

Sustainability Communications Across Multi-Stakeholder Groups: A Critical Review of the Findings from the Hospitality and Tourism Sectors

Authors : Frederica Pettit

Abstract : Contribution: Stakeholder involvement in CSR is essential to ensuring pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours across multi-stakeholder groups. Despite increased awareness of the benefits surrounding a collaborative approach to sustainability communications, its success is limited by difficulties engaging with active online conversations with stakeholder groups. Whilst previous research defines the effectiveness of sustainability communications; this paper contributes to knowledge through the development of a theoretical framework that explores the processes to achieving pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours in stakeholder groups. The research will also consider social media as an opportunity to communicate CSR information to all stakeholder groups. Approach: A systematic review was chosen to investigate the effectiveness of the types of sustainability communications used in the hospitality and tourism industries. The systematic review was completed using Web of Science and Scopus using the search terms “sustainab* communicat*” “effective or effectiveness,” and “hospitality or tourism,” limiting the results to peer-reviewed research. 133 abstracts were initially read, with articles being excluded for irrelevance, duplicated articles, non-empirical studies, and language. A total of 45 papers were included as part of the systematic review. 5 propositions were created based on the results of the systematic review, helping to develop a theoretical framework of the processes needed for companies to encourage pro-environmental behaviours across multi-stakeholder groups. Results: The theoretical framework developed in the paper determined the processes necessary for companies to achieve pro-environmental behaviours in stakeholders. The processes to achieving pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours are stakeholder-focused, identifying the need for communications to be specific to their targeted audience. Collaborative communications that enable stakeholders to engage with CSR information and provide feedback lead to a higher awareness of CSR shared visions and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours. These processes should also aim to improve their relationships with stakeholders through transparency of CSR, CSR strategies that match stakeholder values and ethics whilst prioritizing sustainability as part of their job role. Alternatively, companies can prioritize pro-environmental behaviours using choice editing by mainstreaming sustainability as the only option. In recent years, there has been extensive research on social media as a viable source of sustainability communications, with benefits including direct interactions with stakeholders, the ability to enforce the authenticity of CSR activities and encouragement of pro-environmental behaviours. Despite this, there are challenges to implementing CSR, including difficulties controlling stakeholder criticisms, negative stakeholder influences and comments left on social media platforms. Conclusion: A lack of engagement with CSR information is a reoccurring reason for preventing pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours across stakeholder groups. Traditional CSR strategies contribute to this due to their inability to engage with their intended audience. Hospitality and tourism companies are improving stakeholder relationships through collaborative processes which reduce single-use plastic consumption. A collaborative approach to communications can lead to stakeholder satisfaction, leading to changes in attitudes and behaviours. Different sources of communications are accessed by different stakeholder groups, identifying the need for targeted sustainability messaging, creating benefits such as direct interactions with stakeholders, the ability to enforce the authenticity of CSR activities, and encouraging engagement with sustainability information.

Keywords : hospitality, pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours, sustainability communication, social media

Conference Title : ICCES 2022 : International Conference on Circular Economy and Sustainability

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : June 27-28, 2022