to make sustainable choices while not rejecting technological choices.

Digital technologies are rapidly changing the environment and most important they are reducing asymmetries between customers and sellers in significant ways (Kannam et al., 2017), therefore as Joy Cubilo Ohm stated during her interview:

“Technology can help us at Nimb not only to help customers to be more aware of sustainability and the surrounding environment also, so recommending them the use of apps is like not pushing them to be sustainable but then at the same time it is a good tool for us to educate them following our concept of sustainability”.

(Joy Cubilo Ohm, interview, 2024)

According to what stated by Joy and academic articles, technology could revolutionize the way guests engage with sustainability, and it would allow industry professionals to educate their customers towards sustainable choices. Innovative approaches such as recommending mobile apps designed to facilitate eco-conscious movements in the city, would be beneficial for the hotel itself and for the surrounding spaces and institutions. Studies demonstrated that encouraging guests to explore the city on foot guided by apps, would promote sustainable transportation methods, reduce carbon emissions, and minimize the ecological footprint associated with traditional ways of travelling (Smith et al., 2019).

Joy Cubilo during the interview mentioned also the importance covered by the Augmented Reality (AR) technology highlighted by Cheng et al., (2020), which has the purpose to enhance the immersive experience of customers, providing guests with interactive maps, historical insights, and real time environmental data along the walking routes. This would inspire guests to adopt sustainable practices and make environmental conscious choices during their travels.

By recommending mobile apps instead of classic means of transportation for moving around Copenhagen, Nimb Hotel not only could empower guests to discover the city's hidden gems but also could foster a sense of environmental consciousness and responsibility that can not be directly triggered from the concierge staff by telling the customers what to do or not to do, but on the contrary, the recommendation of digital services instead of using paper maps or transports could enhance guests experiences while promoting sustainability as an integral part of Nimb. Last but not least, it would allow a sense of community and collectivistic engagement between the customer and the hotel staff.

5.3 Marketing and promotion

Academic articles as well as some interviewees affirmed the existing connection between technology and marketing, as well as the importance of marketing and promotions in the luxury hospitality industry to promote sustainability to customers. Nevertheless, marketing has been criticised as fuelling irresponsible consumption, it is important to contextualise marketing as a function of corporate strategy and decision making (Font, X. et al., 2017). Furthermore, since sustainability now represents a key driver of success for most companies, marketing managers within tourism sector must be able to understand the role that sustainability plays in their communication strategies (Amatulli C., et al., 2021), in addition, further promotion and marketing campaign should be taken to spread knowledge regarding sustainable behaviour and sustainable certificates to consumers as stated by Joy Cubilo Ohm during her interview:

“So, guests and usually the regular guests, the question is like, when you do have green key and then engaging into sustainability, some of them don't know it. And that's probably more marketing and promotion that is needed and there is need to advertise it, so the public can see it and know more about this new topic and make more responsible choices.”

(Joy Cubilo Ohm, interview, 2024)

Interviewee 9 added some important and current issues for the promotion of sustainability and mentioned the need of that but taking into consideration the need of avoiding greenwashing that many businesses end up with.

“It favours luxury products, and it favours not necessary the use of resources and products just for luxury purposes. In my experience, in many cases, the hotels and not just at Nimb, but also everywhere else, they often use sustainability to greenwash their customers. They do something small and then they try to sell and market themselves as this huge sustainable company who is going to save our planet. And often it's only like a marketing catch that they are trying to have more revenue with. It's difficult, I think, to navigate between the true sustainable efforts and these staged ones but more promotion to educate people is required I guess.”

(Interviewee 9, interview, 2024)

In terms of marketing and promotion, Anna Finderup, Guests Relations Manager of Nimb also expressed her point of view by affirming the importance of it and the willingness from Nimb to embrace new practices helping the researcher to succeed in the purpose of this thesis, which is find out new strategies that could improve customers engagement towards sustainable choices at Nimb.

“And it's something, you know, it's always something more than the certificates, and the practices themselves, this can help customers to be more aware and maybe get interested into sustainability, but we do not want to push our guests. I mean, it's not our job to say you have to live your life like this. You have to think more sustainable; you have to be more sustainable. We cannot say that to them and that's not our intention, but we just want to make it a little bit more friendly, and advertisement is a tool we did not think about yet but sounds amazing.”

(Anna Finderup, interview, 2024)

Even though some of the interviewees suggested the need of creating and spreading marketing campaigns to customers to get to know more about sustainability, no concrete initiatives related to marketing and promotions have been created yet at Nimb Hotel. On the other hand, Jones & Smith, (2020) stated that incorporating messaging on packaging and promotional materials about the hotel's sustainability initiatives reinforces the importance of environmental commitment of the hotel during guests' stay. Furthermore, Wilson et al., (2021) proposed an efficient and innovative tool which would be ideal for a luxury hotel like Nimb that focuses its main attention on customers' expectations and experiences, by tailoring their experience to align with sustainability preferences leaving a long-term impression. Hence, they suggested that luxury hotels can gather guest preferences regarding sustainability during the booking process or upon arrival and personalize their stay accordingly.

This may include offering options for linen reuse, eco-friendly dining choices and recommending sustainable activities in the surrounding area. This would demonstrate a commitment to meet guests' sustainability expectations and therefore enhance guests' satisfaction and loyalty (Wilson et al., 2021).

Valuable actions could be taken at Nimb by developing what they already have. In the case of Green Key, Smith et al., (2019) reported that this certification validates a luxury hotel's commitment to environmental responsibility. Hence, Nimb could leverage this certification, mentioned by most of the staff members during their interviews, in their marketing materials and communications to differentiate themselves in a competitive market. Moreover, participating in sustainability awards and recognition programs provides an opportunity for the hotel to show their achievements and gain credibility among environmentally conscious travellers (Smith et al., 2019).

5.4 Comfort over luxury

Notwithstanding multifaceted topics emerged from the interviewees, a common element distributed among the former customers of Nimb is their partial or absent inclination to put aside part of their comforts, reduce their access to some amenities while staying at Nimb Hotel in favour of sustainability practices promotion and incrementation. Interviewee 9 affirmed that their decision would depend on the purpose of their stay without considering sustainability as a vacation theme-oriented practice but as a daily practice not related to a leisure holiday.

“It depends on what kind of comfort and also on the motivation for my trip, because let's say, if I'm going to a wellness weekend to Nimb like I did last august, then it is much more important for me to get or like to take part in their luxury amenities than if I am for example only staying in the hotel while I'm attending a conference in the city, so it depends on the purpose of my travel.”

(Interviewee 9, interview,2024)

Academics suggests also that customers' willingness to embrace sustainability in a luxury hotel is often related to the purpose of their stay. For leisure travellers seeking relaxation and indulgence, sustainability may take a backseat to luxury experiences and personal enjoyment (Dolnicar et al.,2011). On the other hand, business travellers with a focus on productivity and efficiency may exhibit greater receptiveness to sustainable initiatives that align with CSR objectives (Kim et al., 2018).

In contrast, Interviewee 7 expressed a different and stronger opinion about their willingness to reduce comfort by stating that:

“Penso che dipenda dal prezzo che mi propongono, perché per esempio quando cerco un hotel di lusso, quello che voglio vedere sono I lenzuoli e gli asciugamani sempre puliti e soprattutto gli asciugamani secondo me devono essere cambiati tutti I giorni ma per essere più sostenibili andrebbe bene anche a giorni alterni, quindi questo non verrei cambiarlo perché quando vado in hotel di lusso come il Nimb, mi aspetto di trovare sempre asciugamani e lenzuola pulire perché penso che sosterrai la sostenibilità ma non deve impattare nella mia percezione di lusso.”

(Interviewee 7, Interview,2024)

In light of what stated by Interviewee 7, the researchers Gursoy et al., (2019) justify the opinion that the Interviewee 7 has, by claiming that luxury hotels are perceived by most of customers like synonymous of extravagance and impeccable service, creating high expectations among customers for comfort and convenience and therefore, their perception of comfort bring them to classify their

expecting amenities and services as the key tool to enhance their relaxation during their stay (Han et al., 2020). As a result, they may resist sustainability initiatives that could compromise their concept of luxury experience.

5.5 Chapter summary

Findings tell us that in accordance with discussions carried out by the author through interviews with industry professionals and former customers of Nimb Hotel, key themes emerged, able to shed light on how to engage customers towards sustainable choices and practices with new strategies.

As stated by Maria Oldenbjerg, Anna Finderup, Joy Cubilo Ohm and Interviewees 4,5 and 8, effective communication is crucial for conveying sustainability efforts to customers from different nationalities and cultures (Oldenbjerg et al., interviews, 2024). This refers to staff members that should emphasize clear and prominent communication to their customers to promote sustainability, reinforcing transportation recommendations and technological solutions (Kharouf et al., 2014). Hence, the concierge staff members who took part in the interviews, advocate for sustainable transportation options in a city where biking and walking are valuable and possible tools to be promoted to customers. This would allow Nimb Hotel to reduce the environmental footprint. Nevertheless, some customers such as Interviewees 6,7 and 9 prioritize comfort and convenience over green transportations to move around Copenhagen. Within this framework, some of the interviewees introduced the need to invest on marketing campaigns for raising awareness about sustainability among customers. By spreading knowledge to customers, it would be possible for Nimb to highlight cultural differences in sustainability perceptions among their customers and set up a bridge of knowledge that could educate them more about this modern and increasingly crucial topic, as a result, getting an education on the topic would trigger customers to opt for more sustainable choices. In fact, as stated in the previous chapter, customers' willingness to embrace sustainability often depends on their cultural background and the way in which the society they live in and grew up in, educated them, which is not present in many parts of the world. It was possible to notice from previous customers of Nimb, who have been interviewed, that cultural values significantly influence their perception of sustainability, while some prioritize luxury and comfort, others may be more receptive to sustainable practices (Hofstede, 2001). Considering the interviews carried out, it is due to this cultural gap among customers that different perceptions of sustainability do not allow a complete implementation of green practices. In order to avoid so, the researcher in the findings chapter provided valuable insight into promoting sustainability at Nimb Hotel by emphasizing the importance of tailored communication, technological solutions, marketing advertisements promoted by Nimb and cultural sensitivity to engage customers effectively in sustainability as well as fostering a collectivistic spirit between

customers and the hotel management, setting up a sort of social community between the hotel and the consumers.

6. Analysis & Discussion

The analysis and the discussion sections are the conclusive parts of this project, which aims at providing a critical evaluation of the findings gained within this study about which strategies can engage customers of Nimb towards sustainable choices and practices. Discussion chapters are fundamental in master's thesis, thanks to whom the author can provide with interpretations of the study. It has been suggested by Paltridge (2002) that the analysis brings together the study's findings, proposes future applications and discusses limitations. Hence, following this strategy by Paltridge, the researcher will thoroughly evaluate Nimb Hotel from the interested angles for the purpose of this project, highlighting its potential in launching marketing campaigns to increase customer awareness about sustainability in luxury hotels, while integrating and interrelating these concepts with collectivism theory exposed in the theoretical framework chapter. After assessing Nimb Hotel's potential, the study will address and elucidate any limitation encountered for the completion of this manuscript.

6.1 Recommendations for sustainability promotion at Nimb

The researcher found insightful and necessary to report that according to what stated in the findings chapter and considering the interviews carried out by the author, sustainability is perceived under different shapes and level of importance depending on the role occupied by individuals in the society, their lifestyle, their cultural background and their education on the topic. This requires a major cohesion between customers and Nimb staff, reflecting one of the key concepts of collectivism, according to which guests could forge meaningful relations during their stay with the hotel employees. The researcher wants to highlight what emerged from this study, in particular the lack of solid and concrete education as well as partial awareness on the topic. For instance, the researcher point of view strongly aligns with what has been suggested by Joy Cubilo Ohm, interviewee, and Concierge staff member of Nimb Hotel, regarding the fact that an efficient communication to customers is relevant and required to transmit knowledge to the customers for a luxury hotel that aims at delivering high-class service. Joy Cubilo and Anna Finderup, Guests Relations Manager of Nimb, stated also that marketing campaigns could be the possibility for Nimb to demonstrate that it is possible to conciliate luxury and sustainability, and that promoting should be prioritized (Cubilo O, j. & Finderup A., interviews, 2024). The author highlights the fact that what has been suggested by the before

mentioned interviewees would fully meet a collectivistic theory, according to which the importance of shared goals among staff members would nourish the satisfaction of customers and it would make possible an alignment with the sense of belonging from the customers side (Han et al., 2010).

During data gathering and the research process for this work, the author discovered that currently, on the most used booking platform for Nimb Hotel, Booking.com, a table regarding the property practices reporting which are the sustainable practices implemented at Nimb, does not represent any practice implemented involving any kind of knowledge spread or marketing plans from the staff of the hotel to customers as we can see in the picture below.

Property practices

Here are the practices that this property has told us they implemented:

Waste

- Recycling bins available to guests and waste is recycled
- Water cooler/dispenser
- Single-use plastic stirrers not used
- Single-use plastic straws not used
- Single-use plastic cups not used
- Single-use plastic cutlery/plates not used

Water

- Water-efficient toilets
- Option to opt-out of daily room cleaning
- Option to reuse towels

Energy and greenhouse gases

- Vegetarian menu options offered
- Vegan menu options offered

Destination and community

- Tours and activities organised by local guides and businesses offered
- Provides guests with information regarding local ecosystems, heritage and culture, as well as visitor etiquette

Nature

- Green spaces such as gardens/rooftop gardens on the property

Figure 2. Nimb Hotel property practices (Booking.com, 2024)

As reported in the figure, emphasis is placed on waste recycling, water and energy consumption and community only in a little amount, which is perceived by the author as a strong point of interest to analyse for a luxury hotel that bases most part of its service on customers' satisfaction and understanding but lack of deep engagement to their customers, without meeting any collectivistic theory integrated into this analysis section by the author. As Smith et al., (2022) stated in their paper, in luxury hotels, customers' understanding is paramount as it directly influences guest satisfaction and loyalty. For this reason, in a competitive landscape of the luxury hospitality, where sustainability has emerged as a crucial differentiator, shaping and personalizing consumer preferences and influencing booking decisions by advertise what is missing is fundamental (Smith et al., 2022).

This would permit to achieve communal experiences for customers instead of being merely transactional, and therefore, cultivate a sense of belonging among customers in line with collectivism.

Nimb Hotel could leverage its official website and the main reservation platforms used to convey their sustainability initiatives and engage with customers on environmental issues. This could be done by inserting eye catching and well-designed interactive contents educating about sustainable choices at Nimb and able to catch customers' attention. By integrating sustainability messaging into their online branding and marketing efforts, the hotel not only can attract even more eco-conscious customers, therefore increase their profit, but also catch the attention of those customers who would like to know more about sustainability and that would like to do their part for a greener world.

“Well, I think marketing is always a violent communication tool but in this case personally I would like to see it implemented, I think people want to know and get to know more about those information, and I actually think it would be kind of like a pusher to you to choose them, especially in a marketing era where we are living in now, everything is marketing so why don't use it for useful purposes?”

(Interviewee 8, interview, 2024)

Interviewee 8, former customer of Nimb Hotel, expressed their interest in targeted marketing campaigns, strengthening the thesis advanced by Joy Cubilo Ohm and Anna Finderup. The researcher and interviewees believe that through targeted marketing campaigns, Nimb Hotel could effectively communicate their sustainability practices and initiatives in a tailor-made method, that could catch up customers attention and be a starting point to make customers aware of how luxury and sustainability can coexist, and that more awareness does not mean less comfort.

Visual engaging contents such as videos, virtual tours showing the luxurious design of Nimb as well as the sustainable practices implemented in the rooms and in the other corners of the hotel, would be an optimal tool to provide customers with a glimpse into their sustainable practices and amenities creating a compelling narrative around sustainability that aims at educating consumers about the environmental impact of their stay, in addition it would empower them to make more sustainable choices, and thus, as a result, there would be more chances to engage more customers towards sustainability at Nimb Hotel, by combining luxury, comfort and sustainability.

To maximize the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns, Nimb should also leverage digital marketing tools and techniques to reach a broader audience. DeMers, (2015) suggests the utilization of search engine optimization (SEO) strategies in order to ensure that their sustainability-focused contents rank prominently in search engine results, increasing visibility. Additionally, social media marketing used in the main social media like Facebook and Instagram would offer Nimb platforms

to share their sustainability initiatives allowing the team to engage with customers and cultivate community responsibility (Barker, 2016). Additionally, this would offer Nimb employees the opportunity to shape the collective culture between them and consumers, nourishing customers satisfaction, and making it easier to achieve social goals such as fostering sustainability to customers of the hotel (Kang et al., 2012).

Within promotion, compelling visuals, informative posts and interactive contents would allow the Hotel to showcase their Green Key certification, eco-friendly practices and inspire followers to support their brand and make environmentally conscious choices.

“So, you think that there is need of promoting marketing campaigns at Nimb? Definitely. Yeah. And the hotel needs to specify, as I said earlier, what they are doing. It's not, it's not enough for me. It's not enough just to have a certification and then say, oh, we are green, they need to publicize more on different travel websites, so people learn more and can make more responsible considerations.”

(Interviewee 6, interview, 2024)

On the other hand, interviewee 9 does not recommend promoting violent marketing campaigns that could compromise the overall objective of them. Hence, they stated that:

“Because it's like, oh, they are really trying to push it on me, then that must be something they use for their strategy to earn more revenue. So, I think that yes more marketing for an overall increase in awareness is needed but not like marketing emails that personally I would feel annoyed to receive.”

(Interviewee 9, interview, 2024)

According to what stated by interviewee 9, the researcher opinion aligns with the one of interviewee 9 and contrast with what has been expressed by Chaffey & Patron (2019), who consider email marketing as the right tool for a luxury hotel to communicate their commitment to sustainability directly to customers and encouraging them to book directly through their websites as well as leveraging their interests. Since by sending targeted email campaigns the hotel would strongly highlight their environmental initiatives, excessively educate customers about their green practices and exponentially promote special offers on eco-friendly stays, the author reckon that this would be an extremely aggressive way of doing marketing that would keep customers aside and disappointed from this commercial aggression that instead of educating about sustainability, promote a collectivistic spirit aiming at bringing closer customers and staff members to establish a sense of belonging and community, it would only have profitability purposes and not also social ones (Han et al., 2010). Therefore, the researcher reckons that to maximize the effectiveness of marketing

campaigns at Nimb, it should be avoided any kind of commercial exploitation and trigger genuine education about sustainability with a balanced approach focusing on fostering sustainability awareness driving sustainable choices and by building a required sense of community and collectivism (Chaffey & Patron, 2019). Lastly, this would not fit with the standards of a five stars luxury hotel that focuses major part of its work onto customer service and satisfaction along with a high-quality service and professionalism.

6.2 Critical discussion and contribution to existing research

This study provided new insights into the dynamics of engaging customers toward sustainability choices and practices into the luxury hotel industry. The author highlighted the importance of an effective communication to overcome different cultural backgrounds of customers, the importance of technology and green transportation, as well as non-aggressive marketing campaigns. These points highlighted have been acknowledged in previous academic studies but not properly detailed within a luxury hospitality context (Jones et al., 2016). The findings suggest that a collectivistic approach, fostering shared goals and community between staff and customers, could enhance the perceived value of sustainability for customers, a concept not widely explored in the current academic literature for lack of precise and detailed contents.

One significant new insight from this study is the identification of education and communication as pivotal factors in enhancing customer engagement with sustainability in luxury hotels. This aligns with but also extends the findings of earlier research that emphasized the role of customer awareness and engagement in sustainable practices (Han et al., 2010). By focusing specifically on a luxury hotel context, this study affirmed that tailored communication and marketing strategies can bridge the gap between luxury and sustainability among customers, addressing the unique expectations and experiences of luxury-oriented customers. Unlike general luxury hospitality studies that often treat sustainability as a universal concept, this research delved into the nuances required to implement sustainability in a high-end service environment where customer expectations for comfort and luxury are essential (Heinrichs, 2018). Additionally, this study introduced the application of collectivism theory to the context of sustainability in luxury hotels. Previous research has predominantly explored collectivism in broader social and cultural context without going deep into the analysis carried out by the author. Hence, the specific application to luxury hospitality and sustainability is a novel concept for academics. This perspective suggests that fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility among guests and staff can significantly enhance the effectiveness of sustainability

initiatives. The study's findings reveal that when staff and guests perceive themselves as part of a collective effort towards sustainability, their commitment and satisfaction increase, aligning with the principles of collectivism theory (Kim et al., 2020).

The study's findings also suggested the potential for developing new concepts and theories in the field of luxury hospitality and sustainability. Hence, a new concept of "collective luxury sustainability" could emerge from this research, where luxury hotels create an environment that not only offers high-end services but also fosters a sense of community around sustainability efforts. This could redefine luxury as not just a personal indulgence but as a shared experience that contributes to environmental and social well-being. Such a concept would challenge traditional notions of luxury and could lead to more sustainable business models in the industry.

To strengthen the academic rigour of this discussion, the author reckons that it is essential to critically evaluate the study's findings in the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks. This involves the comparison of the study's results with previous research, highlighting consistencies and divergences. For instance, while previous studies have recognised the importance of sustainability in luxury hospitality, they often lack a detailed examination of how these practices can be effectively communicated and implemented in a luxury context (Jones et al., 2019). This manuscript aims at filling that gap by providing empirical evidence and practical recommendations for luxury hotels. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on collectivism theory as a framework for enhancing sustainability practices offers a unique contribution to the field. This theoretical approach provides a new lens through which to view customer-staff interactions and their impact on sustainability outcomes. By fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility, luxury hotels can not only improve their sustainability performance but also enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty as already stated. This dual benefit is crucial since it is responsible for underscoring the value of integrating collectivism theory into sustainability initiatives in luxury hospitality. This study shows that a combined commitment of both staff and customers in perceiving themselves as part of a collective effort towards sustainability, their commitment and satisfaction increase. Thus, this finding contrasts with individualistic approaches to sustainability, which often focus on personal responsibility and individual action. By applying collectivism theory, this study contributed to create literature and inspire further research on how luxury hotels can create a culture of sustainability that permeates all levels of the organization, as well as suggesting that sustainability and luxury are not mutually exclusive but can be mutually reinforcing, challenging the traditional view that luxury and sustainability are incompatible due to the perceived excesses of luxury consumptions. Instead, the study positioning demonstrates that luxury hotels can leverage their resources and influence to lead

by example in sustainability. Moreover, the integration of collectivism theory into the study of sustainability in luxury hospitality, significantly enhances existing research by offering an understanding of how communal values and shared goals can drive environmental initiatives. Previous research by academics has often focused on individualistic approaches to sustainability, emphasizing personal responsibility and individual actions (Jones et al., 2019). However, the application of collectivism theory shifts this perspective to a more holistic approach, where the collective effort of staff and guests is perceived as a powerful driver of sustainable practices.

Collectivism theory posits that individuals are more likely to engage in behaviours that benefit the group when they feel a sense of belonging and shared purpose (Triandis, 1995). In the context of luxury hospitality, this means that both employees and guests are more inclined to support and participate in sustainability initiatives if they perceive these efforts as part of a collective endeavour. This communal approach not only enhances the effectiveness of sustainability practices but also enriches the guest experience by fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility (Kim et al., 2020).

The notion of collectivism informs existing research by highlighting the importance of social dynamics and group cohesion in the success of sustainability initiatives within luxury hospitality. Traditional research often combines sustainability with environmental management and operational efficiency (Bohdanowicz et al., 2008). However, this study suggests that the social aspect, how guests and staff members interact and work together, plays a crucial role in achieving sustainability goals for a luxury hotel. Hence, by fostering a sense of community among staff members, Nimb and luxury hotels in general can enhance employees engagement and motivation to support sustainability initiatives. This can lead to more consistent and effective implementation of green practices (Kim et al., 2020). Similarly, when customers feel that they are part of a collective effort towards sustainability, they are more likely to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours during their stay. This communal approach can transform the guest experience from a passive consumption of luxury services to an active participation in sustainable living and promotion.

However, while the collectivistic approach offers significant benefits for both customers and the business itself, it also presents several challenges. One of the main challenges is the need to balance individual desires for luxury and exclusivity with communal sustainability goals as highlighted by the interviewees part of this dissertation. Luxury hotel customers, as highlighted by the interviewees, often expect personalized and communal effort. Thus, hotels need to find innovative ways to integrate sustainability into the luxury experience without compromising the individualized service that their guests expect (Kapferer et al., 2020).

Another challenge which is a crucial point to highlight, is the potential resistance from both staff members and customers who may be accustomed to more individualistic approaches. Changing established mindsets and behaviours requires time, effort and for this reason, an effective communication could help to minimize this issue. Nimb Hotel, therefore, should invest in training programmes for staff and educational campaigns for customers to promote the values of collectivism and demonstrate the benefit of collective action for engaging customers towards sustainability. Nevertheless, implementing collectivism-based strategies may require significant organizational changes, thus, it may be needed to redesign operations, marketing and customer service approaches to foster a sense of community and shared purposes. These transformations can be resource-intensive and may face resistance from stakeholders that are not fully supportive of change.

All in all, the integration of a collectivistic theory offers a promising avenue for enhancing customers satisfaction and a better engagement towards sustainability for customers. Hence, by emphasizing communal values and shared goals, Nimb can create a more cohesive and motivated workforce and engage their customers in meaningful sustainability efforts, making it a worthwhile pursuit notwithstanding the existing challenges. Future research should continue to explore and redefine these concepts, providing both theoretical advancements and practical applications for the luxury hospitality industry.

7. Limitations

7.1 Nimb Hotel's external factors

Even though the researcher found and proposed proofs of the potential that Nimb Hotel has in promoting sustainable practices to their customers as well as make them aware about the possibility to combine sustainability with luxury without giving up on their comfort by launching marketing campaigns and promotions, and through a good communication; sustainability is overall a quite new and developing concept among people all over the world. People's lack of awareness about sustainability in luxury hospitality eradicated in the society, as well as their lack of knowledge on the topic, does not allow the researcher to write solutions, but generate suggestions and hypotheses instead. Furthermore, while efforts were made to triangulate data sources and ensure the credibility of the findings, further factors like consumer preferences and Nimb Hotel guest relations policies impacted the validity and generalizability of the results. Hence, sustainability is also about awareness and even though Nimb is a Green Key certificated hotel, there is need to sensibelize customers about the topic, because it is fundamental to trigger them towards sustainable choices without negatively affecting their concept of travel and luxury (Joy Cubilo Ohm. interview, 2024). Additionally, some

customers have preferences that cannot be easily combined with sustainability nowadays, therefore, until location and prices will be main components to consider when staying at Nimb, sustainability will be perceived as a supplemental service by certain costumers only, not prevailing on the quality of their stay as stated by Interviewee 6,7 and 9. Considering the researcher working background at Nimb Hotel and also what stated from some interviewees, Nimb has been placing a great emphasis on taking good care of their customers.

Furthermore, Nimb is currently giving small hints to their guests trying to push their customers more and more towards sustainable choices, they are trying to make them aware about all the green practices that have been implemented during their stay but without guiding them on their choices (Anna Finderup, interview, 2024). This is due to the high couture service that a five stars small boutique luxury hotel needs to provide its customers, therefore, pushing choices could bring downsides to both customers and the hotel at the same time according to what stated by Anna Finderup, Guests Relations Manager of Nimb. Nevertheless, former customers of Nimb Hotel would like to get information and receive more insights on how to be sustainable and to get to know more before and while lodging, thanks to an efficient communication process that as the author's study showed, they are missing.

To sum up, Nimb Hotel is willing to adopt new strategies and implementations to spread sustainability to their customers as stated by the interviewees that are part of this manuscript, Nimb is expected to be on the same track with external factors and needs that would make the hotel a perfect place to stay for everyone (Maria Oldenbjerg., interview, 2024). Based on the findings, one can argue that Nimb is already doing everything necessary and possible in terms of sustainability and that further actions taken towards customers would be useful for customers who have different perceptions of luxury and sustainability. Nonetheless, interviews exposed the presence of a potential for implementing more sustainability practices and strategies among customers, placing staff members of Nimb on the side of the researcher asking for a more efficient communication and a development of marketing and promotion campaigns that aim at educating consumers of sustainability practices at Nimb and how luxury and green concepts can coexist. This study contributed valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with promoting sustainability to customers in a luxury hotel, and the fact that this research has identified such issues could entail Nimb, which is still constantly developing sustainability and considering new plans and strategies.

Lastly, this study was conducted within a specific timeframe, and the findings may not have captured long-term trends or changes in sustainability practices within luxury hospitality, thus, external factors such as technological advancements and sustainability regulatory developments in Denmark and in

the rest of the world, which resulted to be a big barrier for customers coming from different countries, may also influence the relevance of the findings over time.

7.1.1 Interviewees

Since for the purpose of this project interviewing former customers of Nimb has been fundamental to gather information about their personal experience at Nimb and therefore, also validates and debate what stated by employees, Guests Relations Manager, and the Hotel Director of Nimb Hotel. The researcher considers vital to express the biggest limitation encountered in getting in touch with unknown people former customers of Nimb reaching out to them by social media, without any kind of connection and setting up interviews with them. The interviewing process took away approximately three weeks to the author and considering that a great number of people contacted by the researcher did not get back to the author, it was not possible to interview a considerable number of participants and thus, gather a greater amount of data as expected. Therefore, a limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size of interviewees, comprising former customers from Nimb Hotel. Consequently, the findings may not be fully representative of the broader population of luxury hotel guests of Nimb. Moreover, the researcher could not have had any personal contact or information about former customers of Nimb from internal employees, since in Denmark, “Databeskyttelsesloven”, which is the Danish Data Protection Act, translated into English, is a law that prohibits staff members in luxury hotels from sharing information about their guests. This law governs the processing of personal data and imposes strict regulations on how personal information, including information about hotel guests, is collected, stored, and shared by business and organizations, including luxury hotels and therefore, Nimb Hotel as well (Danish Data Protection Act No.502 of May 23,2018).

In addition, the qualitative nature of the interviews conducted in this study introduced the possibility of subjectivity and interpretation bias. The perspectives shared by each interviewee may be influenced by their personal experiences also in other luxury hotels, beliefs, attitudes and as it was possible to understand from the interviews citations reported by the author, their cultures played a role as well. As a result, this impacted the validity and reliability of the data collected. Mecca et al., (2014) highlighted the critical nature of conflicts of interests, asserting that they “have the potential to undermine the integrity of scientific research as well as to threaten public trust in scientific findings” (p.843). Similarly, Ali et al. (2011) emphasized the significance of objectivity in research, defining it as “the extent to which the findings are free from bias” (p.30), which is widely regarded as crucial

for ensuring the validity and reliability of qualitative studies. To address the risk of bias, the researcher opted to incorporate a variety of sources, including literature and input from individuals within the industry. Ali et al. (2011) suggested that employing multiple methods such as literature analysis and participant observations can help mitigate bias risks, especially when complemented by a rationale demonstrating alignment between interpretations and the perspectives of respondents. Having utilized this approach allowed the researcher to compare the themes explored by the interviewees selected for the completion of this work.

8. Conclusion

The objective of this research was to analyse how customers can be more engaged in sustainability in a case study luxury hotel, Nimb Hotel in Copenhagen, Denmark. Through qualitative interviews with industry professionals and former customers of Nimb, key themes and insights have emerged regarding the barriers and opportunities associated with sustainable practices in the luxury hospitality sector that helped the author to answer the research question of this dissertation. The findings of this study underscored the importance not only of green certifications, but also of an effective communication and marketing campaigns in order to promote sustainability with a specific attention to customers' cultural backgrounds. Hence, even though green certifications such as the Green Key are recognized as essential for demonstrating Nimb's commitment to sustainability and attracting environmentally conscious customers, however, the prioritization of comfort and luxury by some customers highlights the need for a balanced approach that integrates sustainable practices seamlessly into guest experience as well as launching campaigns able to educate customers through booking websites. It is within this framework that a crucial factor emerged during this study, effective communication, which has the role to convey sustainability efforts to customers and fostering engagement with eco-friendly options. Through the statements advanced by some of the interviewees part of this thesis, the author demonstrated that a clear and prominent communication by the hotel staff, coupled with tailored marketing campaigns, can raise awareness about sustainability and bridging cultural differences in sustainability perceptions among guests. Moreover, leveraging digital marketing tools and techniques can amplify sustainability messaging and reach a broader audience of both environmentally conscious travellers and travellers who are not prioritizing sustainability currently but that would be willing to discover more about the topic and apply sustainability while travelling in the future, resulting the most potential hypotheses for Nimb to implement and the answer to the research question of this manuscript. The research highlighted also that luxury hotels have a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead the way in promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship. By strategically designing and implementing sustainability initiatives, effectively

communicating with guests through digital but nonaggressive tools, Nimb Hotel can differentiate themselves in the Nordics luxury hospitality marketplace while contributing to a more sustainable future for the luxury hospitality industry and the planet as a whole.

Lastly, the author adds that Maria Oldenbjerg and Anna Finderup are both very pragmatic individuals, that have earned respect and admiration from Nimb's staff thanks to their visionary plans. It is also for this reason that considering Nimb's engagement in sustainability and customer service, chances to leave its mark and provide cutting-edge and memorable customer experiences are high. However, the hotel needs to put into practice a broader connection with their customers in terms of sustainability and show that the application of it can assume a protagonist role in the luxury hospitality industry.

8.1 Further studies

Within the completion of this thesis, the researcher has illuminated various aspects of promoting sustainability to customers in a small luxury hotel, focusing on a specific case study. However, there are still avenues to take for further exploration, to deepen general understanding and advance the field of luxury hospitality. Hence, the author in this subchapter outlines potential areas for future research that can build upon the insights gained from this study and address its limitations, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability practices in the luxury hospitality industry.

The research affirm that this thesis boasts of a limited time framework that has been analysed, therefore, longitudinal studies offer an opportunity to track the evolution of sustainability initiatives and customers' perceptions over time. By observing trends and changes in customers' preferences, attitudes, and behaviours, researchers can discern the long-term impact of sustainability efforts in luxury hotels. These kinds of studies would be fundamental to unveil emerging opportunities and challenges, providing valuable insights for industry stakeholders. Within the academia, longitudinal research could offer new insights into how sustained efforts in sustainability affect customer loyalty and brand image in the luxury hospitality segment, which previous studies may not have extensively covered.

The entire study carried out is based on qualitative data and analysis, therefore, the author reckons that quantitative analysis can complement qualitative research by quantifying the impact of sustainability practices on customers' satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness to pay. Surveys and statistical techniques can help measure the effectiveness of green certifications such as the Green Key in the case study of Nimb Hotel, object of research in the literature review of this thesis. Surveys and statistical techniques could also help measuring environmental amenities, and sustainable messaging in influencing guest perceptions and behaviours. This would provide empirical evidence to support

sustainability initiatives in luxury hospitality. Furthermore, incorporating quantitative data would strengthen the validity of findings and enable a more comprehensive understanding of customer responses to sustainability.

By addressing these research gaps and exploring new avenues of inquiry, future studies can contribute to ongoing efforts to promote sustainability to customers in luxury hotels and advance the broader goals of environmental conservation and sustainable development in luxury hospitality industry. Future research could examine the intersection of luxury and sustainability, potentially leading to new theories on consumer behaviour in high-end markets, where traditional luxury values intersect with modern sustainable concerns. Moreover, longitudinal studies could track the long-term impact of sustainability initiatives and customer perceptions, offering deeper insights into sustainable development in luxury hospitality (Heinrichs, 2018).

Such studies could reveal how customers' attitudes and behaviours evolve over time, providing a dynamic understanding of the effectiveness of different sustainability strategies. This approach could also identify the long-term benefits and potential drawbacks of integrating sustainability practices in luxury settings, contributing to a more sustainable model of luxury hospitality. In addition, quantitative research could provide empirical evidence on the effects of sustainability practices on customer satisfaction, complementing the qualitative findings of this study. For instance, large-scale surveys and statistical analysis could also quantify the impact of specific sustainability initiatives, such as green certifications or eco-friendly amenities, on key performance metrics like guest satisfaction scores and repeat booking rates. This empirical evidence would be crucial for luxury hotels to justify investments in sustainability and to tailor their strategies to meet and develop eco-conscious guests.

The researcher believes that further studies need to be carried out by both industry and academia. Analysing the launching of new strategies and techniques to be adopted in luxury hospitality will be crucial to predict what awaits the luxury hospitality industry and therefore make a solid contribution to the literature as well. In addition, considering that luxury hospitality involves the provision of exceptional service that exceeds customer expectations, and in recent years, luxury hospitality has embraced sustainability as an integral aspect, seeking to harmonize customers' experiences with environmental responsibility (Hassan et al., 2020), this study's findings suggest new pathways for integrating sustainability without compromising luxury. For instance, future research might explore how luxury hotels can balance opulence with sustainability, potentially leading to new business models that could redefine luxury for the 21st century (Kapferer et al., 2020). Future research should explore these new concepts, contributing to both academic knowledge and practical applications for

the industry (Kapferer, 2020). This would be possible for instance, with the integration of collectivism theory into sustainability practices, offering a novel framework for understanding customer engagement and loyalty in luxury hospitality. Moreover, this approach can inform the development of new marketing and operational strategies that emphasize community-building and shared values, which are increasingly important to modern consumers (Kim et al., 2020).

The study's findings highlighted also the potential of luxury hotels to act as leaders in sustainable development by setting new industry standards and influencing consumer expectations. This could inspire further research into how luxury hotels can leverage their unique position to drive broader environmental and social change within luxury hospitality (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008).

The incorporation of collectivism into sustainability studies in luxury hospitality opens also several new avenues for future research. Firstly, it encourages the exploration of how communal values can be cultivated and maintained in luxury settings. Moreover, future studies could investigate specific strategies that luxury hotels can use to promote a sense of community among customers and staff members, such as teambuilding activities or community events for instance. Secondly, longitudinal studies could examine the long-term impact of collectivism-based sustainability initiatives. By tracking changes in guest and staff behaviours, attitudes, and satisfaction over time, researchers could gain deeper insights into the sustainability dynamics within luxury hotels (Heinrichs, 2018). Such studies would be relevant in understanding how collectivism can sustain and enhance environmental efforts in the long run.

Furthermore, as previously stated within this chapter, quantitative research could provide empirical evidence on the specific benefits of collectivism in promoting sustainability, quantifying the impact of collectivism on key performance indicators such as guest satisfaction and overall sustainability performance, through surveys and statistical analysis (Lee, 2017).

The researcher concludes this dissertation by stating that it should be part of a widened set of targeted studies that can make the difference by interpreting trends and explaining the evolving luxury hospitality industry for future purposes.

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Appendices

Appendices – Interviews transcript

Interview with Maria Oldenbjerg – 06.04.2024

Author: Okay, so hi Maria and thank you for participating in this interview for my master's thesis. Can I record you and report your name?

Maria: Hi Matteo and thank you. Yes sure!

Author: Okay so, let's start with the first question, how does your hotel currently address sustainability concerns in terms of managerial practices?

Maria: I think for us just being certified with Green Key and have been considered collection for a couple of years, consider collection as a part of small luxury hotels. It's a green stamp we got from them. It's all about habits, I think. But here in Denmark, there's a lot of things that we already do. And for me, one thing is the hotel, but I really believe we all have responsibility, both on job, but also privately. So, I think everything we can help to change the habits for our colleagues. So, the soft ways, you know, save water, all the basic things. It also influences the way that we are doing at work.

Author: Okay. Yeah. Makes sense. And still from a managerial perspective, what are the highest obstacles you face in promoting sustainability within your hotel to customers?

Maria: That would be the greenwashing part. Especially being a luxury boutique hotel and only five stars superior hotel in Denmark being Green Key certified. Of course, we are proud of our certification, and everything is real, and we've been going through all the same criteria as all the other hotels do. But when you go out and say, oh, we now have a Green Key, then of course there is a risk that there will be some coming in and say, okay, but then why do you have this shampoo? Why do you, why don't you, why have you chosen this? And everything we do here comes with a choice. So sometimes we say now we're not 100% compliance, but we are maybe more compliance than expected over here. So that's where we gain numbers. So the way that it's built today is that, you know, you collect a certain amount of points to receive the certification. But of course, there will be things that you could challenge if you really go into the bone.

Author: Yeah. Yeah.

Maria: So also, when we got the green. So, for me, it's more like a housekeeping thing having this stamp because we deserve it and we do so many things and we also realized that we are doing this process, there's a lot of things that we already are doing that we just have to be more transparent about both towards our colleagues, so they know. On onboarding for example. But it's also an important thing to have towards the guests, but it's also a very important stamp to have internally to show the colleagues that we take a responsibility and that we care and that we are in the right direction.

Author: Also, because without the involvement of the colleagues, then it's even harder to.

Maria: Yeah, exactly.

Maria: I think it's very important what we really learned that we have a way to go when it comes to onboarding all the colleagues. So many things in there are so many things that that many of our colleagues are not aware of. So, we have a way to go internally to make sure that when a guest comes and asks, so what do you actually do on the green? Then they can say, okay, we actually do this and this and this and this and this. I have a goal set that every colleague towards every colleague should be ready to answer that question within five points right away. So that's actually one of my goals.

Author: Okay. Perfect. Moving on to the customer side. How does your hotel currently address sustainability concerns in terms of customers engagement?

Maria: We're not doing much. We are giving small hints. So, for example, when you order transportation it's always an electricity car. When you come to the room, you will see a can like this where you can go take the water from the. Use the Danish water. Little sign saying actually use, you know, tap the water. The tap water is also being used in Michelin restaurants. So, there will be small hints. When you go to the rooftop, you will see a nice little page saying, please don't take more towels that you actually need. So things like that. And then we're trying to nudge our guests to have a greener impact. Yeah, exactly. A greener impact what they say here.

Author: Okay. And which are the main challenges or barriers you encounter in implementing sustainable practices within your hotel operations?

Maria: That would absolutely be the behaviour of the guests. Because one thing is we don't want to teach our guests. This is not what we're doing here. We are nudging them. But some guests come here with a completely different behaviour. And that can be a challenge.

Author: Okay. So still the biggest barrier seems like the customer one.

Maria: Yes, exactly. And that maybe the agent, the agent says it's important that the hotel is certified with a green certification. But when the guest arrived, they don't care. They come with a private jet. They come with trends they believe in. The way that they behave, the way that it's just match. It's not us to judge. But we have, of course, to accommodate and help the guest.

Author: Yeah, of course. Do you think it's possible to consider both luxury and then for customer side expectation with the sustainability? Like, is there something missing and what could be done more in case?

Maria: Yes, I think it's absolutely possible. Like we do here. But you have to take each action like we have done and say, okay, so what is there a twist? How can we do this in another way? Instead of putting up notes saying, you know, if you put the towels on the floor, then they were going to be changed. Everyone knows that by now. So I think we have to be clever. And I think time is also with us. So we have to work slowly with the time. And then, for example, maybe we will move slippers in

a couple of years in a hotel like this. Right now, we can't do it. But maybe in two years from now, there will be no slippers. If that's the direction we're heading. Two years ago, we would never think about having big bottles in a hotel like this. Now we're having big bottles of amenities. And we're actually not refilling them because of the bacteria thing. So now when you come to a room, the bottle can be half full. And everyone knows that it's because we're using big bottles. And when they're done, we recycle them and put in a new one. Yeah. So times are changing. So I think it's our job to be aware, to be curious, to challenge and to dare challenge and be very close to our guest and dare to ask for the feedback. Because then we will actually, then I'm sure we'll follow the time. Yeah.

Author: So with the passing of time, we will see basically what is going to happen. And what strategies do you employ to communicate your hotel sustainability efforts to customers and enhance their awareness and engagement?

Maria: So we just, what we do now, it's mainly via the webpage. And we do it, we are right now working on QR code. But guests have to be curious. They can find information, but we will not, you know, will not place, this will be what we see, you know, for example, now with the cans, and there will be smaller hints somewhere. But if they ask for it, they can look it up on a web page, and we will be happy to tell them about it. But it's not something that we promote.

Author: Yeah, okay.

Author: And how do you address potential resistance or scepticism from customers regarding sustainability practices?

Maria: We haven't had that yet. But when it occurs, we will talk to them and ask them to, because if we are so fortunate that the guest actually tell us something, then we have to listen because then actually, it's because actually people care. Yeah, so what I will do, I will talk to them personally. And I'm sure we could get something positive out of it. Maybe we have to change something. But we have to listen.

Author: Also, because that's one of the main goals now. So exactly.

Maria: So if they say, you know, of course, it's always something you have to value from time to time. And what is the case? But I think we also in our survey, we ask, we have a green hotel, do you have any suggestions how we can be how we can improve? Okay.

Author: And can you share any innovative ideas or initiatives your hotel has implemented to overcome sustainable barriers in hospitality?

Maria: Right now, we just have got some new bins that we are testing at the moment. We can sort waste in the rooms. We also before we have 21 litres coming out of the fixture, we just took a bath. Now we actually changed this. So it's 7 litres in a minute and nobody complained. So it's really interesting how we changed that. Also, we're working on getting CTS at the moment, which controls

all the heating and all the lights in here and aircon. So we can actually from reception when you were as a night receptionist, you can, if there's some rooms not being used, you can close to shut it down from the reception. Now we have a challenge for that. So that's absolute things where we can improve. But it also comes with a heavy cost.

Author: And how do you ensure that your sustainability efforts are authentic and not perceived as just greenwashing?

Maria: But that's where the green key, you know, the stamp comes in, because, you know, we're a part of a greater concept. So that's where the green key, I think, comes in to help us in that. And then I will say that it's important to look through the whole chain to say, okay, if you say you do something, then go through the chain and look, is there anything, you know, from the suppliers you're working with to all your standards that, okay, is that real? You know, is that real? Do we make sure that we actually, you know, achieve the goal that we're setting out? So it's something we do all the time.

Maria: So there's always some, yeah, some control and something that I have. Exactly.

Author: Do you think your guests are really willing to, to accept these, let's say, sustainability measures, also the more expensive one?

Maria: I don't think they're expensive. I think, you know, all the food is organic. We don't have any waste. You know, if we have a nice machine that says, okay, if there's a guest not showing up, then it will tell us at nine o'clock, we can use it in staff canteen. And then we put it into the system so we can actually, you know, make the whole chain more valuable for us and also being honest and, you know, and make a goal out of it. So there's so many things. But it's, you know, it's a bit what the whole green key process that is helping us with. Okay. We do so many things. So I'm actually curious to see. And, and the guests, you know, what are the guests paying, you know, for the three things? It makes a difference. But the guests have to feel that they also contribute, you know, in order to make it real. Otherwise, they just, you know, we're not in it for ourselves. But we have to do, you know, that's the whole purpose.

Author: Yeah, we almost reach the end of this interview. So, last question is, do you have any plans to enhance sustainability efforts in the future? And if so, can you share some of these plans with us?

Maria: Yeah, I think it, as I just mentioned, the new bins we have, we have in mind. We're trying to, to push towards more local initiatives. We're trying to, with our suppliers, we are testing the CST. We are, the big bottles, everything we have done. We are, when it comes to our carpets, we change all the carpets. So they're all, you know, from waste, recycled, you know. So many things. So I think it's more, I think what we, what we have to be better at is communicate what we actually do. Because we do so many things, but we are so busy doing it. So maybe we forget to tell the stories. So I think that's

where we have to be better. Also. I think it would be nice to educate more our guests with innovative strategies like marketing for instance.

Author: Yeah, because actually there's a lot to tell and a lot to share. Yeah, yeah, exactly. Okay. So thank you very much, Maria, for your time and for your answer.

Maria: You're welcome Matteo, good luck with your thesis it was a pleasure

[Interview with Anna Finderup – 08.04.2024](#)

Author: Okay, so hi Anna and welcome to the interview. Firstly, can I record you and report your name?

Anna: Hi Matteo! Yes of course!

Author: Okay, we can start with the first question. How does your hotel currently integrate sustainability practices into its operations?

Anna: I would say that we really try to integrate it as much as possible in the guest journey. Also, in regard to our SOPs, how we do our work just at the front desk. But to integrate it for the guest experience, we do it with small steps so that we don't push our guests too much and try to nudge them in the sustainable way of living. We've upgraded our rooms with just some small touches that maybe allow the guests not to think about having a lot of water bottles, for example, but just trying to use the tap water. In the taps, we also try not to put too much water in the rooms as we did before. So, try to have all the information that the guests need, of course, but without changing their preferences. The way we do our SOPs at the front desk, I think we really all of us, the whole team, we try to focus on also not just printing invoices for the guests if they are asking for it. Find questions, maybe put an email and stuff so that we can see it there.

Anna: Yeah, I actually think it's a service in a way to get it on email because most people would just go with how it is. But also to sort all the waste that we get and also to sort it out. So, we also have to see how it works.

Author: Yeah, I agree. Then at the same time, I think you can do two things at the same time, like being sustainable and then it's better for the customer having an invoice digitally, at least. Let's say that he or she doesn't lose it. It's easier to lose it if it's printed. It's important to think, how do we do it better for the guests? And then if we can make it more sustainable, then it's just perfect.

Anna: Exactly. The same goes for the linen we have in all the rooms, how we change that as well. How often we change it and how easy it is for the guests to ask or also if they want it to be changed, but also that we don't encourage them to have it changed in the meantime.

Anna: Yes, there are lots of small touches that we do and where we think sustainable. Also, say after we've got the Green Key, we do, we shoot out sustainability and then we order our products and how it's going to be used. Will we have too much? So, we order just enough so that we can still provide to all the guests or to all the employees, whoever is going to receive the products that we order. So, it is in our minds all the time.

Author: Okay, then going to the next question, what specific sustainable initiatives or programs does your hotel offer to guests and how do you communicate these initiatives to them?

Anna: A little bit like I already said, but we have these small initiatives in the rooms where we, for example, have a water carousel for water to pour in instead of water bottles. We also have a web presentation where it's mostly about the social responsibility that you have, for example. Then we also have our Green Key presentation on the website. We are not a household that goes out and says, oh, look at us, now we've got this, now we've got that. We want more like the guests to ask, actually, and then we will show it by having these small touches all around the hotel. And I'm also wearing the, I don't know if you remember, the little flower pin? That I made out of reused coffee process and actually a lot of guests are asking what it is and where it's from. And by that question, we kind of start a conversation about sustainability.

Author: I think that's really smart because, for example, also in another interview that I had, they talked about promotions, about sustainability, for example, when customers, you know, like potential customers, let's say. So, I think that that could be a nice way to start to talk about that. And it's something, you know, it's always something more than the certificates, you know, and the practices themselves, it can help them to be more aware and maybe get interested into that.

Anna: Exactly. We want to push our guests. And I mean, it's not our job to say you have to live your life like this. You have to think more sustainable; you have to be more sustainable. We cannot say that to them and that's not our intention. But we just want to make it a little bit so friendly, and advertisement is a tool we did not think about yet but sounds amazing also. It's just, it's a nice tool in a way. We also, we started, or we will start soon to sort all the waste in the rooms. So it's actually up to the guests to sort it out. Yes, and I think that that is a little, for the guests to say, okay, it's a nice tool, not only when you're at the hotel, but maybe also at home, if your country allows it. That's how it's done.

Author: Then what challenges do you face in promoting sustainability to guests, especially in a context where comfort and luxury are really emphasized?

Anna: That's what we talked about already again. We don't promote it because we are not a green hotel, but we promote it by, for example, offering when guests like a transfer, we offer it to be always

for that. So it's just these small touches, actually, all over this experience where we try to promote a more sustainable service, a more sustainable way for the guests.

Author: Then how personally do you balance the expectations of luxury-seeking guests with the goal of promoting sustainable practices within your hotel?

Anna: I think the setting in which we are proposing our standards, what the standards setting up the rooms are set up, so that you get your linen changed every second day, get more care for all of us. First, if the guest's expectations are that we have, for example, a 0-120 water fountain room when we arrive, then I think we balance it so that we don't see most of them. We put it in the room, but we make it a little bit mechanical. With no seeing, you can actually drink and sit there. So it's a thought-balancing in this whole thing as well. And many years we have tough balance to manage, because luxury doesn't necessarily go well with sustainability as it is right now. We also have many guests arriving by private plane, so it's a safe demo, safe on the beach when you're arriving, only one person from the other side. So it's a balance. It's about meeting the guests where they are, and where they are in this process of being more sustainable and having a living, a more sustainable life.

Author: Okay, and the next question is, we already kind of discussed that, but in case you have something more, just tell me, otherwise we can just skip. Can you discuss any successful strategies or initiatives your hotel has implemented to overcome barriers to sustainability? So we talked already about Green Key, basically. So in case you have also something else that can be added, or...

Anna: Not at the moment. I think that is a bit of a surprise for us, to be honest, because we're the first five-star superior hotel in Denmark that has this expectation. So I believe that that is a step in the right direction.

Author: Yeah, I agree. Then how do you measure the effectiveness and impact of your sustainability initiatives on guest satisfaction and the overall hotel performance?

Anna: Yeah, we have this survey that we sent out to all guests after their stay, where we actually implemented a question about what we do, and what we actually mentioned. We are part of the Considered Collection. Do you have any suggestions for how we could improve? How could we live up to your expectations? That's something that we implemented not that long ago, so we haven't really seen an effect of that question in the survey yet. But I'm sure that we will get some good points, and maybe something that we can consider bringing.

Author: What role does corporate social responsibility play in shaping the sustainability efforts of your hotel? Can customers benefit from that? In your opinion, what role does CSR play in your hotel, in shaping the sustainability efforts?

Anna: So we are also that we are, and we are trying to meet what we do in Denmark and Copenhagen. I think that by getting the green keys into operation, we will be a part of setting a standard for how

hotels should run their business. And because we now have been in the game for a couple of years, and we are number one at TripAdvisor, I think maybe other hotels around us look at what we do, and maybe they will get inspired by us, so we can have a more sustainable hotel.

Author: Okay, then, what are some of the key customer preferences and trends in luxury hospitality that your hotel takes into consideration when they design guest experiences?

Anna: I think that we see more and more that our guests, they are interested in if we have any...luxury, so let's consider small, how we...also, and which companies that we work together with. So I think by having this justification, and by trying to go on and be working, one, it gives the best of these preferences, and we just have a way of... So, I think that's some of the key customer preferences. ...take into consideration is that it's important to have a...so it's easier for guests just to look up, for example, just online to see, okay, do they have this green stamp, or do they do anything, or...

Author: Yeah, exactly. How do you address, for example, the perception of cost differences associated with green initiatives? And how do you communicate the value, this kind of value to the guests, if, of course, you communicate that?

Anna: We don't communicate that. For us, I don't think it's important to our guests, actually. You know, we know our prices too, and we know our guests too, and that is not a big problem.

Author: Okay. How does your hotel address the challenge of maintaining high levels of luxury and comfort for guests, while also implementing sustainable practices that maybe can be considered as a reduction in amenities or services?

Anna: It's super important for us that we don't do any reductions in amenities or services, so we don't compromise the comfort for the guests while implementing sustainable practices. We hope that we can go hand-in-hand. We can still maintain our high level of service and also all the amenities that we put in the room, but still doing it in a more sustainable way. For example, when we tried to use this, we found out that we actually reused 21 litres of water per minute every time we took a shower.

Author: Wow, that's a lot of water.

Anna: The reason why we did that and why we looked into it was that we wanted to create this wellness feel in the room as opposed to when you're just taking a shower and it still feels really, really nice and it feels like a rain shower. We actually found these small filters in each shower and then we adopted these 21 litres into 9 litres. We did that, what, now four or five months ago, I think, and we haven't had a single complaint about it. So I feel like here we really have a new sustainable nature. Nothing happened and we didn't compromise on the well-being feeling that we wanted just to receive and have. It was customer safety and sustainability done. And we saved a lot of water.

Author: Yeah, okay. Can you discuss, if there are any cases, any specific instances where customer expectations for luxury conflicted with sustainability goals?

Anna: I can only say, as I've said before, that if there's a request, we will of course try to live up to that as much as possible. But of course, if you can match the guests' needs of this, while doing it without saying no to the guests, the example with water bottles, match them a little bit, to maybe use the careful estimate of 20 water bottles. I think that's a good start. We also don't want to push anything or judge anyone with their way of living and what they expect from a hotel. They are at a luxury hotel, and they have to live up to the guests' expectations if they want 20 water bottles.

Anna: Of course, they need to be provided.

Author: Can you share any insights or experiences regarding, for example, how different guest demographics, such as age or nationality, influence their attitudes towards sustainability?

Anna: I can share what my personal experience is. For example, with the waste sorting that we've done now, we've tried it for a few weeks now, with different nationalities and different groups that sleep in the same room, where it is clear to see that the younger generation may sort more. I think they sort out where maybe the elder generation, they just put waste in whatever there is. But also, we've seen a Danish guest, and a British and an American one, and the Danish guest, they did sort, but I think because they do it so much already at home, so it's just a habit now. It's also a cultural thing, and we will see that the British guests, they do sort it, but the American guests don't. I would say, of course, yeah. I hope when we get these waste sorting things in all of the rooms, that it will make it more comfortable in the room.

Author: Yes, exactly.

Author: So the next question is basically connected to this one, because it would be, if the culture of the customer influences their perception of sustainability, but we basically already answered.

Anna: I would just say yes to that.

Author: Yeah, exactly. Then the next question is also, I don't know if you have something more to add, but we already discussed about that as well, because it's, do you think that being more sustainable for customers means removing part of the luxury expected from them?

We already also discussed that for several reasons.

Author: We already also discussed that for several reasons, so we can move ahead. Looking ahead, what are your future plans or goals for further integrating sustainability into the guest experience at your hotel?

Anna: I don't have any plans, but I think that our goal must be to keep integrating these more sustainable experiences in the rooms, and also in the way we provide guests, for example, using what we have around us, using our nature that we have around us, trying to recommend it more. And then

I think that it will continue to develop. Now we have this point on the list before you, for example, making a partnership or you order some new products or something, we have to look into, okay, but what is this kind of company, and do they have any sustainability? And so I think that's how we started. We've been working on it for a few years, but now we've really started to increase this. So I think that will also push us, because there will be new regulations. Another idea could be promoting sustainability to customers by develop our website through marketing campaigns and promotions, but that should be better planned by us and requires a lot of offer, but it sounds like a great idea.

Author: We need to keep up to date. Okay, great. Thank you for the interview. I'm going to just stop here.

Anna: Thank you, Matteo! Hope I was helpful!

Author: Thank you, Anna!

[Interview with Joy Cubilo Ohm – 17.04.2024](#)

Author: Hi and thank you for participating in my interview! First, can I record you and report your name?

Joy: Hi Matteo, sure!

Author: Okay, I'm going to start with the first question. So, how would you describe Nimb Hotel's approach to sustainability according to your personal experience?

Joy: I would say it's just like recently that Nimb approached this sustainability subject, I've been as well at Nimb for almost 10 years and it's just this couple of years that they started this project and I would say they are in a good start because they take it, this, I mean, the idea of this comes from Tivoli. Yeah. Because Tivoli got the green key, I think, two years ago and then, of course, because Nimb is part of Tivoli, so, yeah, like, why should we not start it because, yeah we are associated in a way with Tivoli.

Author: Okay, yeah. And then, what specific sustainable practices does Nimb Hotel currently implement at the reception? So, for example, what is sustainable that you can see as a reception staff member?

Joy: I would say at the moment, at the reception, we try to implement now electric cars that it is the type of transportation that we suggest to our guests. So, now we're trying to use more cars with electricity, for example, and we try to, of course, it depends again on the demand of the guests, but

that's our priority at the moment, since we got the green key. So, we tried our best to, with regards to transportation, we try to use electric cars as much as we could. And as well, we suggested our guests to take the bikes because, yeah, it's the way you help to maintain, sustainability, as we have now the green key. That's the best part. And then, we try to recycle now, as you can see in the back office, we have two of these recycle bins. So, we try as well to sort out what kind of waste we have at the reception. So, that's, I would say, the best two things that we implemented at the reception at the moment.

Author: Okay, yeah. And then, can you explain any initiatives or programs the reception staff are involved in promoting sustainability within the hotel? If you know any, of course.

Joy: Ah, I'm sorry, what did you say?

Author: Like any programs or initiatives that you are involved in for promoting sustainability?

Joy: I would say it's the same as now. We try to do our best about the transportation and then the recycle. As mentioned earlier, it's new at Nimb that we implement the sustainability process. But, yeah, I would say that the transportation and the recycle bin that we tried. I don't know if you noticed it, but we have, we try to see to each other what we have to sort out waste and so on.

Author: Okay.

Joy: And now we have this, we have our own drinking bottles. So, yeah. So, we will not use more plastic bottles in our team.

Author: Okay, great. And how does Nimb Hotel integrate sustainability considerations into its daily operations at the reception desk?

Joy: It's, yeah, it's a little bit of, like, I don't know, 50-50 now, because as you know, Nimb Hotel, we are part of high-end and it's a little bit complicated to implement sustainability. It's new to, especially for, like, the regular guests. But now we have this, for example, in the rooms, I don't know if you noticed, like, we don't put bottle of water anymore. We put, like, a jar. Yeah. So, the guests can use it instead of... But some of the guests understand it. The one that's been coming to Nimb regularly, they, like, question it. So, it's, like, we are there, but I would say it takes a couple of years to be considered as normal. It takes time for them to get used to this.

Author: Of course. I mean, it's a new thing for everyone.

Joy: Yes, it's a new thing, especially for Nimb because this facility has been here for years, but for us, is new for us. Yeah, so, it's a process, I would say.

Author: Okay, yeah. Makes sense. Of course. And in your opinion, do you think it's possible to conciliate both luxury and so customers' high expectations with sustainability? Is there something you think is missing and something that could be done more?

Joy: I would say, specifically for Nimb, there should be more, we should put more, like, in our website that we are in there, because I don't know how much, we have this green key, I think, just this year, a couple of months ago, that we officially put it in the website. But I would say, maybe more advertisements that we are actually doing, we are part of it. So the regular guests, the question is like, when do you have, when do you have this, like this, green key and then engaging into sustainability? Because some of them don't know it. And that's probably more marketing and like to advertise, like the public can see it.

Author: Yeah, of course, makes sense. And what challenges do you encounter usually when trying to implement sustainable practices, but customers do not care at all about them?

Joy: I would say for them that is the new guest, it's not a problem because for everybody it's a huge topic now about how we save our planet, how we save, how we can engage, how we can be involved with this. So how, what we can contribute, but for them as mentioned, a guest staying with us for a long time, like it's been since Nimb started, this is quite difficult for them to adapt. What's the new product, the new product we have, what's the new process that you see when they visit again. So that's, I would say that's the difficult one because they're not used to this. And suddenly it came, they come to Nimb and then they have this new water bottles, like we see in the room that you have a carafe, or you have a jar, what is this for? And why are we using this? It's quite strange for them to see this, but of course, it's, a part of helping our environment. So it takes time for them to get used to this.

Author: Yeah. Yeah. It's tricky for everyone.

Joy: So, yeah. And now, they have to, in the rooms we have this recycle bin as well. Back then we did not have this. So this for instance, it takes a lot to really engage to sort out your own waste. Because if you are like been there for a couple of years and then coming and you just put in one bin and suddenly you are like three, you suddenly see there's like three different kinds of bins. So I was like, okay, it's an extra time for me. But yeah, that's, I would say that's it. That's the, the two things that it's a little bit difficult for them to, to, yeah. It's a little bit of challenge.

Author: Yeah. Yeah. But I agree. And usually during the check-in process or during customer stay, do you communicate them Nimb Hotel's sustainability initiatives?

Joy: Yes. Now, because we officially launched the Green Key and everybody, it's in Tivoli now and it's official. Everybody knows it now that we have our Green Key. So when we have time, of course, we explain that when we bring more guests to the room, we explain them that we have, now we have this Green Key and we have these things that we implement in the rooms and, and yeah, we do it.

Author: Okay.

Joy: Of course, if you have time, of course, and I guess, the guests have to have time for it because some of them come from another different time zone and they just want to be like, go to the rooms and rest. So if both have the time we will explain.

Author: Yeah, of course. Especially in the evening and the night.

Joy: Exactly, and now since we are approaching the high season, I would say most of our check-ins are like, yeah, late evening and they just want to go straight to their rooms and yeah, have a rest.

Author: Yeah, that's true. And how has customer feedback regarding Nimb Hotel sustainability efforts has been so far?

Joy: It's, I would say 50-50 because as mentioned it's quite new at Nimb. And then we really have to put more effort in this. And also the time for the guests to adapt it because yeah, it's new. So, for some, especially for the younger generation, they are more flexible and they are more, I would say they understand this better because it's been, this topic for a while and it's there and it's been on and on and on for years now. So they are more into like this, yeah, that they understand this more.

Author: Yeah, okay. Can you share any interesting or memorable stories related to sustainability efforts at Nimb Hotel? If you have any, of course, like if you remember any feedback, good or bad?

Joy: I would say maybe, yeah, it's like a good experience because there's one guest, maybe it's just last week because it's a regular guest and he's been, as mentioned, he's been a guest at Nimb for a couple of years and then when he came last week, he just really said, okay, what happened? And then he was like, why I do have this jar in the room and why do I have to like do this thing? And for me, it's like I understand that it's new, but it gives more opportunity, to engage more with this guest and explain more why we have this sustainability project now. And it's, I would say it's really fun as well to see that, then he understands now why we have this project and now he's part of it. So now he even asked how he could help us because this guest, he has been here for years. So, I think he, in a way he feels like, okay, I have this sense of belonging to Nimb as well because he's been a guest for a couple of years. So, it's fun to engage and talk about this as well. So that's good I would say, good experience for me because it's fun to like, to know that there are still people, like this guest, that they are willing

to engage as well. And now even he's asking me if, how he could help us more. So that's fun. That's a good experience.

Author: Okay, nice to know. I was going to ask if you got any positive feedback, and this is very positive. And last question. How do you see the future of sustainability at Nimb Hotel and what more do you think can be done in the coming years?

Joy: I would say more, like, as mentioned, I would say more guests should be more involved and they will understand this, especially if we put more effort in the marketing, as mentioned earlier, because now we have this Green Key and it's more official to everyone that we are into this project now. But I would say more marketing is necessary, and it will be better for the next coming years for Nimb, to have this project. So, I would say it's going to be a good thing for Nimb to increase Marketing. It will help us more to engage, not only with the guests, but also with our staff. Technology can help us at Nimb not only to help customers to be more aware of sustainability and the surrounding environment also, so recommending them the use of apps is like not pushing them to be sustainable but then at the same time it is a good tool for us to educate them following our concept of sustainability.

Author: Okay, well, definitely. Thank you, Joy, for the time and for the amazing answers. I appreciate it. Have a nice day.

Joy: You're welcome. Have a nice day Matteo!

[Interview 4 – 17.04.2024](#)

Author: Hi and welcome to my interview for my master's thesis! First, can I record you and report your name?

Interviewee 4: Hi Matteo, it is okay to be recorded but I prefer not to say my name if it's okay.

Author: Of course, no worries, so let's start with the first question. How would you describe Nimb Hotel's approach to sustainability?

Interviewee 4: We recently got the Green Key, so as the only luxury hotel here in Denmark, as far as I know, we're the only one to have it. So I think they take it quite seriously at Nimb Hotel for their sustainability. They try to make an effort in everything they do.

Author: And like, what specific sustainable practices does Nimb currently implement at the reception, as far as you know?

Interviewee 4: So you mean only in the reception or also like what they do in the rooms and stuff in general or only at the reception?

Author: At the reception, and then if you know also something that they do in the rooms that would be great.

Interviewee 4: In the reception we have like the trash where we divide it by the food and the plastic and the paper and these things. So we take good care of the planet in that way as well. Every time we have to go somewhere to pick something up for the guests, we take the bike, like one of us biking. So for example, if they want some flowers or if they're gonna have something, you know, special, like it could be anything, then we bike to the place. So we don't use public transport or taxi or anything. We use the bikes and stuff. We don't have the like, we have the room keys there. You use them again and again. You don't throw it out. And also I know in lots of other hotels you have something to put the keys inside. For example, I was working at Jumeirah. We had like key holders of paper and in Nimb we don't have it. So we actually use less paper in that way, I would say. But in the rooms we have like, if it's there, it depends on the guest. But we normally like to tell the guests that Copenhagen is a great city to walk or to bike in, which is a good way to get around. So they don't use like cars or transportation in any way. We also have like a water thing in the, in every single room. And we have a little note where it stands that Denmark has one of the finest water. So you can drink it actually from the tap. So they don't have to take for, like for example, they don't have to take from our minibar to drink the water. They could also take it. We don't say it to them, but it's there. Like it depends on the guest again. But it's in every room written that it's safe in that way. Also, I think we just got it like not that long time ago, like the water thing for them to take a shower. There is a thing on it. So it's like the guest cannot feel the change, but it's not going to give as much water as it used to. So we're not using as much water every time the guests are taking a shower because there's like a filter on the showerhead. So in that way as well. All our like menus and stuff in the room, we use them again. So it's like, it's always the same menus there is in the room. Yeah, and then we have like as well the bed thing. We have like a little note on the bed if they wanted to change the bed, they have to call us. Like otherwise, we don't change the bed linen every day for the guests that are staying for a long time. So in that way, we also try to save a bit.

Author: Okay. And can you explain any initiatives or programs that the reception staff are involved in to promote sustainability at the hotel?

Interviewee 4: The Green Key.

Author: Okay, so that's still related to what you told me in the first question, basically.

Interviewee 4: Yeah, the Green Key. And also I know Tivoli, we're part of Tivoli Gardens, and Tivoli Gardens also take good care of the sustainability. And as we are part of that, it's important that we are following up with the gardens as the hotel as well.

Author: Yeah. And do you know how Nimb Hotel integrates sustainability considerations into its daily operations at the reception desk?

Interviewee 4: Yeah, it's kind of the same I said with the trash we throw out. And yeah, like if there is a guest, if it's the right guest to sell them, you can walk or you can bike to try to push them in that direction to be sustainable. Also, I know in the reception, we did a change because before we were drinking off plastic bottle waters. And now all the employees in the reception have a bottle of, I don't know what it's made of, but one they can reuse all the time. So we don't throw lots of plastic bottles anymore as we used to do. So that's one thing we have done differently as well.

Author: And passing on to something more personal, let's say, do you think that it is possible to conciliate both luxury and therefore customers' expectations in a luxury hotel with sustainability? Like what do you think is missing and what could be done more?

Interviewee 4: I definitely think it is, you can do it because we are kind of the proof that it's possible to do luxury and sustainability. I think, of course, it's a bit more difficult because you always want to please the guests. So if the guests want something, you kind of have to, you cannot say no. For example, if they wanted something printed or something like that. But I think personally as well that lots of our guests at Nimb, they actually also like that it's sustainability. It's more in nowadays and it's our planet and everything. So I think they, I have a feeling like personally, but also for our guests that it's important to do it. It makes you feel good. So like luxury is also to feel good with yourself and feel good about the stay. And for the guests, they're feeling better. And I would personally, if it was me, feel better knowing that I'm not, like that I'm actually making a difference by choosing this hotel compared to maybe other hotels.

Author: Yeah. And as a receptionist, what challenges do you encounter when trying to implement sustainable practices?

Interviewee 4: It can be difficult because it really depends on the guest. So if for example, there are some guests that they're coming from a place where they do not drink tap water, they're not used to drink from the tap. It's a bit more, you can say it, but it's a bit more difficult because I think they're scared because maybe they're, so used to drinking bottles of water. So, you know, like probably when they haven't done it before, they're more scared to it. So also, for example, about the biking and the walking, the difficult thing for me is, as a receptionist, is that you really have to see who you're standing in front of, like not to go over the limit with it. So you have to do it like in a smooth, nice way to say it, but not say they have to do it. So like it's their choice, but it really depends on the guest because we're in the luxury industry and we cannot say what they have to do and what they do not have to do in this way.

Author: Yeah, of course. So of course you need to take into consideration also habits and culture, let's say, no?

Interviewee 4: Yeah. So it's really, it depends on the cultural difference because in lots of countries you cannot drink tap water. So it can be maybe scary for them because they're coming from another culture where they never drink tap water. And also, yeah, the habits because they're probably, you know, like everyone has to change the habit. And when you're going to go maybe for a two-day trip, it's not the thing you're thinking about changing habits. It's more like in the daily life when they are home.

Author: Yeah, of course. Makes sense. Besides if it's business guest stays traveling a lot.

Interviewee 4: Yeah.

Author: Usually do you communicate Nimb Hotel's sustainability initiatives that are taken to the guest during their check-in process or during their stay also?

Interviewee 4: It's a part of my job and it's a part of the Green Key. If we want to have the Green Key, like keep having it, we have to do it. So it's like when I do the check-in, when I room them and show them around and I, and I explained about the room, I always mentioned some of the sustainability things. So they know, um, because it's a good thing that we have the Green Key. So, we are showing them what we are doing as hotel. Yeah. So, but I do it normally during the rooming and the check-in. Yeah. Or if there is a question from the guest, they're coming down to me in the reception and asking something like, uh, yeah, then I'm, if it's something they similar to related to that, then I'm saying it. For example, if they ask for water, can we have more bottles of water? I'm saying it's also possible to do that, but it's, you know, you can still have the water, but just so they know, because maybe they're not reading the note.

Author: Yeah. Of course. Just to advise them, let's say.

Interviewee 4: Yeah. Yeah.

Author: And, um, have you received any kind of training or guidance on sustainable practices as a reception staff member till now?

Interviewee 4: No, not like a training in that way. We have a monthly meeting where our Guests Relations Manager, Anna, she, um, she was the one taking care of the Green Key. And, um, I think normally, not normally, but she mentioned it quite a few times because, you know, it was new and so, but it's not like training we are getting it. No.

Author: Okay, and what do you think that would be beneficial in that aspect? Do you think that you would feel more confident if you had received any training or a bit more guidance, let's say?

Interviewee 4: I think it's always a good thing to have the training and to have the guidance. So, um, in this way, I'm not sure, like maybe it could be a good idea because then also like all the employees

are having the same understanding because we're working in different shifts. So we're not all, uh, attending the same meetings every month. So I think it could be a good idea to have a training, like then, you know, like everyone has the same understanding and they're more confident and comfortable about doing it and saying it. So, yeah, but I think it's a good idea.

Author: Yeah, it's a good point because maybe also when you do the training, as you are more people, you might raise more questions or problems that, you know, the person giving the training might not have thought of, you know?

Interviewee 4: Yeah, exactly. And, and yeah, then you can also be like, okay, it's important for me to know, for example, like, for me to do my job a hundred percent right, i need to have all the information and all the guidance I can have and get. So I think it could be a good thing. And also it's easier to know what, what to do and what to say and how much to say and what not to say.

Author: Yeah, I get that. Do you think Nimb Hotel's sustainable efforts have had a positive impact on your working environment, like the reception area specifically?

Interviewee 4: I think, yeah, because personally, I like the thought of it. I think, um, it makes me feel good because it's also, you know, like it's also a part of you as a human being to be in it and you're a part of the world. So I think it makes you more happy, like a better working environment, um, that you are more conscious about what you're doing and more, you know, like how you can be a part of, uh, making a change for the better.

Author: Yeah. And do you think that Nimb Hotel's guests value and appreciate these sustainable practices? I know you told me before that probably, yes, because also for them it's important, but if you could talk a bit more about it, that would be great.

Interviewee 4: I think, uh, again, it depends on the guest. I think, um, for some guests, it's not a priority for them, but I think, um, like the majority of the guests, they're happy about it. They appreciate it. And, um, they think it's a good thing. Like also with the water in the rooms, I've never had anyone complain or like, if you're drinking it from the tap, they actually like that you are not using more, um, plastic, you know, for them to drink the water. So I think for them, they like it, but I think there are still like some guests, they are not so, like it's not a priority, but I think, um, it makes them feel good to know that it's there. Like it's, it's not something they would think about normally, but now they know about it and then it's like, okay, it's actually a good thing. So yeah.

Author: Okay. Thank you very much for your answers, the interview is over!

Interviewee 4: You're welcome Matteo!

Interview 5 – 17.04.2024

Author: Hi and thank you for participating in this interview. First, can I record you and report your name for the purpose of this project?

Interviewee 5: Hi Matteo, yes but I would like to be anonymous if possible.

Author: Sure! so, let's start with the first question. How would you describe Nimb Hotel's approach to sustainability?

Interviewee 5: For me, that I am Spanish, I think that Nimb Hotel's approach to sustainability is high. Also, the working environment, they make sure that it is sustainable and also the services that are provided. Also, for example, if I think about the food, everything is organic and local, which is also an important thing for promoting sustainability. But also, for example, the fact that we put carafes in the rooms with tap water, it's something really important that it helps, of course, to implement sustainability and to promote it to the customers. The same goes, for example, with the soap, that we have, the refillers instead of buying, for example, new plastic bottles. And also for towels and bedsheets, that we don't replace them every day. And so I think that overall if it is compared, for example, to my country, I can really see a cultural difference when it comes to sustainability.

Author: And what specific sustainable practices does Nimb Hotel currently implement at the reception?

Interviewee 5: So at the reception, for me, it is basically just keep the customers, if there us, of course, the occasion, updated about the practices that I just told you about. And also, for example, at the reception, we have for the staff members, for the trash, there is something like a basket for plastic, for paper, for organic, which is a great thing. And also, we remove the plastic bottles from the fridge and we just got personalized water containers so that we can just refill them with still or sparkling water. And we don't have issues related to excessive use of plastic, for example. So yeah, at the reception, it's basically that, what we implement between the staff members.

Author: Can you explain any initiatives or programs the reception staff are involved in to promote sustainability within the hotel?

Interviewee 5: It's basically, as far as I know, we just explain everything to the guests about what I just told you. And then when there are staff meetings once a month, we get updated from our Guests Relations Manager, Anna. For example, recently she told everyone that Nimb Hotel just got Green Key certificate, which is a big step. And that's what basically we are involved in, and we don't have specific trainings about that. We just get updated about the new things going on in terms of sustainability, sustainable practices, and we try to implement them at the reception. We do our best. And if it's great to the customers, we also provide the services.

Author: How does Nimb Hotel integrate sustainability considerations into its daily operations at the reception desk?

Interviewee 5: Well, as I said before, we try to make our customers as much as possible aware about which are the sustainable practices that we try to implement. For example, in the rooms, about the restaurants also, for example, when we recommend the restaurants in Copenhagen. In many cases, we try to recommend that to our customers, but it's also the customers themselves that sometimes ask for organic and vegan options, which is, I think, a really great thing from both parties, like customers and staff members at the same time. And also, for example, we promote a lot bike services, which is a great thing because apart from the fact that Copenhagen is one of the most bike-friendly cities all over the world, it's also a nice thing so that we can avoid taking transportation. And also, yeah, I think that's what I can come up with, like in the daily routines and the operations. Yeah, now I can't come up with anything else.

Author: And do you think it is possible to reconcile both luxury and therefore customers' expectations with sustainability? What is missing and what could be done more?

Interviewee 5: Well, I think that that's quite a tricky question. It's not that easy because we have to consider that customers are coming to a luxury hotel, a five-star hotel. So in many cases, they have high expectations and they pay a high amount of money. And of course, what they pay, they expect also in the services. So sometimes it's not easy to combine sustainability with their expectations, because for example, if customers ask for change their towels and bed sheets every day, of course, we have to do that since we are a five-star hotel and we have to provide the service. So I think that partially it's possible, of course, and also more than partially. Nimb Hotel, I think, is the proof for that with all the activities that we implemented and with the attention that we pay to sustainable development goals, for example, the sustainable working environment, organic food and sustainable activities and everything. But I think it's not possible 100% to reconcile sustainability and customers' expectations in a five-star hotel like Nimb. So yeah, what is missing? I think we are actually on the right direction. Of course, there is always something that can be done more. But when it comes, for example, to this fracture between sustainability and customers, I think maybe it could be nice, for example, to ask the customers if they are interested in sustainability and if there is something that they would appreciate. So maybe ask directly the customers what they would like and then maybe see if there is something that we could have done more because otherwise, like I think that Nimb already implements valuable sustainable practices.

Author: Okay, what challenges do you encounter when trying to implement sustainable practices, but consumers do not care about them? And how do you address them?

Interviewee 5: Well, I think it's not easy to address them and then maybe we don't encounter them directly. It's not easy to address them because, well, of course, customers, they want the service. And if they don't want to be really sustainable, sometimes it's not that easy to talk to them when they expect a lot from us. And so I think that maybe the biggest challenges could be like in terms of towels or like in terms of water in the room, even though we tell them that we have one of the cleanest water in Denmark, sometimes they just want to use the hygge bar or get other kinds of drinking services, like, for example, order drinks and sodas. And of course, we can't say no to that. So I think that that maybe could be some of the biggest challenges for us.

Author: Do you communicate Nimb's sustainability initiatives to guests during their check-in process or during the stay?

Interviewee 5: Yes, we do. We communicate, for example, about using tap water. We communicate about organic food if there is the opportunity for that. For example, they ask for recommendations for eating at Nimb. But also, for example, we communicate about the bike services and all those kinds of stuff. We communicate about Green Key certifications, because that's related to the hotel itself. But when it comes to services, yeah, we usually communicate them also.

Author: Have you received any training or guidance on sustainability practices as a reception staff member?

Interviewee 5: We don't really receive a training. The only thing that we usually receive is updates and information related to sustainability. Also during our monthly staff meeting where the Hotel Director and Guests Relations Manager usually tell us about the new initiatives and they also update us about how the initiatives that have already been implemented are going. So that's basically what we get. So we get guidance, but not specific training about that.

Author: In what ways do guests typically respond to Nimb Hotel's sustainability efforts when interacting with the reception staff?

Interviewee 5: Well, of course, it depends from customer to customer. But generally speaking, also in terms of bikes, they're always happy about that. That's also because biking is also a big thing in Copenhagen. So in many cases, I think we are lucky to be sustainable and then at the same time to promote like a must-do activity in Copenhagen, which is biking. And also, for example, when it comes to organic food, like most of the time, customers are happy about that. In terms of towels replacing or bedsheets replacing, of course, we can't do that much about that if they want to have them replaced. We do, of course, our best to not replace them constantly, but I think that's the right track that we are taking. So yeah, that's pretty much it.

Author: Can you share any success stories or notable achievements related to sustainability that the reception team has experienced?

Interviewee 5: Well, of course, one of the most recent is obtaining Green Key, which is a really big thing. And I think that's, yeah, one of the last things that we achieved and that's already a lot of success.

Author: What strategies does the reception team employ to encourage guests to participate in sustainability initiatives during their stay?

Interviewee 5: Well, usually, as I said before, we just tell them the activities that we provide our guests and also all the sustainable implementations related to soaps in the rooms and also about, for example, water, towels, bedsheets, food and bikes. So basically we have this word-of-mouth, so to say thing that we are going to communicate them about the different activities that we implement and we push them, let's say, as much as possible to implement them.

Author: Are there any upcoming sustainability projects or initiatives planned for the reception area that you can share?

Interviewee 5: Well, as far as I know, no. So I don't think that there will be more initiatives, but that's what I know.

Author: How do you personally feel about Nimb Hotel's commitment to sustainability and how does it influence your role at the reception?

Interviewee 5: Personally, I think that they have a really strong commitment to sustainability and they try to be on track constantly and to be updated about any new initiatives and activities. So I think that's a really nice thing. And I feel very happy about that. And I think that it really influences a lot the role at the reception that I have because it's something that helps you to be more climate change aware. It helps you to be also more careful not to waste, for example, food, water, and not to waste a lot on transportation, for example, thanks to the bike. So I think that there is a really high commitment that influences a lot of the staff members as well, and that we can also be more committed and feel this attention to sustainability even more, thanks to the practices, the policies also that we have at Nimb.

Author: What do you believe are the most important factors for Nimb Hotel to consider in order to further enhance the sustainability efforts at the reception?

Interviewee 5: Well, I think that even though we are on the right track, of course, there is always something more to do. I think that maybe it could be nice to talk to customers, for example, and try to understand first which will be their expectations in terms of sustainability, if they're interested, of course, and then considering that if they're up for that, of course, I think it would be nice to see which would be their preference and then in accordance to that maybe try to announce some particular factors related to sustainability. So I think that would be really interesting and maybe important for the staff members, the hotel management, and for the customers as well.

Author: Considering sustainable development goal number eight regarding decent work and economic growth, do you feel that your working conditions as an employee are completely respected?

Interviewee 5: Yes, 100%. I think it's like one of the best hotels to work at because the working condition is really respected. There is a really nice environment in general with all the colleagues, not only from the reception, but also with other departments. It's really friendly, it's really attentive to everyone's rights, to everyone's working condition, salary, and so I think it's completely respected and there is nothing to add because it's perfect to me.

Author: Looking ahead, what do you see as the future challenges and opportunities for advanced sustainability at Nimb?

Interviewee 5: Well, I think that with the passing of time, of course, sustainability is already a big thing, but it will become a big thing even more because as we can see, the planet is changing, climate is changing, and we need to be more attentive. And of course, hospitality will feel that as all the fields. So I think also one big thing for the hotel is going to be facing the regulations deriving from the government and the governmental policies and initiatives that will become on the page, let's say, in the next few years. So I think that that could be maybe a future challenge that could limit who knows or help Nimb Hotel that we can't know now. But also it could be also the change of customers' expectations because maybe, of course, with the passing of time, your change and also their preferences and expectations are going to change. And that could be in some cases a challenge, of course, for Nimb. So, yeah, I think that's pretty much it. And then with the passing of time, of course, we will discover which will be the challenges. I think we already have quite a few now, so we will see in the future maybe what they will be, but, I think it is really important to establish an efficient way of communicating with guests because it is fundamental for us as staff members to be clear with customers, build trust on them and this would allow us to recommend them sustainable options which is possible if there is trust.

Author: Okay, thank you for your interview.

Interviewee 5: You're welcome, glad to help

Interview 6 – 22.04.2024

Author: Hello and thank you for the interview, we are gonna start with the first question which is how would you describe your ideal luxury travel experience?

Interviewee 6: My ideal travel experience and luxury hotel will be, well, not all inclusive but I get what I ask for. If I call the reception, I ask for something, I get it. Especially when you consider a five-star hotel.

Author: Okay, and what factors are most important to you when selecting a luxury hotel?

Interviewee 6: Location. Yeah, it has to be a great location where you can experience some nature but still have the opportunity to jump in a pool or sea or something.

Author: And what if you are in a city? It has to have still those services like Nimb has, or you would look for something different?

Interviewee 6: I think I would have looked for something different unless that in-city luxury hotel provided some sort of this, I don't know, like a pool inside or something like Nimb has.

Author: Okay, so nothing sustainability related?

Interviewee 6: It's not what I will look for because when I go for luxury, you pay a certain amount of money to get this luxury. Sustainability is not the top of my head.

Author: Okay, okay. And since you said that you pay a lot of attention to great service, you know, since you pay a lot of money and you want luxury, do you prioritize exclusivity, personalization, so exclusivity of the service, personalization still services related and the professionalism, you know, of the staff members, quality or authenticity in your travel choices?

Interviewee 6: If I'm booking at a luxury hotel, that is definitely what I will prefer.

Author: Okay, you wouldn't look for anything else?

Interviewee 6: Yeah, but on the top of my head... It's those, like those words, maybe it's what you're looking for in a luxury travel or luxury stay.

Author: Yeah. Okay, so that's great. And how much is important to you environmental sustainability when choosing a five-star hotel? So we're not talking about traveling in general, but when choosing a five-star hotel.

Interviewee 6: Um, I'll say since you already are paying that amount for the luxury hotel, since you know, you pay a certain amount of money. So if a sustainable luxury hotel costs, let's say, five percent of extra of your total spend, then for me, I could go to this sustainable hotel. Depending on how they advertise this sustainability that they do, what are they doing for being sustainable? If it's just like, we have removed the plastic straw and that's basically it, then no. I need more. I already pay a lot for luxury hotels. So if I'm going to pay a little bit extra for getting this sustainable experience, then I want that experience.

Author: And what do you mean by you would like more?

Interviewee 6: You know that when they make room service, things don't come. Yeah, for instance, in plastic cups and Nimb is already doing it. Also, one thing I never understood, and I think it actually goes for the general popularity in the world, that towels. I mean, people know, like myself, that if you throw a towel on the floor and the cleaning come, they take it and replace it. But let's face it, we don't do that at home. We don't throw out towels on the floor at home. We use it several times. And I think that is also something hotels can do. So if Nimb, a luxury hotel, had a policy that stated, of course, if I'm a five-star hotel, I want an extra towel. I paid for it. But if the hotel has a policy where it states that to avoid unnecessary use, overuse, the hotels prefer to own it every other day. Of course, it has to be luxury. That sustainability and luxury don't always go well together here because people want certain, like me, a certain luxury. But yeah, some towels, plastic cups practices are always good.

Author: So, you think that there is need of promoting marketing campaigns at Nimb?

Interviewee 6: Definitely. Yeah. And the hotel needs to specify, as I said earlier, what they are doing. It's not, it's not enough for me. It's not enough just to have a certification and then say, oh, we are green, they need to publicize more on different travel websites, so people learn more and can make more responsible considerations.

Author: And what else they could do?

Interviewee 6: It could also be the air conditioner, that they are more sustainable. It could be the way they prepare food in the kitchen, if they use oil or they use gas. Not oil, but, you know, there's these different stoves and some of them are more environmental than others. So, yeah, it could be stuff like that.

Author: Yeah, and so, do you actively look for eco-conscious accommodation during your travels or not?

Interviewee 6: It's something I don't pay attention to. For me, it's actually just a bonus if the hotel I choose have it. It's not on my list that says they need to have it, otherwise I won't go.

Author: And also, you said that you don't pay attention, right? You don't pay attention intentionally or you don't notice?

Interviewee 6: I don't notice. I know now that it's actually unconsciously that I don't notice it. It's just because I don't, it's not because I don't want to, but I simply don't think about it because the advertisement on this area, sustainability in hotel, luxury hotels. I mean, you have to be in the business to know it even exists.

Author: So, you think that there is a need for like maybe marketing and campaign?

Interviewee 6: Definitely. Yeah. And hotel needs to specify, as I said earlier, what they are doing, otherwise it's not enough for me. It's not enough just to have a certification and then say, oh, we are green. For what reasons? What are you doing as a hotel? They need to promote that to customers. As I said, I don't think about it because frankly, people don't associate those two things.

Author: Okay. Would you be willing to pay like an extra amount of money for green practices and sustainable initiatives in a luxury hotel?

Interviewee 6: As stated earlier, it depends on how much extra. If I'm spending a hundred thousand crowns on a room and I have to, I can spend a hundred thousand in one hotel or I can spend a hundred and five thousand on another hotel where the hundred and five thousand is sustainable. Then for me now we are in the money range where it doesn't, five thousand, that doesn't matter if I use a hundred or a hundred and five. But as stated, it depends for me what they are doing specifically. I don't want one thing that's sustainable about those hotels and that's it. Then forget it.

Author: Okay. And also, would you be willing to compromise on certain luxury amenities or comforts in favour of sustainability?

Interviewee 6: It's a little bit difficult to answer because as I said, those two things usually, in my opinion, don't go well, sustainability and luxury. That could also be because of the lack of marketing that those two things, well, I guess they can go together. But for me as a guest and a user of luxury hotels and Nimb, I haven't been influenced by it. I haven't seen it. I guess I would make compromise. Again, it depends on what kind of compromise I'm asked to do. Can I live without getting a change of towels every day? Most certainly. If that's air-corroded compromise, yeah, fine by me. If I have to give up a very, very comfortable pillow because it hasn't been produced in a sustainable way and instead sleep with a rock under my head, then no.

Author: Okay, so it depends on different situations.

Interviewee 6: But again, if the hotel markets themselves tells what they're doing, and also sometimes even though it is a luxury hotel and guests have certain expectations when it comes to luxury hotels, it depends. If the hotel marketers say, hey, for saving the planet or try to save the planet, we do this and this. I can only speak for myself, but I think a lot of people would say, okay, we don't even use those amenities. So why even, why offer them to us? We don't use them. Like for instance, but that's not luxury hotels in Denmark that do that. But a lot of hotels, they offer some small amenities in the room and people basically don't use them. It's the same for, let's say, and of course it's luxury hotel. You also expect certain luxurious products. But let's say it is like this. When you go traveling, you usually pack your own soap for showering. And hotels are paying a lot of money for a small sample

of a shampoo with their logo on a small bottle and that can't be sustainable at all whatsoever. I know that we expect it, but I could live without it. So that's a compromise I would be willing to.

Author: Okay, that's interesting. And how does your cultural background and values influence your preferences for luxury hospitality experiences? So your culture basically, does it influence choices or expectations in luxury? Regarding sustainability.

Interviewee 6: Yeah, so it has some influence, not that much, because we in Denmark are really fond of saying that we are doing one thing. Well, in reality, we actually are doing the quite opposite, because if it's required for us to do something, then we don't do it. But we still have this small voice at the back of our head who tries to convince us to be greener. I know it from myself, I know it from a lot of other people that when you talk about green and the environment, go green, everything, sustainability. Danish people talk more than act. And that's also why I think if you ask, like me and a lot of other Danish people, if they would choose a sustainable hotel, they would probably say yes. But if they are told they have to do something like live without a certain thing, they probably say no. And as I said, it has influenced me, my background to think about the environment and think about sustainability in general. So, yes, I say it has influenced me, but not that I am a member of some organization or something. It hasn't pushed me to that extremes.

Author: Okay, the interview is finished, thank you for taking your time for being part of this thesis!

Interviewee 6: You are welcome.

Interviewee 7 – 22.04.2024

Author: Okay, Buonasera e grazie per partecipare in questa intervista e iniziamo con la prima domanda. Come descriveresti la tua idea di esperienza di viaggio di lusso?

Interviewee 7: Buonasera e grazie a te, beh, nel passato quando ho soggiornato in strutture di lusso, quello che cercavo principalmente era il comfort e un'esperienza di servizio clienti di alta qualità. Allo stesso tempo, penso che almeno per me la sostenibilità non sia una parte fondamentale di ciò che cerco, perché a volte la sostenibilità è un aspetto a doppio taglio e non sempre riflette la qualità e il lusso dei miei viaggi.

Author: Okay, quindi in questo caso quali fattori sono più importanti per te quando selezioni un hotel di lusso?

Interviewee 7: Quando scelgo un hotel di lusso, per me è importante la posizione, prima di tutto, il servizio e l'ospitalità. Inoltre, di solito controllo anche il design, che dovrebbe essere di alta qualità, e anche la privacy e la sicurezza che a volte non vengono offerte negli hotel che non sono di lusso, e anche quello che controllo è legato alle strutture che l'hotel offre e al rapporto qualità-prezzo che spendo.

Author: Okay, di solito dai priorità all'esclusività, alla personalizzazione, alla qualità o all'autenticità nelle tue scelte di viaggio?

Interviewee 7: Sì, di solito do priorità alla personalizzazione perché penso che quando cerchi un hotel di lusso, ciò che stai cercando è anche di ricevere un'attenzione speciale da parte dei dipendenti che lavorano lì, quindi è qualcosa che sicuramente considero, per questo ho scelto Nimb Hotel quando sono stato a Copenaghen, perché leggendo le recensioni su booking, ho letto di una grande inclinazione verso il cliente, e così è stato.

Author: Quanto è importante per lei la sostenibilità ambientale nella scelta di un hotel a cinque stelle considerando quanto ha appena detto finora?

Interviewee 7: Beh, penso che sia importante, ma fino a un certo punto perché, quando prenoto un alloggio in un hotel di lusso, ciò che sto cercando è il lusso, quindi sono strutture di alta qualità, design di alta qualità e allo stesso tempo mi interessa l'aspetto della sostenibilità, ma per me non dovrebbe influenzare la qualità delle strutture e il servizio, intendo.

Author: Cerca attivamente sistemazioni eco-consapevoli durante i suoi viaggi o no?

Interviewee 7: Di solito non è il criterio principale, ovviamente se c'è, posso capire che se sto prenotando e vedo che c'è molto spreco, nessun riciclo e niente affatto, potrebbe influenzare la mia decisione, ma non è che quando cerco un alloggio di lusso la sostenibilità e le pratiche dell'hotel abbiano un impatto enorme sulla mia scelta.

Author: Sarebbe disposto a pagare un prezzo extra per pratiche green e iniziative sostenibili in un hotel di lusso?

Interviewee 7: Quando viaggio e prenoto un alloggio in un posto di lusso, il denaro non è un problema per me, quindi non è qualcosa che, se c'è una sorta di azione di sostenibilità e mi piace il modo in cui l'hotel gestisce la cosa e mi fido di ciò che dice l'hotel, potrei essere disposto a pagare un po' di più per aiutare l'ambiente e sostenere queste azioni e attività sostenibili.

Author: Okay. Sarebbe disposto a comprometterti su determinati comfort di lusso a favore della sostenibilità?

Interviewee 7: Penso che dipenda dal tipo di costo che è per me, perché per esempio quando cerco un hotel di lusso, quello che voglio vedere è che ad esempio gli asciugamani siano sempre puliti e le lenzuola siano sempre pulite e se per esempio soprattutto per l'asciugamano devono essere cambiati ogni giorno, secondo me, in un'attività sostenibile, potrebbe essere cambiato ogni altro giorno e così via, quindi questo è un po' qualcosa a cui non sono disposto a rinunciare perché quando vado in un hotel di lusso come il Nimb, mi aspetto che mi vengano forniti sempre ogni giorno asciugamani puliti e lenzuola pulite e tutto quindi penso che dipenda dal tipo di attività e da quanto costa per me perché penso che sosterei le attività di sostenibilità ma non dovrebbe influenzare la mia percezione del lusso

Author: Va bene. Inoltre, in che modo il suo background culturale e i valori influenzano le sue preferenze per le esperienze di lusso?

Interviewee 7: Penso che, voglio dire, vengo dall'Italia, penso che nel sud Europa non abbiamo questa enorme cultura della sostenibilità quindi penso che sarei meno incline a compromettermi e ad adattarmi a questi cambiamenti e ad adattarmi a pratiche più sostenibili diminuendo il mio lusso e il mio comfort quindi penso che questo sia qualcosa che dovrebbe essere importante perché è come per esempio i popoli scandinavi hanno una cultura diversa quando si tratta di sostenibilità quindi sono più disposti a ridurre il loro comfort a favore della sostenibilità anche l'idea di lusso penso che sia diversa quindi penso che nei paesi del sud Europa l'idea di lusso sia principalmente legata al comfort e all'eccesso quindi è come se ci si aspetti di avere un certo livello come ho detto anche cambiare gli asciugamani ogni giorno è qualcosa che ci aspettiamo forse nel sud dell'Europa ma non è un grosso problema per le persone del nord Europa quindi penso che dipenda ma sicuramente influisce sulla mia visione della sostenibilità.

Author: Sì concordo.

Interviewee 7: E poi quindi pensi che i fattori culturali siano ancora abbastanza legati alla domanda precedente questa ma pensi che i fattori culturali giochino un ruolo nello plasmare le aspettative dei consumatori per il turismo di lusso o no beh penso che sì perché penso che le persone provenienti da luoghi diversi abbiano aspettative diverse anche quando si tratta di pratiche. Anche le persone dell'Asia, come probabilmente sai, sono meno propense a bere acqua del rubinetto o non riciclano molto o usano molto plastica, quindi non è qualcosa a cui pensano e probabilmente sarebbero preoccupati di bere acqua del rubinetto anche se gli si dice che è acqua di alta qualità, e quindi penso che davvero modelli le aspettative dei clienti, quindi è come se mi aspettassi di avere asciugamani

puliti e le persone dell'Asia si aspettano di avere acqua chiusa in bottiglia e di aprirla subito davanti a loro, quindi sanno che è acqua pulita,

Author: Okay, c'è qualcosa di specifico che vorrebbe vedere implementato, no scusa penso che fosse un'altra cosa, um sì quali sono le sue aspettative riguardo alle iniziative di sostenibilità e alle pratiche eco-consapevoli nell'ospitalità di lusso se le ha ovviamente?

Interviewee 7: Come ho detto non è qualcosa che cerco davvero quando prenoto un posto quindi non penso di avere molte aspettative ovviamente mi aspetto che l'hotel ricicli e cerchi di usare prodotti locali quando si tratta di proporre opzioni di ristorazione ma questo è anche legato al comfort penso perché penso che come quando dico che mi aspetto che il cibo sia biologico e cresciuto localmente ed è qualcosa che puoi trovare in un hotel più sostenibile ma penso che la mia aspettativa principale sia principalmente legata alla riduzione dei rifiuti e al riciclaggio, principalmente perché non è una grande cosa per me, non è quello che cerco quando cerco un hotel di lusso non ho grandi aspettative.

Author: Quindi per esempio non le interesserebbe sapere se un hotel specifico ha una certificazione come green key?

Interviewee 7: Per esempio per essere onesti ho viaggiato molto e sono stato in molti hotel di lusso ma non me l'hanno mai detto e che avevano alcune attività sostenibili, nemmeno al Nimb, quindi lo sapevo perché ho letto il loro sito, ma non hanno mai fatto notare che avevano la certificazione e non ne ero nemmeno a conoscenza quindi non è qualcosa che penso che cambierebbe la mia percezione dell'hotel se avessero questa certificazione okay non è qualcosa che non so i criteri che devono seguire per ottenere la certificazione quindi penso che fondamentalmente valuterei l'hotel quando si tratta di sostenibilità in base a ciò che posso vedere quindi se riciclano se usano acqua del rubinetto se riducono l'illuminazione questo tipo di cose okay ma forse apprezzerei se qualcuno della reception ad esempio mi informasse sul fatto che hanno certificazioni green key penso che potrei apprezzarlo, ma dovrebbe essere detto come cosa comporta quindi cosa hanno fatto per ottenere questa certificazione e come posso io con la mia azione reale che faccio nell'hotel ad esempio bere acqua del rubinetto o fare certe cose con l'illuminazione e così via è solo se so che quello che faccio è collegato e faccio un impatto su quello.

Author: Okay e c'è qualcosa di specifico che vorrebbe vedere implementato o migliorato come nel mio caso di studiosul Nimb hotel per migliorare la sua esperienza di viaggio di lusso può essere correlato a qualsiasi cosa può essere correlato alla sostenibilità o meno se c'è qualcosa che vorrebbe vedere migliorato?

Interviewee 7: Sì, per essere onesti non proprio perché come ho detto non ho un'aspettativa per la sostenibilità e la mia conoscenza della sostenibilità è proprio bassa, quindi quando cerco un hotel sostenibile è principalmente legato a come ho detto a delle attività di base che gli altri possono fare e quello che di solito cerco è comfort e lusso, quindi penso che più lussuoso appare meglio è finché posso vedere che non influisce così tanto sull'ambiente okay.

Author: Okay, quindi l'ultima domanda, come può il Nimb allinearsi meglio con le sue preferenze e aspettative in termini di sostenibilità e responsabilità ambientale? pensa che ci sia un modo per piccoli hotel di lusso che potrebbero allinearsi alle sue preferenze quando si tratta di sostenibilità quindi ad esempio se c'è una pratica che le piacerebbe vedere implementata?

Interviewee 7: Sono solo un esempio beh ma quando si tratta di questo penso che quello che vorrei sicuramente vedere implementato sia anche legato alle mie aspettative quindi fondamentalmente quello che cerco è anche quando si tratta delle opzioni di ristorazione penso che sia importante promuovere cibo locale e cibo biologico cresciuto localmente quindi penso che sia sicuramente qualcosa che come un sacco di hotel di lusso non fanno ma è anche come le mie aspettative come viaggiatore è ottenere cibo di alta qualità cibo locale e gli alloggi possono implementarlo perché sono stato per esempio in passato in un hotel dove non avevano alcun prodotto coltivato localmente ma erano comunque un hotel di alta qualità ma proponevano opzioni asiatiche quindi non penso che questo corrisponda alle mie aspettative, cosa che invece al Nimb ho apprezzato con una grande varietà di cibi organici e vegani.

Author: Okay l'intervista è finita grazie mille e buon proseguimento!

Interviewee 7: Grazie a te, spero di averti aiutato e in bocca al lupo!

[Interviewee 8 – 27.04.2024](#)

Author: Hello and thank you for taking part in this interview. So let's start with the first question. So the first question is, how important is sustainability to you when choosing a luxury hotel for your stay?

Interviewee 8: Hello! Well, for me, I would say at Nimb and in like so many luxury hotels, they have single-use products and stuff like that. And I don't think those are the most important things when you're choosing a luxury stay. So I would say like sustainability is high in mind, but sustainability is also not just about, you know, products and environment. It is also about, you know, social stuff, like are the staff treated well and are they getting a living wage and so on. Are they treated nice and also

the products that they use for cleaning the rooms and stuff like that. So like overall, sustainability is like important when I choose a luxury hotel stays.

Author: Yeah, I think that's about it. Okay, So which factors are most important to you when selecting a luxury hotel? What triggers you to book a luxury hotel??

Interviewee 8: Well, for me, usually when I choose hotel, it is about the location and the price. But also just, you know, what is included, like what facilities do they have, like coolers and what kind of linen and how is the sound isolation in the rooms and stuff like that. So those are kind of the most important when I choose a hotel. Not that it is just. Yeah, just like you want a class, you know, when you're choosing a luxury hotel, you want like a special treatment kind of.

Interviewee 8: Yeah. So you want more service and you want to be treated as a royal. You know, so so like the luxury service, I would say, and that you can get more stuff than just at a budget hotel. If you get what I mean. I remember a guy from the reception suggested us different options, I guess to promote sustainability, For going back to the airport he suggested us a private transfer but I don't know if it was electric or not, and also biking during our stay, but I didn't want to because me and my husband were too lazy and decided to take the taxi for moving around.

Author: Yeah. To you, how does a hotel's commitment to sustainability influence your decision to book a stay?

Interviewee 8: Well, you usually don't see what sustainability stuff they are doing, and I got the same impression at Nimb. I think you have to usually ask because when you're googling hotels, you get booking.com and booking.com only has the leaves kind of. And you don't know what the leaves are, maybe. Or I think it is a leaf, but like a green thing. So maybe you don't know what that means, like what kind of a sustainability are they doing? So you need to go like. Because also it is really known that sustainability products in tourism, they're not you can see them that well and you need to go further and really read and dig into what you're actually buying to be able to know what the company is actually doing. And that's kind of what you need to do when you're booking a hotel stay. You need to go to their page and then you need to like scroll down and find the environmental plan. And it's even bigger if it's a hotel chain, then you need to check what the chain is doing and stuff like that. So, yeah, I think it's a little bit complicated.

Author: Okay, then do you believe that luxury, so luxury, hospitality and sustainability can coexist together? Why? If yes or why not?

Interviewee 8: Yeah, I think they can coexist because sustainability is not, like I said before, it is not just about environment and stuff like that. Like the staff at the hotels, they need proper treatment and they need no harassment and the company should have equal pay and equal opportunities and like the hotel needs to follow standards and have all the security systems. That is all sustainability. Like if they have the GSTC criteria, they need to have all of it included, all license, they need to have evacuation plans and everything needs to be updated and in order. And of course, that applies with luxury hotels as well, you know. So, yeah, but it is also like some people might see it as they're taking away your comfort. They want to see the cotton pads and they want to see extra soaps and stuff like that. And single bottles thingy, even though they don't use it because, I mean, most people bring their own shampoos and stuff, I think, when they go to a hotel. But some might just find it nice, like, okay, I paid for it and now it's nice and it's more comfort and stuff like that. But yeah, I think it can co-exist, like sustainability matters, it should matter to us all. We are in this together and we need to start doing more of it.

Author: Personally, do you actively look for eco-conscious accommodation during your travels or not?

Interviewee 8: I don't dig really deep into it, like I don't check what kind of products they use in rooms and like, because you can have a certification, but the certification isn't maybe a good one. So, like, you really have to know all the certifications to be actually informed about what you're actually buying in regard to sustainability.

Author: So, for example, as a customer, you would appreciate, for example, some marketing and some promotion, let's say, about what's sustainable, for example, for a hotel, like in this case Nimb hotel. Just an example, because it's the case study, would you be interested in seeing like some promotion and marketing campaigns, of course, not greenwashing, but real serious one carried out from the company and the hotel?

Interviewee 8: Yeah, I think that's like something you would like to see, you want to know those information, and I actually think it would be kind of like a pusher to you to choose them, if they would show more what they're actually doing, if they would be transparent, and also if you can see that like with just the suppliers, if they're buying local products and stuff like that, you as a traveller, you're just like, oh, okay, I'm buying or renting a hotel room, you know, but your experience also local soaps, for example, you know, and so like it is experience as well, and trying something new, and so yeah, I think also, like if they're transparent in the buying, what you say, like not buying method, like when

you're in the buying process, that if they're transparent there, and you can see like what they're actually doing there, when you're choosing between different products.

Author: Yeah, I agree with you. And would you pay like an extra amount of money for green practices and sustainable initiatives in a luxury hotel?

Interviewee 8: That's a good question, I think that's like a question that many people are asking themselves and others. I've come to the conclusion for myself that I feel like this should just be included in the price, this shouldn't show prices that are not green, just like with airplanes, like why can you see the price with and without carbon offset? Why isn't there just a law that this show carbon offsetted prices?

Author: Yeah, you mean it should be just one price, which includes already the sustainable initiatives?

Interviewee 8: Yeah, the carbon offset, yeah, because I don't think people, and for example, just in tourism in general, people are choosing usually the cheaper option, even though they're choosing luxury hotels, they are looking at the cheaper luxury hotel, you know. They are not, or at least I am not checking, like, okay, should I choose this green product or should I not choose a green product? It's just like, I wouldn't mind if all of them were green, but I would still choose the cheaper option.

Author: The cheaper, yeah, of course. Yeah, it isn't necessarily connected to if it's sustainable or not.

Interviewee 8: Yeah. Like, it is just a cheaper option. So I think everybody should have chosen just the green option available, not the other one. So maybe there should be also some modification for the policies, let's say, no? Because, of course, like people, if they see a price that is cheaper and they provide something that for them it can make a small difference, but maybe not make a big difference in their stay, of course, you know, they're going to pay a cheaper price, and that is just known in tourism because people are usually traveling and they're traveling for a long time or buying many products at once, you know, and they're buying hotel, they're buying flight tickets and stuff like that. So, they're usually paying a lot in total for whatever they're going to do in their travels. So, yeah, I think it should be just included. We shouldn't be able to see, like, this is sustainable option, this is not sustainable option because people look at the price and then end up choosing not the sustainable option.

Author: Yeah, I agree.

Author: And then maybe also, you know, you're going to create already, how to say, like a difference, like you're already creating the, I don't know how to say in English, but I think you know what I mean.

You know, this fracture that there is already. And if somebody is not really a hundred percent inclined to be more sustainable in that way, you push them not to be, in my opinion.

Interviewee 8: Yeah. Yeah. By showing them lower price and you're just like, would it matter to me if I would have to buy like for 500 crowns more? Like, of course, you're going to go for the cheaper option.

Author: Exactly. Yeah. Okay. Then, would you be willing to compromise on certain luxury amenities or amenities in general or comforts in favour of sustainability?

Interviewee 8: Yeah. I think hotels are already doing it because if they want to be certified, like if they do the GSTC, they need to have, they need to buy supplies and books. For example, the soaps, they don't have millions of plastic bottles, like everybody gets their own or maybe three bottles of a soap, you know, they just have one container in the showers. And that is, of course, you know, you're not getting your own soap and you're not taking home with you soap or anything like that. You're just using what you need to use while in the shower. And that is the same with like the cotton pads that often come while you're staying in luxury hotels, just like those small products that you can. So you're kind of not getting them. Yeah. But overall, I don't think there's more that you're not getting. You're not sacrificing anything. I mean, yeah. Sometimes like I'm actually staying at a hotel now and my hotel is like that, that they don't clean my room daily. They clean my room if I ask them to. So I don't get new towels every time. Hotels are often doing that now. Like you need to put the towels on the floor if you want them to take them and replace them. Otherwise, they don't do it. So many people might think that they're just going on a vacation and they can do whatever and they're not cleaning the towels themselves. So like why should they even think about it? They just use it once and throw it on the floor and next time they shower they can get a new towel. So if you have that kind of a mindset, then of course you're yeah, like losing something. But overall, I think it is just nice and I can use the same towel more often. So I haven't felt that I'm missing or losing anything because it's more sustainable.

Author: Okay, but still talking about mindset since you met, like how does your cultural background and values influence your preferences for luxury hospitality experiences?

Interviewee 8: Yeah, I'm not sure about that one. You know, I got the question, but I am not sure if it is like, maybe it has more to do with my values, not my cultural background. So my values is that I want to be more sustainable and I want to like leave the world in a good condition when I go. So maybe that's why it doesn't affect me that much. And I'm more glad that hotels are doing it like that. So yeah, I don't think it has anything to do with my Norwegian culture. It was like many, many years

ago, I loved going to hotels and just using the towels as much as I wanted. And I used the soaps as much as I wanted. And that was because, you know, when you're at home, you don't do that. You want to save the soaps and stuff like that. And you don't want to clean as much and stuff like that. So maybe it doesn't matter for people that don't do their own laundry and they don't go to the store and buy their own soap or something. I don't know. And so maybe to someone else, the culture thingy has more value to them or like not really like it's affecting their decision more. So I would say people who care about it will think about it. People who don't care, they don't care at all about sustainability and don't mind if they use the towels and soaps.

Author: Okay. How, if you know, of course, how do you perceive the balance between environmental responsibility and luxury in the hospitality industry? basically what's your, do you think, first of all, do you think that there is a balance between the two of them? if yes, what's your opinion about that? Are you just asking about the environmental or are you talking about sustainability overall?

Interviewee 8: Yeah. I think we already covered the balance between sustainability and luxury. Yeah. We kind of discussed already also about that.

Author: Yeah, we already mentioned it in a question before, so there is no point to say it again. But this is interesting because when staying in a luxury hotel, how important is it for you to be informed about the hotel sustainability initiatives and practices? If it is, of course.

Interviewee 8: Yeah. It is really important to me. I want to see it and I want to see it while I'm staying at the hotel. And also before, like when you enter the hotel and your hotel room, you want to see signs about like, please help us saving water consumption by using the towel again and stuff like that. Even though I would know that the hotel is sustainable, I still want to be reminded of it. It is just nice to see. And you're always reminded like, yeah, this is like this because they're doing good things, you know? So it's important I guess. I would like to see it more.

Author: The next question is also quite connected with the question I asked you before about the amenities and comforts. Do you believe that practices in a luxury hotel could improve or detract from the overall guest experience? And if yes, why? So basically, be more sustainable could be an improvement or maybe could be detrimental, let's say, for the overall experience for guests. Because, you know, since some people could perceive it as less in service, maybe, and more in sustainability, maybe for some people could be an improvement, for some people could be a detractment. What's your opinion about that?

Interviewee 8: For me, seeing a hotel as sustainable is seeing that there is quality, like they have quality standards. And if they have a certification, you know, and you can be sure if it is recognized

standards, you can see that they are following all the three or four pillars of sustainability. So I think it's more quality that you're actually getting. And you can be sure that everything is okay, because they need to go through so many criteria to be certified. So even though you're not getting a new towel, and stuff like that, it doesn't affect you because you're getting so much more in return, you know? because also sustainability, like, many of the standards also go after the ISO quality standards. So, like, often it depends, like, what standard they have but you can be sure that there has been an audit, and it is going after quality standards, like, world quality standards.

Author: Okay. Thank you for the interview and for your timespent. It was very interesting to hear your thoughts on sustainability in luxury hospitality.

Interviewee 8: My pleasure. Thank you.

Interview 9 – 34.04.2024

Author: Hello and thank you for taking part in this interview. Let's start with the first question, which is how important is sustainability to you when choosing a luxury hotel for your stay?

Interviewee 9: Hi! i think it depends on the destination. For some destinations it's more common to have sustainable practices from the luxury hotels, but with others it's not that common and I think I wouldn't actively search for a hotel that has different kind of sustainable certificates and stuff.

Interviewer: Okay, which factors are most important to you when selecting a luxury hotel?

Interviewee 9: Price. Especially the price value ratio, like what do I actually get for my money? And then everything, like all the common things like where is it located.

Author: Okay, so location.

Interviewee 9: Yeah, so like if it's a city trip then I would like to be in the centre or close to the centre like I was at Nimb, so I don't have to take a lot of time to go, to travel around. If I am on a business-motivated trip, then I need to be close to where my meetings are held or at least with good connection.

Author: Okay.

Interviewee 9: Yes, I would say that is the price and the location that are the most important. I would also maybe mention the style, like the style of the design of the rooms and also the facilities. In my

mind these luxury hotels have like a certain way of looking that is associated with luxury, so maybe that too, I don't know.

Author: Okay, does a hotel's commitment to sustainability influence your decision when booking a stay?

Interviewee 9: To some degree yes, but as I said before, I wouldn't actively search for hotels that have sustainable practices, but if I would like, let's say I'm looking at a website of a hotel, I'm thinking about choosing it, then if they talk a bit about their sustainable efforts, I can like relate to that, then that's definitely a plus. That's a thing for me.

Author: Okay, and do you believe that luxury and sustainability can coexist together in a hotel experience? Why? If yes, or why not? If you don't think so.

Interviewee 9: Definitely. I don't think that sustainable practices need to be less comfortable for the people who stay there, and I also don't think that luxury is super necessarily unsustainable. It often is, but it doesn't necessarily have to be. So to put it in one word, yes, I think definitely they can coexist.

Author: Okay, so you think that is not that if you have sustainability, it means less service or less luxury?

Interviewee 9: No, I don't think that it is connected.

Author: Okay. Also, do you actively seek out, so you're looking for eco-conscious accommodation during your travels?

Interviewee 9: No. So it's just related to what we said before. Basically, you check first price, location, and then that's it. It can act as a positive point, like if I'm about to choose between two hotels, and then that's the only main difference that one is talking about their sustainable efforts that I can really relate to, and the other one, then I might go with the one that is talking about the sustainable efforts, because then it's more sustainable. But no, that wouldn't be a main thing for me when I look at a list of 200 hotels in a location, and then that wouldn't be something that I would look at, first of all.

Author: Okay. And would you be willing to pay an extra price for green practices and sustainable initiatives in a luxury hotel?

Interviewee 9: Depends on how much extra. I might be willing to pay a little bit of extra for that kind of things, but if the hotel would tell me like, okay, then you have this option for this much, and then you have the sustainable option for twice, then definitely no.

Author: Okay. And also, would you be willing to compromise or to reduce cut down, let's say, on certain luxury amenities or comforts in favour of environmental sustainability?

Interviewee 9: Again, it depends on what kind of comfort and also on the motivation for my trip, because like, let's say, if I'm going to a wellness weekend like I did at Nimb last august, then it is much more important for me to get or like to take part in those luxury amenities than if I am, for example, only staying in a hotel while I'm attending a conference or something.

Author: Okay.

Interviewee 9: So it depends on the purpose of the travel, basically.

Author: Yeah, okay. And how does your cultural background and values influence your preferences for luxury hospitality experiences? So basically, do you think that your culture can influence on your preferences for luxury stays?

Interviewee 9: I think people's culture really influence their way of thinking about these kinds of things, but in my culture, like the way I was raised and the way I grew up, the whole concept of sustainability didn't really play a role in my life before I actually went to other countries for work like Denmark, Germany or the Netherlands. So, I think it's not that deeply embedded in my mind as it is for example in someone's who is the younger generation who was born with this. So I think it's not that deeply embedded in my mind as it is, for example, in someone's who is the younger generation in France now who was more born into sustainable practices. And also, it depends on the geological location where I grew up. In my home country, sustainability wasn't even a thing up until like, I would say, six, seven years ago, when they just started to talk about it and started to act on it. So it's not really a concept I knew when my true values were shaped. But I mean, it's a huge part of my career as an architect. And also, I am actively working with sustainable initiatives in my everyday life. So the things that I encounter day by day, though, pretty much influence my approach to sustainable initiatives, both when I work and when I am living my life.

Author: Okay. How do you perceive, this is quite connected to something that you already talked about, but how do you perceive the balance that there is between sustainability and sustainable responsibility with the luxury in the hospitality industry?

Interviewee 9: Generally, in the world, I wouldn't say that it is good. It favours luxury products and it favours not necessary the use of resources and products just for luxury purposes. In my experience, in many cases, the hotels and not just in the tourism industry, but also everywhere else, companies often use sustainability as a way to greenwash their customers. They do something small and then

they try to sell and market themselves as this huge sustainable company who is going to save our planet. And often it's only like a marketing catch that they are trying to have more revenue with. It's difficult, I think, to navigate between the true sustainable efforts and these staged ones, I would say.

Author: Okay, and then when staying at a luxury hotel, how important is it for you to be informed about hotel sustainability initiatives and practices? From the staff members or from the front desk?

Interviewee 9: I think it's nice to have the option to ask about it. It's nice if it's mentioned to me that, hey, we have these sustainable initiatives. If you want to hear more about it, you are welcome to drop by the reception when you have time tomorrow and then we can tell you more. But I don't think that this should be something that is kind of forced on the customers or on the guests when they are checking in or something. So I think it's nice to mention and the people who are interested will go and ask about it, or they can also ask when the staff members mention it. Then also maybe not super detailed explanations. Like, I don't know, once I met this concept in a restaurant of a really luxury category hotel that they were mentioning when they brought the food that they are trying to minimize food waste. They are trying to use everything and make their own portions. So just a small comment like this could be a good way to let people know, but still not overwhelming people with all the sustainable information. Because even if it is true, too much information could come off as a greenwashing marketing strategy for someone, not only at Nimb of course. Even if it's true. Because it's like, oh, they are really trying to push it on me, then that must be something that they use for their strategy to earn more revenue. So I think there needs to be a balance in mentioning, but not telling huge stories about it.

Interviewer: Okay, then, do you believe that sustainable practices in a luxury hotel can improve or detract from the overall guest experience and why?

Interviewee 9: Again, it depends, I think, on the amount of how much it influences the individual person's stay. Because hotel's sustainable efforts are often not necessarily reflected on an individual guest's stay or not as much. So yeah, it depends on what efforts and what initiatives are there. Yeah. Did that answer the question? I'm sorry, I stopped talking.

Author: Yeah, it's fine. Then how would you react if a luxury hotel you were considering staying at prioritized sustainability over traditional luxury amenities? What would you do in that situation?

Interviewee 9: I think that is not something our society, like the luxury level society, is prepared for. Yeah. Personally, I am not sure what I would do. But if I want to stay in a luxury hotel, then the reason why I want to stay in a luxury hotel is to have the luxury amenities. And if they do not have the luxury amenities, it doesn't matter the reason why they don't have it, then they are not a luxury hotel anymore.

So, in a way, the sustainable efforts need to be met with the luxury amenities, otherwise the hotel loses their market position.

Author: Okay. And then last question is which measures or initiatives would you like to see implemented in luxury hotels in the future to further prioritize sustainability without compromising on luxury hospitality standards?

Interviewee 9: First of all, remove buffet breakfast. It generates a huge amount of food waste. People just put everything on their plates and then I'm just gonna eat half of it and then that's it. No. And that goes to waste. And if 200 people leave half of their food, that could feed half of a starving country. That is the first thing. Then I think a hotel generates a lot of other types of waste, especially papers with all the paperwork. Unfortunately, the digital systems cannot be 100% trusted, so there needs to be some manual paper saved copies of certain things. But maybe to reduce that a little bit, like for example with the key card holder or how you call it, the paper thing is that you get the key card in. Like those could be replaced with something more sustainable, so that there is not like that much going to waste. Then there could be like some water saving things like on the toilet flush thingy. It could work with less water. Then also on the shower, there is the other end with the shower when you start to shower and then you have to press it every five seconds. Of course, annoying and that is like a true way when sustainable efforts compromise your convenient stay and result in a bad guest experience. So that's not good, but still there could be some like water reduction thing. Another perfect idea would be educating guests with marketing campaigns and promotions, I think many guests at Nimb would be interested in that, and it would help to enhance sustainability at Nimb among customers, considering that many of them are really educated people.

Author: Okay, that's interesting to hear and something that should be considered.

Interviewee 9: Exactly, you're done with the questions, right?

Interviewer: Yes, thank you for the interview and your time spent, it was a pleasure.

Interviewee 9: You are welcome, good luck!