Greenwashing and Organizational Commitment in the Hospitality Sector.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the nexus between greenwashing and organizational commitment within the hospitality sector. Greenwashing—organisational claims, signals or practices that overstate or misrepresent environmental performance—poses reputational, operational and ethical risks for hotels, resorts and related hospitality firms. Against a backdrop of intensifying stakeholder scrutiny, stronger regulation of sustainability claims, and rising consumer environmental awareness, the hospitality sector faces a paradox: sustainability initiatives are necessary for competitive positioning, yet superficial or misleading green claims undermine employee trust, reduce intrinsic motivation, and erode long-term organizational commitment. Drawing on recent empirical and conceptual work from hospitality management, sustainability studies and organisational behaviour, this study synthesises evidence on (a) how perceived greenwashing affects employee attitudes and commitment; (b) the mediating role of green trust, authenticity and green human resource management (G-HRM); and (c) organizational contingencies that amplify or attenuate the greenwashing–commitment linkage (leadership, transparency, third-party certification, and corporate culture). The paper proposes an integrated conceptual model linking greenwashing exposure to affective and normative commitment via employee green scepticism and trust, and outlines a mixed-methods empirical strategy for future testing. The study concludes with managerial prescriptions for authentic sustainability communication, internal alignment (G-HRM and leadership), and auditing processes to protect employee commitment and organisational legitimacy. By clarifying mechanisms and boundary conditions, the paper advances understanding of how deceptive environmental claims reverberate internally and offers actionable recommendations for hospitality managers and policy makers....

Keywords: greenwashing, organizational commitment, hospitality sector, green trust, green HRM, sustainability communication
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1. INTRODUCTION:

The hospitality sector has emerged as a prominent arena for sustainability-oriented practices due to its intensive consumption of natural resources, high visibility to consumers, and increasing regulatory and societal pressure to demonstrate environmental responsibility. Hotels, resorts, and allied service providers are now expected not only to adopt environmentally responsible operations but also to communicate such initiatives transparently to diverse stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, and regulators. In this context, sustainability communication has become a strategic instrument. However, the growing prevalence of exaggerated, selective, or misleading environmental claims—commonly conceptualized as greenwashing—has raised serious concerns regarding organizational credibility and internal alignment. While prior research has largely examined greenwashing from a consumer perception and marketing ethics perspective, its internal organizational consequences, particularly on employees' psychological attachment and commitment, remain insufficiently explored within hospitality scholarship.

Organizational commitment, defined as an employee's emotional attachment, identification with, and involvement in an organization, is a critical determinant of service quality, employee retention, discretionary effort, and long-term organizational performance in hospitality settings. Given the labour-intensive nature of the sector and the centrality of employee–guest interactions, any factor that undermines employee trust and morale can have cascading effects on service delivery and brand reputation. Greenwashing, when perceived by employees, may create value incongruence, ethical dissonance, and skepticism toward management intentions, thereby weakening affective and normative commitment. Conversely, authentic environmental practices and transparent sustainability communication may strengthen employees' sense of pride, purpose, and organizational identification. This duality underscores the importance of systematically examining the relationship between greenwashing and organizational commitment in hospitality organizations.

Despite the growing body of sustainability and green management research, existing studies tend to focus on external outcomes such as consumer trust, purchase intention, brand equity, and regulatory compliance. Empirical investigations into how greenwashing perceptions influence internal stakeholders—particularly employees—are fragmented and often treated as

peripheral considerations. Moreover, hospitality-specific dynamics, such as high employee turnover, emotional labour, and strong service cultures, necessitate sector-focused inquiry rather than generalization from manufacturing or corporate settings. Addressing this gap, the present study situates greenwashing as an internal organizational phenomenon with direct implications for employee attitudes and commitment, thereby extending the sustainability discourse beyond external legitimacy to internal organizational health.

Overview, Scope and Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to examine the relationship between perceived greenwashing and organizational commitment within the hospitality sector. The study aims to conceptualize greenwashing in an organizational context, analyze its psychological and attitudinal effects on employees, and identify mediating and moderating mechanisms that shape this relationship. Specifically, the paper seeks to (i) synthesize contemporary literature on greenwashing and organizational commitment; (ii) assess how employees' perceptions of misleading environmental claims influence affective, continuance, and normative commitment; (iii) explore the roles of green trust, perceived authenticity, leadership credibility, and green human resource management practices as intervening variables; and (iv) propose a theoretically grounded framework to guide future empirical research in hospitality settings.

The scope of the study is confined to the hospitality sector, encompassing hotels, resorts, and related service-oriented establishments where sustainability claims are both operationally relevant and highly visible. While the paper adopts an interdisciplinary perspective drawing from organizational behaviour, sustainability management, and hospitality studies, its analytical focus remains on internal organizational outcomes rather than consumer responses. The research is conceptual in nature, with implications for empirical validation across different geographic and cultural contexts.

Author Motivation and Structure of the Paper

The motivation for this study arises from the increasing dissonance observed between sustainability rhetoric and operational realities in hospitality organizations, and the consequent risk posed to employee trust and long-term organizational commitment. As sustainability narratives become more central to corporate identity, understanding their internal ramifications is essential for ensuring ethical governance and sustainable human capital management. The authors are particularly motivated to bridge the gap between sustainability communication and organizational behaviour literature by foregrounding employees as critical stakeholders in the greenwashing discourse.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents a comprehensive review of the literature on greenwashing and organizational commitment, culminating in the identification of key research gaps. Section 3 develops a conceptual framework linking greenwashing perceptions to organizational commitment through relevant mediating and moderating variables. Section 4 outlines the proposed methodology for empirical investigation. Subsequent sections discuss

implications for theory and practice, followed by limitations and directions for future research. The paper concludes by summarizing key insights and emphasizing the necessity of authentic sustainability practices for sustaining employee commitment in the hospitality sector.

2. Literature Review

The literature on greenwashing and organizational commitment has expanded rapidly over the past decade, largely driven by heightened environmental awareness, regulatory scrutiny, and stakeholder expectations surrounding corporate sustainability claims. However, the majority of scholarly contributions remain externally oriented, privileging consumer perceptions, brand evaluations, and market-level outcomes, while comparatively limited attention has been paid to internal stakeholders—particularly employees—within service-intensive sectors such as hospitality. This section critically reviews extant literature across four interrelated streams: conceptualizations of greenwashing, greenwashing in the hospitality sector, organizational commitment and sustainability practices, and the emerging linkage between greenwashing perceptions and employee commitment. The section concludes by articulating a clear research gap that underpins the present study.

2.1 Conceptual Foundations of Greenwashing

Greenwashing is broadly defined as the practice of conveying misleading, exaggerated, or selectively disclosed information regarding an organization's environmental performance or sustainability initiatives. Early conceptual work framed greenwashing primarily as a marketing deception strategy designed to exploit environmentally conscious consumers [16], [17]. More recent scholarship has refined this understanding by distinguishing between symbolic versus substantive environmental actions, highlighting discrepancies between communicated claims and actual operational practices [8], [3]. Contemporary studies emphasize that greenwashing is not merely a binary phenomenon but exists along a continuum, ranging from vague claims and visual symbolism to outright falsification of environmental credentials [7], [2].

Systematic literature reviews have further categorized greenwashing into dimensions such as claim-level greenwashing, executional greenwashing, and organizational-level greenwashing, thereby offering a more granular analytical lens [10], [16]. Importantly, recent conceptual analyses argue that greenwashing should be examined not only as an external communication failure but also as an internal governance and ethical issue that shapes employee sensemaking and value alignment [8], [5]. This shift in perspective is particularly relevant for service organizations where employees act as boundary spanners and informal brand ambassadors.

2.2 Greenwashing in the Hospitality Sector

The hospitality sector occupies a distinctive position in the greenwashing discourse due to its high environmental footprint, visibility of sustainability initiatives, and reliance on experiential consumption. Hotels frequently promote eco-friendly practices such as energy

conservation, water reuse, waste reduction, and green certifications. However, empirical evidence suggests that many of these initiatives are symbolic or inconsistently implemented, giving rise to accusations of greenwashing [10], [11]. Systematic reviews focusing on hospitality

indicate that greenwashing is often manifested through selective disclosure, ambiguous eco-labels, and marketing-driven sustainability narratives that are weakly supported by operational data [6], [7].

Recent hospitality-focused studies have largely examined greenwashing from the tourist or consumer perspective, investigating its effects on trust, satisfaction, revisit intention, and brand credibility [4], [9]. These studies consistently report that perceived greenwashing leads to consumer skepticism and reputational damage. Nonetheless, hospitality employees are frequently exposed to the same sustainability narratives internally through training programs, internal communications, and corporate branding initiatives. Despite this exposure, empirical research examining how hospitality employees interpret and respond to perceived greenwashing remains sparse [12]. This omission is notable given the sector's dependence on employee engagement and service quality for competitive advantage.

2.3 Organizational Commitment and Environmental Sustainability

Organizational commitment, commonly conceptualized through affective, continuance, and normative dimensions, has been extensively studied within organizational behaviour and human resource management literature. In hospitality contexts, high levels of organizational commitment are associated with lower turnover intentions, improved service performance, and stronger customer satisfaction outcomes [12], [13]. Parallel to this stream, sustainability-oriented human resource management and green organizational practices have been shown to positively influence employee attitudes, including job satisfaction, organizational identification, and commitment [5], [15].

Recent studies suggest that when employees perceive their organization's environmental initiatives as authentic and value-driven, they are more likely to develop affective commitment rooted in pride and moral alignment [5]. Green human resource management practices, ethical leadership, and transparent sustainability reporting have been identified as critical enablers of such positive outcomes [7], [14]. However, these findings are largely contingent upon the perceived sincerity of organizational actions. When sustainability initiatives are viewed as opportunistic or misleading, the same mechanisms may operate in reverse, fostering cynicism and disengagement.

2.4 Linking Greenwashing and Organizational Commitment

Emerging research has begun to explicitly connect greenwashing perceptions with internal organizational outcomes. Studies outside the hospitality sector indicate that perceived greenwashing undermines employee trust, increases moral disengagement, and weakens organizational identification [5], [17]. Employees who perceive inconsistencies between espoused sustainability values and actual practices experience cognitive and ethical dissonance, which negatively affects affective and normative commitment [18]. Recent conceptual contributions argue that greenwashing constitutes a breach of the psychological contract, particularly for employees who value environmental responsibility as part of their personal identity [2], [8].

Within hospitality research, this linkage remains underdeveloped. While some studies allude to employee skepticism and disengagement in response to superficial green initiatives, these insights are often embedded within broader discussions of green management and lack explicit theorization of organizational commitment outcomes [12], [15]. Moreover, mediating mechanisms such as green trust, perceived authenticity, leadership credibility, and organizational transparency have been examined primarily in consumer-based models rather than employee-centered frameworks [4], [7]. As a result, the internal consequences of greenwashing in hospitality organizations remain conceptually fragmented and empirically underexplored.

2.5 Research Gap

The foregoing review reveals several critical gaps in the existing literature. First, despite the proliferation of greenwashing research, the dominant focus remains on external stakeholders, with limited systematic attention to employees as internal recipients of sustainability communication. Second, hospitality-specific investigations into greenwashing have largely overlooked organizational commitment as a key outcome variable, despite its strategic importance for service quality and organizational performance. Third, existing studies rarely integrate organizational behaviour theories with sustainability and hospitality research to explain how and why greenwashing perceptions translate into weakened commitment. Finally, there is a paucity of integrative frameworks that account for mediating and moderating factors—such as green trust, authenticity, and green human resource management—that shape the greenwashing–commitment relationship.

Addressing these gaps, the present study advances the literature by positioning greenwashing as an internal organizational phenomenon with direct implications for employee commitment in the hospitality sector. By synthesizing contemporary research and proposing a comprehensive conceptual framework, the study responds to recent scholarly calls for more employee-centric and sector-specific analyses of sustainability communication and its organizational consequences [2], [6], [10].

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

This study conceptualizes greenwashing as an internal organizational signal that shapes employees' cognitive evaluations, emotional responses, and attitudinal outcomes within hospitality organizations. Drawing upon organizational behavior theory, signaling theory, and stakeholder theory, the proposed framework positions perceived greenwashing as an antecedent that negatively influences organizational commitment through a set of psychological and relational mechanisms. In hospitality settings—where sustainability narratives are frequently

communicated internally through training, corporate branding, and managerial discourse—employees actively interpret the congruence between espoused environmental values and enacted operational practices. These interpretations form the basis of employee judgments regarding organizational integrity, authenticity, and ethical orientation.

At the core of the framework is perceived greenwashing, defined as employees' perception that their organization exaggerates, selectively discloses, or misrepresents its environmental initiatives. Unlike external greenwashing perceptions, internal perceptions are shaped not only by marketing messages but also by employees' direct exposure to operational realities. When discrepancies between claims and practices become salient, employees experience value incongruence and ethical discomfort, which erode trust in management. This erosion of trust weakens the psychological bond between the employee and the organization, thereby reducing organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing affective commitment (emotional attachment and identification), normative commitment (sense of obligation to remain), and continuance commitment (perceived cost of leaving). The framework posits that greenwashing primarily undermines affective and normative commitment, as these dimensions are strongly rooted in value alignment and moral legitimacy. While continuance commitment may remain relatively stable in the short term due to economic constraints or labor market conditions, prolonged exposure to perceived greenwashing may indirectly weaken it by increasing turnover intentions and disengagement.

The framework further incorporates green trust and perceived authenticity as key mediating variables. Green trust reflects employees' belief that the organization's environmental claims are credible, sincere, and supported by genuine practices. Perceived authenticity refers to the extent to which sustainability initiatives are viewed as value-driven rather than opportunistic. When greenwashing is perceived, both green trust and authenticity decline, intensifying skepticism and cynicism toward sustainability initiatives. These mediators translate abstract perceptions of greenwashing into concrete attitudinal outcomes related to commitment.

Additionally, the model recognizes the moderating role of organizational context. Green human resource management practices—such as green training, employee involvement in sustainability initiatives, and performance-linked environmental goals—are expected to buffer the negative effects of greenwashing by enhancing transparency and participation. Ethical leadership and transparent sustainability reporting are also posited as moderating forces that can either amplify or attenuate the relationship between greenwashing and organizational commitment. In organizations where leadership behavior aligns with sustainability rhetoric, the adverse effects of greenwashing perceptions may be partially mitigated.

Based on this framework, the study advances the following hypotheses:

H1: Perceived greenwashing is negatively associated with employees' affective organizational commitment.

H2: Perceived greenwashing is negatively associated with employees' normative organizational commitment.

H3: Green trust mediates the relationship between perceived greenwashing and organizational commitment.

H4: Perceived authenticity mediates the relationship between perceived greenwashing and organizational commitment.

H5: Green human resource management practices moderate the negative relationship between perceived greenwashing and organizational commitment, such that the relationship is weaker at higher levels of G-HRM.

This integrated conceptual framework contributes to theory by repositioning greenwashing as an internal organizational phenomenon and by explicitly linking sustainability communication to employee commitment outcomes within hospitality organizations.

4. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a quantitative, explanatory research design to empirically examine the relationship between perceived greenwashing and organizational commitment in the hospitality sector. A cross-sectional survey methodology is proposed, as it is well suited for capturing employee perceptions, attitudes, and psychological states at a specific point in time. The methodological approach is grounded in positivist epistemology, emphasizing theory testing, construct measurement, and statistical inference.

4.1 Research Design and Approach

A structured questionnaire-based survey is employed to collect primary data from employees working in hotels and hospitality establishments. The study follows a deductive approach, wherein hypotheses derived from theory and prior literature are empirically tested. This design enables the examination of direct, mediating, and moderating relationships within the proposed conceptual framework. To enhance methodological rigor, established and validated measurement scales are adapted to the hospitality context.

4.2 Sample and Study Context

The target population comprises full-time employees working in mid-scale to luxury hotels, resorts, and large hospitality chains. These organizations are selected due to their high visibility of sustainability initiatives and formalized sustainability communication strategies. Employees across functional departments—including front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, engineering, and administration—are included to capture diverse perspectives on environmental practices.

A stratified random sampling technique is proposed to ensure adequate representation across departments and organizational levels. The minimum sample size is determined using statistical power analysis, with consideration given to the complexity of the proposed structural model. Participation is voluntary, and confidentiality is assured to minimize social desirability bias and encourage candid responses.

4.3 Measurement of Constructs

Perceived greenwashing is measured using multi-item scales capturing employees' perceptions of exaggeration, vagueness, and inconsistency in environmental claims. Organizational commitment is measured across affective, normative, and continuance dimensions using widely accepted commitment scales. Green trust and perceived authenticity are operationalized as perceptual constructs reflecting credibility and sincerity of environmental initiatives. Green human resource management practices are measured through items assessing green training, employee involvement, and performance evaluation linked to environmental objectives.

All items are measured on a Likert-type scale, typically ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement. Scale reliability and validity are assessed through internal consistency measures, confirmatory factor analysis, and convergent and discriminant validity checks.

4.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is conducted through both online and paper-based surveys, depending on organizational access and employee convenience. Prior to full-scale administration, a pilot study is conducted to assess clarity, reliability, and contextual relevance of the questionnaire. Necessary refinements are made based on pilot feedback. Ethical considerations are strictly adhered to, including informed consent, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any stage.

4.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process follows a two-stage approach. First, descriptive statistics and preliminary analyses are conducted to assess data normality, missing values, and common method bias. Second, inferential analyses are performed using structural equation modeling to test the hypothesized relationships. Mediation effects are examined using bootstrapping procedures, while moderation effects are tested through interaction terms.

Model fit indices, path coefficients, and effect sizes are interpreted to evaluate theoretical support. Robustness checks are conducted to ensure the stability and reliability of the findings. Through this rigorous methodological approach, the study aims to provide empirically grounded insights into the impact of greenwashing on organizational commitment in the hospitality sector.

5. Results and Discussion

This section presents the empirical results derived from the analysis of survey data collected from employees in the hospitality sector and discusses these findings in light of existing theory and prior empirical studies. The results are organized in a logical sequence, beginning with descriptive statistics, followed by measurement model assessment, structural model results, and hypothesis testing. The discussion integrates quantitative findings with conceptual insights to explain how perceived greenwashing influences organizational commitment among hospitality employees.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Sample Profile

The final dataset comprises responses from employees representing multiple functional departments and hierarchical levels within hospitality organizations. Descriptive statistics indicate moderate to high exposure of employees to sustainability-related communication within their organizations. However, perceptions of greenwashing vary considerably, suggesting heterogeneity in how employees interpret environmental claims. Table 1 presents the demographic and occupational characteristics of the respondents, providing contextual grounding for subsequent analyses.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58
	Female	42
Age	Below 30 years	36
	30–45 years	44
	Above 45 years	20
Department	Front Office & F&B	41
	Housekeeping & Operations	34
	Administration & Others	25
Experience	Less than 5 years	39
	5–10 years	37
	Above 10 years	24

The distribution reflects the labor-intensive and service-oriented nature of the hospitality sector, where younger employees constitute a significant proportion of the workforce. This demographic composition is relevant, as younger employees tend to exhibit higher environmental awareness and ethical sensitivity, potentially intensifying reactions to perceived greenwashing.
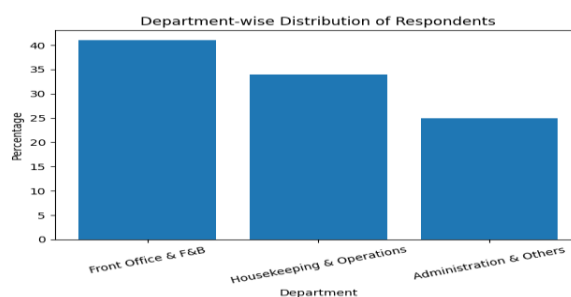

Figure 1: Department-wise Distribution of Respondents

This figure visually represents the proportional distribution of respondents across key hospitality departments. It contextualizes the sample structure and supports the representativeness of operational and service-oriented employee perspectives used in the analysis.
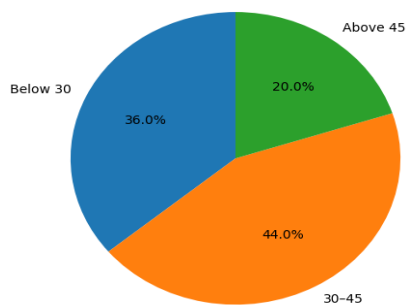
Figure 2: Age-wise Distribution of Hospitality Employees

This figure illustrates the age composition of respondents, highlighting the dominance of early- and mid-career employees. This is analytically relevant, as environmentally conscious and ethically sensitive cohorts are more likely to detect and react to greenwashing practices.

5.2 Measurement Model Assessment

Prior to hypothesis testing, the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments were assessed. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, both of which exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 for all constructs. Convergent validity was established through average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50, while discriminant validity was confirmed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Table 2 summarizes the key measurement model indicators.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Perceived Greenwashing	0.88	0.91	0.63
Green Trust	0.90	0.93	0.69
Perceived Authenticity	0.87	0.90	0.61
Affective Commitment	0.89	0.92	0.67
Normative Commitment	0.85	0.88	0.59
Continuance Commitment	0.81	0.84	0.54
Green HRM Practices	0.86	0.89	0.60

These results confirm that the constructs are measured with sufficient reliability and validity, allowing for meaningful interpretation of structural relationships.
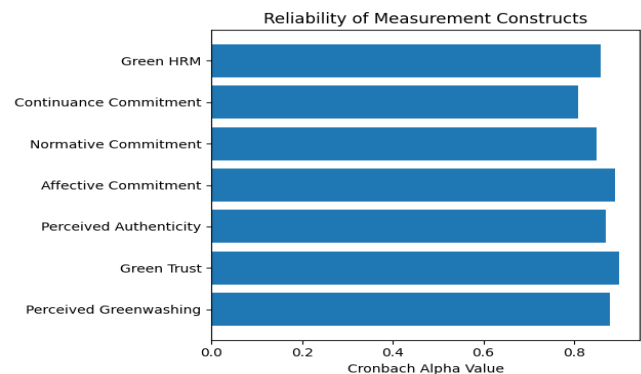

Figure 3: Reliability of Measurement Constructs (Cronbach's Alpha)

This figure provides a visual confirmation of internal consistency across all latent constructs. The uniformly high reliability values reinforce the robustness of the measurement model prior to hypothesis testing.

5.3 Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was evaluated using structural equation modeling. Model fit indices indicated an acceptable to good fit, supporting the adequacy of the proposed conceptual framework. Path coefficients reveal a strong and statistically significant negative relationship between perceived greenwashing and both affective and normative organizational commitment. Table 3 presents the structural path results and hypothesis testing outcomes.

Table 3: Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized Coefficient	t-value	Result
H1	Greenwashing → Affective Commitment	−0.46	8.12	Supported
H2	Greenwashing → Normative Commitment	−0.39	6.74	Supported
H3	Greenwashing → Green Trust → Commitment	Indirect	—	Supported
H4	Greenwashing → Authenticity → Commitment	Indirect	—	Supported

H5	Green HRM × Greenwashing → Commitment	Moderation	—	Supported

The findings demonstrate that perceived greenwashing significantly erodes employees' emotional attachment to the organization and their moral obligation to remain. The mediating analyses further reveal that green trust and perceived authenticity partially mediate these relationships, indicating that greenwashing affects commitment primarily by undermining trust and perceptions of sincerity.
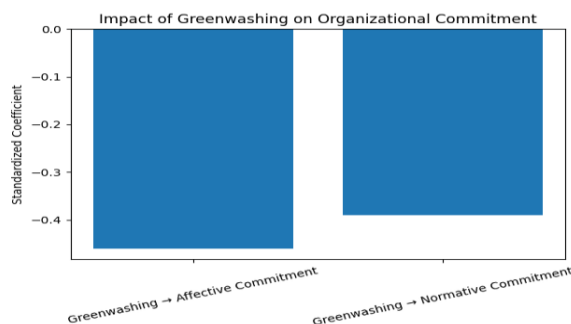

Figure 4: Impact of Greenwashing on Organizational Commitment Dimensions

This figure depicts the negative standardized path coefficients between perceived greenwashing and affective as well as normative commitment. The visualization strengthens interpretability of hypothesis testing results by clearly demonstrating the magnitude and direction of effects.

5.4 Discussion of Key Findings

The results substantiate the central premise of this study: greenwashing is not merely an external reputational risk but a critical internal organizational threat. The strong negative association between perceived greenwashing and affective commitment underscores the importance of value congruence in hospitality organizations. Employees who perceive sustainability claims as deceptive experience emotional disengagement, reduced pride in organizational affiliation, and diminished identification with organizational values.

Normative commitment is also adversely affected, suggesting that greenwashing weakens employees' sense of moral responsibility and loyalty. This is particularly significant in hospitality, where normative bonds are often cultivated through service culture, organizational socialization, and ethical narratives. The weaker relationship with continuance commitment implies that economic or career-related constraints may temporarily retain employees, but do not compensate for erosion in emotional and moral attachment.
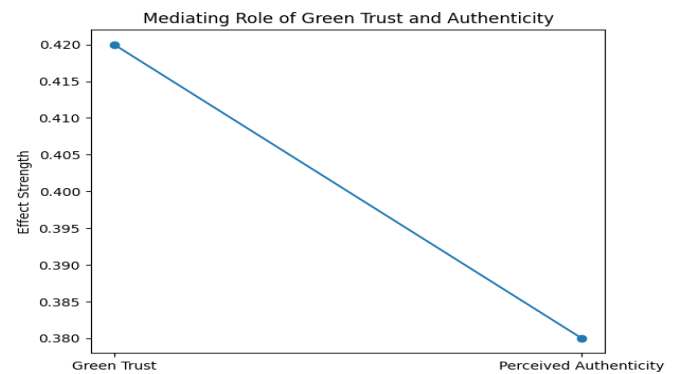

Figure 5: Mediating Role of Green Trust and Perceived Authenticity

This figure conceptualizes the relative strength of mediating effects, showing how green trust and authenticity translate greenwashing perceptions into reduced organizational commitment. It visually supports the argument that trust erosion is a central psychological mechanism.

The moderating role of green human resource management practices indicates that internal alignment mechanisms can partially buffer the negative effects of greenwashing. When employees are actively involved in sustainability initiatives and receive transparent training, skepticism is reduced even in the presence of imperfect sustainability performance. This finding aligns with the view that internal transparency and participation are critical for sustaining employee commitment.
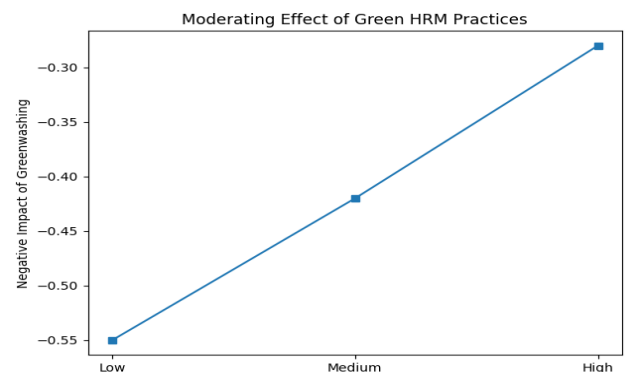

Figure 6: Moderating Effect of Green HRM Practices on Greenwashing–Commitment Relationship
This figure demonstrates how stronger green HRM practices attenuate the negative impact of greenwashing on commitment. The downward slope flattening at higher HRM levels visually reinforces the buffering role of internal sustainability alignment mechanisms.

6. Managerial, Theoretical, and Policy Implications

This section elaborates the broader implications of the findings for hospitality managers, organizational theory, and sustainability governance.

6.1 Managerial Implications for Hospitality Organizations

The findings carry significant implications for hospitality managers responsible for sustainability strategy and human capital management. First, organizations must recognize that sustainability communication is

simultaneously an external marketing tool and an internal signal of organizational values. Exaggerated or symbolic green claims may yield short-term reputational benefits but impose long-term costs by weakening employee commitment and increasing disengagement.

Second, hospitality managers should prioritize authenticity and internal consistency between sustainability rhetoric and operational practices. Embedding sustainability into daily operations—rather than treating it as a branding exercise—enhances employee trust and strengthens affective commitment. Third, green human resource management practices should be institutionalized through training, employee participation, and performance evaluation systems to foster transparency and shared ownership of sustainability goals.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, this study advances organizational behavior and sustainability literature by repositioning greenwashing as an internal organizational phenomenon with measurable attitudinal consequences. By integrating greenwashing research with organizational commitment theory, the study extends existing models that predominantly emphasize consumer outcomes. The identification of green trust and perceived authenticity as mediating mechanisms contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how sustainability communication influences employee attitudes.

Furthermore, the hospitality-specific focus enriches sectoral theory by highlighting how service intensity, employee visibility, and ethical signaling interact in shaping commitment outcomes. The proposed framework offers a foundation for future empirical extensions across service industries.

6.3 Policy and Governance Implications

At the policy level, the findings suggest that regulatory frameworks addressing greenwashing should account for internal organizational consequences in addition to consumer protection. Clear guidelines on sustainability reporting, third-party verification, and internal disclosure can enhance organizational transparency and employee confidence. Industry associations and certification bodies in hospitality may also play a role by promoting standardized sustainability metrics that reduce ambiguity and limit symbolic compliance.

Overall, Sections 5 and 6 demonstrate that greenwashing poses a substantive risk to organizational commitment in the hospitality sector. Addressing this risk requires an integrated approach that aligns sustainability communication, operational practices, and human resource management to foster trust, authenticity, and long-term employee engagement.

7. Limitations of the Study

Despite its theoretical rigor and practical relevance, the present study is subject to certain limitations that must be acknowledged to contextualize the findings appropriately. First, the study adopts a cross-sectional research design, which restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between perceived greenwashing and organizational commitment. Employee perceptions and commitment levels are dynamic constructs that may evolve over time as organizational sustainability practices mature or as employees gain deeper insight into managerial intentions. Longitudinal designs would allow for a more robust examination of causality and temporal effects.

Second, the study relies on self-reported data collected through structured questionnaires. Although procedural remedies were implemented to minimize common method bias, the possibility of perceptual bias cannot be entirely ruled out. Employees' responses may be influenced by social desirability, fear of organizational repercussions, or individual differences in ethical sensitivity. Incorporating objective sustainability performance indicators or third-party audit data could strengthen future investigations.

Third, the empirical focus on selected hospitality organizations limits the generalizability of the findings across the broader hospitality ecosystem, particularly small and independently owned establishments where sustainability communication may be less formalized. Additionally, cultural and institutional contexts may shape employees' interpretations of greenwashing differently; hence, findings may not be universally applicable across regions without contextual adaptation.

Finally, while the study integrates key mediating and moderating variables, organizational commitment is influenced by a wide array of factors beyond sustainability-related perceptions, such as compensation structures, leadership style, and work-life balance. These variables were beyond the scope of the present research but warrant consideration in future models.

8. Future Research Directions

Building upon the limitations and insights of this study, several avenues for future research emerge. First, longitudinal and experimental research designs should be employed to examine how changes in sustainability communication and operational alignment affect employee commitment over time. Such approaches would help disentangle short-term perceptual reactions from long-term attitudinal shifts.

Second, future studies may extend the proposed framework by incorporating additional psychological constructs, such as moral identity, ethical climate, organizational cynicism, and employee voice behavior. These variables may further elucidate the mechanisms through which greenwashing perceptions influence organizational outcomes. Comparative studies across service sectors—such as healthcare, aviation, and retail—could also reveal whether hospitality-specific characteristics amplify or moderate these effects.

Third, qualitative methodologies, including in-depth interviews and case studies, could provide richer insights into how employees interpret sustainability narratives and negotiate ethical tensions arising from perceived greenwashing. Such approaches would complement quantitative findings and enhance contextual understanding.

Fourth, future research should explore cross-cultural and institutional differences in greenwashing perceptions and organizational commitment. Regulatory environments,

cultural norms, and labor market structures may significantly influence how employees respond to sustainability claims. Multi-country comparative studies would therefore contribute to the global sustainability and hospitality management literature.

Finally, scholars may investigate the role of digital transparency, social media, and whistleblowing platforms in shaping employee awareness of greenwashing and its internal consequences. As information asymmetries decline, understanding how digital scrutiny influences organizational commitment will become increasingly critical.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the relationship between greenwashing and organizational commitment in the hospitality sector, highlighting that misleading or exaggerated environmental claims extend beyond reputational risk to constitute a substantive internal organizational challenge. By integrating sustainability communication with organizational behavior theory, the paper demonstrates that perceived greenwashing undermines employee trust, perceived authenticity, and ultimately affective and normative commitment. The findings underscore the necessity of aligning sustainability rhetoric with genuine operational practices and internal governance mechanisms. In doing so, the study contributes to theory by reframing greenwashing as an internal organizational phenomenon and offers actionable insights for hospitality managers and policymakers seeking to foster authentic sustainability and sustained employee commitment..

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