

Leadership Power for Sustainable Performance of Zero-rated Hotels in Eldoret, Kenya

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Abstract

The hospitality industry, particularly zero-rated hotels, operates within a complex framework where power dynamics significantly influence organizational behavior and sustainable performance. This study delved into the intricate interplay of leadership power bases, specifically positional and personal powers, within the context of zero-rated hotels in Eldoret town, uncovering their impact on sustainable performance. Grounded in the Contingency theory and Sustainable Balanced Scorecard framework, the research employed a mixed-method approach, combining self-reported questionnaires and nominal group discussions. Results highlighted the pervasive misuse of legitimate, reward, and coercive power, hindering sustainable performance. Expert power emerged as a positive influencer, fostering a culture of learning and collaboration, while referent power faced skepticism. Information and connection power, when misused, create imbalances and conflicts. Multiple regression analysis results confirmed that both positional power ($\beta=-.416$, $p=.004$) and personal power ($\beta=-.478$, $p=.001$) impacted hotel sustainable performance negatively. The study recommends leadership development, transparent communication, fairness, employee empowerment, positive interpersonal relationships, continuous learning, and employee well-being initiatives to address power dynamics and enhance sustainable performance in zero-rated hotels. These findings have significant implications for organizational strategies and policies, emphasizing the need for ethical leadership and inclusive practices to foster a conducive environment for long-term success in the hospitality sector.

Keywords: Leadership power, Power, Sustainable performance, Zero-rated hotels

INTRODUCTION

Power, a fundamental force shaping entrepreneurial dynamics globally, encapsulates the capacity of an individual, denoted as 'A,' to influence the behavior of another, denoted as 'B,' in ways they might not otherwise choose (Omisoro and Nweke, 2014). This capacity empowers individuals to operate assertively, enforce their will, and influence the actions of others to achieve desired outcomes (Eatough, 2022). In entrepreneurship, power plays a pivotal role, profoundly impacting decision-making processes, operational strategies, management practices, and overall business outcomes (Melović et al., 2022).

Within the hospitality industry, entrepreneurs find themselves intricately interwoven with their environment, influenced by external factors such as bureaucratic regulations, anti-corruption efforts, and legislative frameworks. The astute entrepreneur acknowledges and navigates these environmental nuances, considering their legal ramifications that can significantly affect organizational operations (Nguyen, 2020). As a valuable resource, power becomes a potent tool wielded by managers, supervisors, and entrepreneurs alike to instill obedience and foster accountability among subordinates, aligning their actions with organizational objectives (Zameni et al., 2012). Various forms of power are applied in leadership roles to influence subordinates and correct undesirable behaviors.

Leadership, a nuanced art, entails guiding organized groups toward goal-setting and achievement (Stogdill, 1950). Effective leaders employ a combination of intelligence, empathy, honesty, trustworthiness, courage, discipline, and compassion. Balancing these attributes is crucial; relying solely on intelligence may incite rebellion, while excessive trust may lead to imprudent decisions. An ideal leadership approach motivates individuals to willingly follow the leader's guidance and adhere to their decisions (Rue and Byars, 2000).

Sustainable performance, a multifaceted concept, signifies an organization's capacity to meet the needs and expectations of customers and stakeholders over the long term. It results from effective organizational management, staff awareness, continuous learning, and the application of appropriate improvements and innovations (Stanciu et al., 2014). Sustainability permeates various levels, including individual and group dynamics, and is evaluated diversely (Bezerra et al., 2021). Parameters gauging sustainable performance span economic stability, environmental conservation efforts like water preservation, and positive societal impacts, forming a nexus of interconnected outcomes (Pranugrahaning et al., 2021). In the context of this research, sustainable performance emerges as an organizational consequence resulting from the implementation of leadership power bases.

This study aims to scrutinize the foundations of leadership power prevalent in hotels and assess their impact on the sustainable performance of these establishments. Specifically, the research delves into the types of leadership power employed within hotels and examines their ramifications on the sustainable performance metrics of these establishments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The Contingency theory proposed by Fiedler (1960) emphasizes that effective leadership is contingent upon the specific situation and requires adapting one's leadership style accordingly. A leader who is effective in one scenario may not be as effective in another.

The Sustainable Balanced Scorecard (SBSC), developed by Epstein & Wisner (2001) and Figge et al. (2002), encompasses five perspectives: financial, customer, internal business process, learning and growth, and social and environmental. The financial perspective focuses on higher returns from capital investment (Riana, 2013). The customer perspective centers around understanding customers and market segments. The internal business process perspective emphasizes critical processes and procedures necessary for achieving stakeholder objectives. The learning and growth perspective incorporates elements supporting strategy, people, technology, and the overall operating climate. Lastly, the social and environmental perspective involves contributing solutions to community social problems and implementing policies for environmental preservation.

This study sheds light on how managers in zero-rated hotels can leverage their power to enhance sustainable performance across these diverse perspectives. The SBSC perspectives, including financial, customer-related, internal business process-related, learning and growth-related, and social and environmental aspects, as highlighted by Gil, Jimenez, & Lorente (2001) and Kaplan & Norton (1992), significantly influence sustainable performance outcomes.

Hotel Sustainable Performance

Sustainable performance in the hospitality industry has different components such as economic, operational, financial, task and relational, environmental, and social aspects (Sapta et al., 2021; Iqbal et al., 2020; Javed et al., 2020). Environmental performance includes task-related and proactive efforts, focusing on efficient energy consumption, energy-saving initiatives, waste recycling, pollution prevention, and green product designs, meeting societal expectations concerning the natural environment (Iqbal et al., 2021; Liao and Zhang, 2020; Siddiquei et al., 2021). The social perspective emphasizes building trust with suppliers, considering societal well-being while generating profits, and demonstrating commitment to social expectations within the supply chain (Akhtar et al., 2017; Javed et al., 2020).

In this study, Hotel Sustainable Performance (HSP) is categorized into financial, customer-related, internal business process, learning and growth, social, and environmental aspects. These categories align with the Sustainable Balanced Scorecard (SBSC) approach, which lacks a standardized measure in the hotel industry (Bohdanowicz & Martinac, 2007; Clarke & Chen, 2007). The measurement framework was adapted from Chen et al. (2011) based on Kaplan and Norton's balanced scorecard approach (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). Additionally, the social and environmental perspectives developed by Holcomb, Upchurch, & Okumus, 2007

were incorporated to provide a comprehensive evaluation of hotel sustainable performance.

Position Power

Position power derives from one's organizational rank and encompasses various forms, including legitimate, reward, coercive, and resource power (Rowe, 2018). Legitimate power, also known as titular power, is linked to an individual's position in the organization and grants authority as long as that position is held. It allows leaders to issue commands and directions to subordinates, drawing from the established hierarchical structure (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2011). Reward power relies on offering incentives such as pay raises, benefits, promotions, or praise to motivate employees to accomplish tasks. While it can enhance satisfaction and performance, misuse, such as withholding rewards, may lead to negative outcomes (Branch, 2006; Yi, Jia, & Luo, 2014).

Coercive power, on the other hand, enforces compliance through threats, rules, and dominance, or force, compelling employees to act out of fear of consequences like dismissal (Eatough, 2022). Although it may yield short-term results, coercive power diminishes employee satisfaction and engagement, hindering long-term organizational sustainability (Audretsch & Fiedler, 2022; Wrong, 2017). Positive coercion, achieved through policies promoting sustainable performance, offers a more constructive approach. The question then is how position power manifests in zero-rated hotels in Eldoret and how it impacts the sustainable performance of these entities. To this end, we posit that:

H01: *Position power has no significant effect on hotel sustainable performance.*

Personal Power

Personal power, a psychological mindset rather than a direct control mechanism, can shape influence within or outside formal authority structures. There are four types: expert, referent, informational, and connection power. Expert power stems from deep technical knowledge and experience, commanding trust and respect. Peers and subordinates often heed expert opinions, fostering a positive organizational environment (Yi, Jia, & Luo, 2014). Referent power operates internally, relying on qualities like trust, respect, and integrity. Managers possessing referent power display exceptional interpersonal skills, engendering confidence and support. Unlike other forms, referent power isn't transferable, relying solely on the leader's internal strengths (Lipkin, 2013). Information power hinges on exclusive access to specific information, albeit temporarily. It lacks long-term credibility-building potential and can be fleeting due to eventual information release. Its misuse, such as withholding crucial information can jeopardize sustainable performance by causing delays and inaccuracies in decision-making (Natter, 2019).

On the other hand, connection power derives from influential alliances, networking skills, and favors. Leaders amass this power when their partnerships with influential figures are admired and sought after by others. This connection enables access to resources beneficial for sustainable performance, reflecting a political aspect

in organizational dynamics (Natter, 2019). Similarly, we question how personal power manifests in zero-rated hotels in Eldoret and how it impacts sustainable performance. Consequently, we presuppose that:

H₀₂: *Personal power has no significant effect on hotel sustainable performance.*

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design and Philosophy

This study adopted a phenomenological research design grounded in a constructivist research philosophy. Phenomenology allows for an in-depth exploration of individuals' lived experiences, making it ideal for understanding the nuanced perspectives of managers and employees within the context of zero-rated hotels in Eldoret town. The constructivist approach aligned with the study's focus on interpreting and understanding the participants' subjective realities and perceptions.

Sampling and Participants

The study targeted managers and employees from zero-rated hotels in Eldoret town. Hotels were purposively selected based on their zero-rated status, ensuring a specific focus on the intended context. A total of 50 employees were randomly selected to participate in the study by completing self-reported questionnaires. Additionally, 12 managers were purposively chosen to engage in nominal group discussions, divided into two groups of six participants each.

Data Collection

Data collection involved two main methods. **Self-Reported Questionnaires:** Employees completed structured questionnaires designed to gather quantitative data. The questionnaire encompassed relevant constructs related to leadership power bases and sustainable performance. **Nominal Group Discussions:** Managers participated in nominal group discussions, facilitating rich qualitative data collection. These discussions encouraged active participation, allowing managers to express their viewpoints and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Data Analysis

For the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires, descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were employed to summarize the data. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was utilized to identify relationships and predict the impact of leadership power bases on sustainable performance. Qualitative data from the nominal group discussions was analyzed narratively. This approach involved systematically organizing and interpreting the qualitative data to identify themes and patterns. Thematic analysis was conducted to extract meaningful insights from the discussions, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Positional Power

Positional power includes legitimate power, reward power, coercive power and resource power.

Legitimate power

The analysis of the data unveiled a consistent perception among employees, indicating that managers frequently made decisions without considering their expertise (M=4.49, SD=.711) and utilized legitimate power for personal objectives rather than organizational goals (M=4.49, SD=.711). Conversely, there was a shared belief that legitimate power did not significantly contribute to establishing order and structure within the hotel (M=1.98, SD=.661). Furthermore, there was a consensus that the misuse of legitimate power resulted in decreased productivity (M=4.20, SD=1.00). However, there existed a divergence of opinions concerning the association of economic benefits with legitimate power, indicating a lack of unanimity among employees on this matter (M=1.71, SD=.736).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Legitimate Power

Legitimate power statements	M	SD
1. Managers use their position to make decisions without considering employees' expertise.	4.49	.711
2. Our hotel is often used to achieve personal goals rather than organizational objectives.	4.49	.711
3. Power creates a sense of order and structure within our hotel.	1.98	.661
4. Employees in our hotel feel that power is misused, leading to decreased productivity.	4.20	1.000
5. Economic benefits in our hotel accompany legitimate power.	1.71	.736

These descriptive findings underscored the imperative need to address issues related to the appropriate use and misuse of legitimate power within the organization, with the aim of augmenting employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational effectiveness.

Results obtained from nominal group discussions resonated with the survey findings. Participants expressed similar sentiments, emphasizing the misuse of legitimate power and its disconnect from expertise, leading to adverse effects on productivity. Notably,

"Legitimate power is misused and often not matched with expertise, affects productivity, and is most often used to achieve personal goals. It relies on structures, has economic benefits, and creates order with little social and environmental impacts" (NGD +Interviews)

Reward power

Upon analysis, it was evident that employees within the hotel perceived that their good performance was duly rewarded (M=4.39, SD=.702), and both managers and staff found motivation in these rewards (M=4.37, SD=.698). Despite this positive

perception, significant concerns were raised about the sustainability and ethical integrity of the rewarding process ($M=1.47$, $SD=.581$). Employees expressed worries regarding the long-term costs and sustainability of the existing reward system ($M=4.51$, $SD=.711$). While reward power had a positive impact on employee expectations and job satisfaction, there existed variability in the extent to which employees felt influenced ($M=4.12$, $SD=.927$), indicating potential individual differences in how rewards affected their perceptions and experiences within the organization. Addressing these concerns related to the sustainability and ethical dimensions of the reward system was identified as a crucial step to enhance the effectiveness of the reward power strategy in the hotel.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Reward Power

Reward power statements	M	SD
1. Employees are rewarded for their good performance in our hotel.	4.39	.702
2. The process of rewarding employees in our hotel is sustainable and does not lead to bribery or corruption.	1.47	.581
3. Managers and staff in our hotel are motivated by the rewards they receive.	4.37	.698
4. The use of reward power is costly and may not be sustainable in the long term.	4.51	.711
5. Reward power impacts employee expectations and job satisfaction in our hotel.	4.12	.927

Findings from nominal group discussions echoed the sentiments expressed by employees. Participants acknowledged the utilization of reward power by managers and entrepreneurs but highlighted concerns about its detrimental effects on sustainability.

"Both managers and entrepreneurs used reward power, but the process of rewarding can be detrimental to sustainability. When managers and staff are rewarded, it improves productivity. However, using reward power is expensive, not sustainable, abused by managers, and results in "bribery" and corruption. It has an impact on employee expectations" (NGD +Interviews).

Coercive Power

The data analysis highlighted that employee perceived coercive power as a significant factor in the workplace, emphasizing their compliance with tasks out of fear of job loss ($M=4.73$, $SD=.446$). These tactics were noted to create a negative work environment ($M=4.20$, $SD=.816$), leading to dissatisfaction and conflicts among employees ($M=4.76$, $SD=.434$). While there was consensus on the presence and impact of coercive power, there existed some variability in how employees perceived its effects on sustainable performance ($M=4.29$, $SD=.677$). Recognizing the detrimental aspects of coercive power and fostering a more positive and supportive

work environment was identified as essential for enhancing overall job satisfaction and sustainable performance within the organization.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Coercive Power

Coercive power statements	M	SD
1. Coercive power is used to force employees to comply with tasks they might not agree with.	4.73	.446
2. Employees in our hotel often do tasks out of fear of losing their jobs.	4.00	1.000
3. Coercive power creates a negative work environment, leading to employee dissatisfaction.	4.20	.816
4. Coercive power sometimes results in conflict among employees.	4.76	.434
5. Coercive power has positive and negative impacts on sustainable performance in our hotel.	4.29	.677

Insights derived from nominal group discussions echoed these sentiments. Participants collectively conveyed that coercive power involved managers using threats to compel employees to perform tasks against their will, resulting in staff carrying out tasks out of fear of job loss.

"In coercive power, managers use threats to force people to do work they might not agree with; staff do wrong things out of fear of losing a job, staff are unhappy and disengaged and make people against each other. It has both a positive and negative impact on sustainable performance because managers can achieve their goals while creating a poor social and environmental workplace." (NGD +Interviews).

Resource Power

The analysis revealed that employees perceived managers' use of resources, such as food and off-duty days, to motivate them ($M=4.24$, $SD=.662$). Furthermore, individuals in superior positions were observed to benefit from resource power, often getting their way ($M=4.63$, $SD=.487$). However, there was significant disagreement concerning the objectivity of resource power usage ($M=1.49$, $SD=.582$), with employees expressing concerns about potential favoritism.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Resource Power

Resource power statements	M	SD
1. Managers in our hotel use resources (like food, off-duty days) to motivate employees.	4.24	.662
2. Employees in superior positions tend to get their way due to resource power.	4.63	.487
3. Resource power in our hotel is used objectively and does not create favoritism.	1.49	.582
4. The availability of resources influences employees' decisions and actions in our hotel.	3.63	.859
5. Resource power affects employee loyalty and commitment in our hotel.	3.63	1.112

The availability of resources moderately influenced employees' decisions and actions (M=3.63, SD=.859), and it also had a moderate impact on employee loyalty and commitment (M=3.63, SD=1.112). The variability in responses indicated that while resource power had an impact, there were differences in how employees perceived its influence on decision-making processes, loyalty, and commitment. Insights from nominal group discussions corroborated these employee perspectives. Participants shared their observations, emphasizing that resource power often led individuals to support a cause due to monetary or material gain, resulting in a lack of objectivity.

"In resource power, people choose to support because of money or resources, hence no objectivity. Those in superior positions get their way at the expense of their subjects. In the hotel, managers use food, off duty days, lessen punishment and other goodies as resources to compel or endear staff to work or do as required" (NGD +Interviews).

Personal Power

Personal power discusses referent power, expert power, information power and connection power.

Referent Power

The analysis of employee responses reflected a strong disagreement regarding the value placed on referent power, which is rooted in trust and relationships within the hotel (M=1.41, SD=.497). Similarly, employees expressed a lack of belief in promoting a positive work environment through referent power (M=1.29, SD=.456). While there was a moderate consensus that apprenticeship served as the primary form of referent power (M=3.59, SD=.956), there was a strong agreement that referent power did not significantly enhance cooperation and teamwork due to a lack of faith in its effectiveness (M=1.24, SD=.434). This lack of belief in referent power was perceived as a significant barrier, leading to its rare implementation within the organization (M=4.76, SD=.434).

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Referent Power

Referent power statements	M	SD
1. Referent power, based on trust and relationships, is valued in our hotel.	1.41	.497
2. Employees in our hotel believe in helping others and promoting a positive work environment.	1.29	.456
3. Apprenticeship is the primary form of referent power in our hotel.	3.59	.956
4. The use of referent power enhances cooperation and teamwork among employees.	1.24	.434
5. There is a lack of belief in referent power, making it rarely achieved in our hotel	4.76	.434

Nominal group discussions further supported these perceptions, with participants indicating that referent power was rarely achieved due to a lack of belief in helping others.

"Referent power is rarely achieved because people don't believe in helping others. Apart from apprenticeship, there is little use of this power. If this power could be adopted, it would help in sustainable performance." (NGD +Interviews).

Expert Power

The analysis of employee responses underscored a strong agreement that expertise and knowledge are highly valued and recognized in decision-making processes within the hotel (M=4.71, SD=.500). Additionally, employees acknowledged that the lack of expertise in specific areas led to inefficiencies and operational challenges (M=4.27, SD=.700). There was consensus that individuals possessing specific expertise were given opportunities to contribute to important projects and initiatives (M=4.24, SD=.751). Moreover, expert power fosters a culture of continuous learning and skill development among employees (M=4.24, SD=.751). The data also indicated that expert power was widely acknowledged and respected, promoting cooperation and collaboration among team members (M=4.51, SD=.711).

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Expert Power

Expert power statements	M	SD
1. Expertise and knowledge are highly valued and recognized in decision-making processes	4.71	.500
2. Employees with specific expertise are given opportunities to contribute to important initiatives.	4.24	.751
3. Lack of expertise in certain areas leads to inefficiencies and challenges in operations.	4.27	.700
4. Expert power fosters a culture of continuous learning and skill development among employees.	4.24	.751
5. Expert power is acknowledged and respected, promoting cooperation/collaboration among teams.	4.51	.711

Insights from nominal group discussions further supported these findings.

... "Expert power revolves around what one knows and what one can do, which determines whether you gain favor or not. Experts are valued for their contributions and decisions made according to expertise. I tolerate staff even when they make mistakes when they have a skill that no other person possesses. Lack of expertise leads to losses, hence unsustainability." (NGD +Interviews).

Information Power

The analysis of employee responses revealed a strong disagreement that information was transparently shared, fostering trust and collaboration among employees (M=1.53, SD=.544). There was a unanimous consensus that managers did

not responsibly use information power to empower employees and enhance productivity within the organization (M=1.24, SD=.434). Furthermore, employees strongly agreed that the lack of access to crucial information hampers effective decision-making and collaboration (M=4.76, SD=.434). There was also agreement that selective sharing of information led to misunderstandings among employees (M=4.43, SD=.677). Additionally, a robust consensus existed that some managers frequently misused information power to gain a competitive advantage over colleagues and employees (M=4.80, SD=.407).

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Information Power

Information power statements	M	SD
1. Information is transparently shared among employees, fostering a sense of trust and collaboration.	1.53	.544
2. Managers use information power responsibly to empower employees and enhance productivity.	1.24	.434
3. Lack of access to crucial information hinders effective decision-making and collaboration	4.76	.434
4. Misinterpretation of information due to selective sharing creates misunderstandings	4.43	.677
5. Some managers misuse information power to gain a competitive advantage over colleagues	4.80	.407

Nominal group discussions provided additional insights into employees' perspectives on information power.

"Information power is experienced with managers who hold back information to make others look lost. Managers fail to transmit information to sabotage others and only distribute information to those who are known. This power affects sustainable performance through poor productivity and low morale. It creates an imbalance between staff. There is also a tendency of misinterpreting information to suit individuals, which disadvantages others and creates suspicion." (NGD +Interviews)

Connection Power

The analysis of employee responses indicated a strong consensus that connections and relationships significantly influenced decision-making processes within the organization (M=4.67, SD=.474). There was agreement that individuals with influential connections had advantages, although opinions varied on the extent of this influence (M=4.02, SD=1.01). Furthermore, there was consensus that connection power often led to conflicts of interest within the hotel (M=3.88, SD=1.166). Employees strongly agreed that managers favored employees based on personal connections rather than merit (M=4.76, .434). There was also agreement that job security was influenced by connection power, although opinions varied about the extent of this influence (M=4.24, SD=.830).

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Connection Power

Connection power statements	M	SD
1. Connections and relationships play a significant role in decision-making processes	4.67	.474
2. Individuals with influential connections are more likely to be promoted or receive benefits	4.02	1.010
3. Connection power often leads to conflicts of interest within the hotel.	3.88	1.166
4. Managers tend to favor employees based on personal connections rather than merit.	4.76	.434
5. Connection power determines the level of job security and stability for employees	4.24	.830

Nominal group discussions and interviews strongly corroborated employees' perceptions of connection power. Participants emphasized that connections and relationships were instrumental in decision-making processes, often leading to preferential treatment based on personal affiliations.

"Connection power creates influence by proxy and lobbying. People work with those they relate with and gain favor out of relationships. This type of power has been misused because connections are construed towards ethnicity, nepotism, friendship and those capable of returning favors. Connection power determines one's promotion, demotion, dismissal and disciplinary action. It even dictates the salary scale and benefits derived from the job. Sustainable performance is compromised because of conflict of interest." (NGD +Interviews)

Hypotheses Testing

Positional Power and Hotel Sustainable Performance

Hypothesis **H₀₁** postulated the lack of a statistically significant effect of positional power and hotel sustainable performance. The unstandardized coefficient for positional power was -.735, with a standard error of .240. This coefficient signifies that for every unit increase in positional power, sustainable performance was estimated to decrease by .735 units. The t-value of -3.057 was significant at $p = .004$, suggesting that there was a statistically significant negative relationship between positional power and sustainable performance. In other words, higher levels of positional power were associated with reduced hotel sustainable performance. The hypothesis was not supported.

Table 9: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	1.430	1.139		1.255	.216
Positional Power	-.735	.240	-.416	-3.057	.004
Personal Power	-1.038	.296	-.478	-3.507	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable performance

Personal Power

The unstandardized coefficient for personal power was -1.038, with a standard error of .296. This coefficient implies that for every unit increase in personal power, hotel sustainable performance was estimated to decrease by 1.038 units. The t-value of -3.507 was significant at $p = .001$, indicating a statistically significant negative relationship between personal power and sustainable performance. This means that higher levels of personal power were associated with diminished hotel sustainable performance.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that positional power, encompassing legitimate, reward, and coercive power, significantly influences the sustainable performance of zero-rated hotels. Managers' decisions made without considering employees' expertise, the misuse of legitimate power for personal objectives, and the fear of job loss due to coercive power led to negative consequences. These findings align with previous research highlighting the detrimental effects of misusing positional power on employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness (Omisore and Nweke, 2014; Eatough, 2022). The study emphasizes the importance of ethical and responsible use of positional power, encouraging managers to align their actions with organizational objectives to enhance sustainable performance.

Personal power, comprising expert, referent, informational, and connection power, also significantly impacts sustainable performance. Expert power, rooted in knowledge and skills, emerged as a positive influencer, fostering a culture of continuous learning and collaboration among employees. In contrast, referent power faced skepticism within the organizational context, hindering its effectiveness in promoting cooperation and teamwork. Information power, when misused or selectively shared, led to misunderstandings and created an imbalance among employees, affecting sustainable performance. Connection power, based on relationships and affiliations, often resulted in preferential treatment, impacting job security and compromising sustainable performance.

Prior studies have consistently highlighted the positive influence of expert power on team performance, problem-solving abilities, and overall organizational effectiveness (Yukl, 2012). When employees recognize and respect the expertise of their colleagues or leaders, they are more likely to collaborate, seek guidance, and engage in continuous learning. Expert power fosters a culture of innovation and knowledge sharing, which aligns with the findings in the context of zero-rated hotels. Moreover, the skepticism surrounding referent power observed in zero-rated hotels aligns with previous studies highlighting the challenges associated with this power base. Referent power, rooted in trust and interpersonal relationships, can be fragile, especially in diverse or hierarchical work environments (Yukl, 2012).

The findings regarding information power align with studies emphasizing the importance of transparent communication within organizations. Research has shown that open and honest communication contributes to employee trust, engagement, and collaboration (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008). Selective sharing of information, as observed in this study, leads to misunderstandings and imbalances among employees, affecting

sustainable performance. Prior literature emphasizes the role of information power in shaping organizational culture and climate. Leaders who responsibly use information power by promoting transparency and avoiding favoritism create a positive work environment, fostering sustainable performance (Yukl, 2012).

Connection power, based on relationships and affiliations, often leads to preferential treatment, impacting job security and sustainable performance. This finding aligns with research on organizational politics and power dynamics. Studies have shown that favoritism resulting from connection power can erode trust, demotivate employees, and create a divisive work environment (Ferris et al., 2002). Such practices can hinder cooperation and collaboration, ultimately affecting the organization's sustainability. Researchers have emphasized the need for organizations to address issues related to nepotism and unfair treatment, advocating for transparent policies and merit-based decision-making to mitigate the negative effects of connection power (Ferris et al., 2017).

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Entrepreneurs possessed and exercised all power based on the situation and subjects which was affirmative towards attainment of HSP. Power has led to low economic gain and growth as a result of external factors. Referent power is not realized in absence of role models especially from those with legitimate power. Expert power has been watered down because of using reward, connection and resource power which reward poor performance. There is little social and economic engagement arising from the focus of legitimate, expert power which align to specific policies and procedures. Moreover, positive HSP was realized through balanced deployment and combination of power resultant to improved communication and relationships among stakeholders, customer satisfaction and loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness, plus professionalism and compliance with social-environmental issues. Managers have high sense of hierarchy, exercise position power for personal gain resulting to low productivity and morale which impact negatively on HSP while entrepreneurs possess and exercise all power based on the situation and subjects which was affirmative towards attainment of HSP. To realize sustainable performance, there is need for a combination of power among stakeholders and compliance with social-environmental issues.

These findings offer practical implications for managers and entrepreneurs in zero-rated hotels. Understanding the nuances of different power bases can enable leaders to leverage their influence effectively. Encouraging the responsible use of positional power, fostering a positive work environment, promoting expertise, and fostering transparent communication can enhance sustainable performance. Addressing issues related to misuse and skepticism around certain power bases is crucial for building trust, employee satisfaction, and long-term organizational sustainability. Moreover, this research contributes to the existing literature by providing informed insights into the specific power dynamics prevalent in zero-rated hotels. By examining various power bases and their impacts on sustainable performance, this study enriches the understanding of leadership influence within specific organizational contexts. The findings underscore the importance of

considering both positional and personal power when analyzing leadership dynamics, offering a comprehensive view of their effects on organizational outcomes.

Several recommendations are proposed to enhance sustainable performance in zero-rated hotels by addressing the issues related to positional and personal power bases. Firstly, investing in leadership development and training programs is essential. These initiatives should focus on cultivating ethical leadership qualities, emphasizing transparent communication, and promoting responsible use of power among managers and employees. Addressing favoritism and nepotism within the organization is imperative. Clear policies against discriminatory practices should be implemented and strictly enforced. Merit-based decision-making processes for promotions, rewards, and job security should be established to ensure fairness and equal opportunities for all employees. Additionally, entrepreneurs should enact operational policies for managers in decision-making to avoid power misuse and create training on developing leadership traits for comprehension of HSP.

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