Going green: Decisional factors in small hospitality operations

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Abstract

This paper reports on research into the factors that influence the adoption of environmental measures in small hospitality firms. The research found that the decision to become environmentally involved had been a value-driven journey, influenced primarily by the development of environmental consciousness. Personal, socio-cultural and situational factors were other significant influences. The paper argues the importance of appreciating the personal and contextual circumstances of individual business-owners to understand their decision-making and operational approach. Further, it points to the value in making operators aware that going green need not involve a major change or capital outlay but can grow in accordance with the business' needs and priorities.
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1. Introduction

As a series of widely publicised environmental catastrophes signalled the globalisation of environmental concern, society had entered the last stage of a process that took humans "from fearing, to understanding, to using, to abusing, and now, to worrying about the physical and biological world around them" (Bowman, 1975, p. 94). Over a decade later, the Bruntdland Report (WCED, 1987) crystallised this concern by concluding that environmental protection should be accorded primary status in policy development. The formulation of an action plan for sustainable development followed in 1992 with Agenda 21. In 1996, Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry drew attention to the need to develop tourism sustainably. As one of the largest industries and one that is reliant on the quality of the environment to ensure its survival, tourism plays a major role in environmental preservation. One of its integral components is the accommodation sector, which mainly consists of small, independent operations. Whilst their individual detrimental impact on the environment is limited, their collective one is significant. Yet, acknowledgement of this fact by the industry has only partially resulted in positive action. Within a Scottish context, noteworthy has been the work of the Tourism & Environment Forum, a private/public partnership aimed at encouraging sustainability in tourism, which resulted in the launch of the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) in 1998. A VisitScotland Quality Assurance Scheme, the GTBS is an environmental accreditation scheme tailored to tourism businesses. Participation is voluntary, with a fee charged depending on size. The number of measures implemented determines the level of award (Bronze, Silver, Gold). Over 500 businesses are now members in the UK (GTBS, 2007).

Limited academic interest has focused on small firms' decision-making and environmental response. Moreover, there has been a prevalence of normative literature, prescribing how decisions 'should' be made and why firms 'should' respond to environmental pressure. If positive action is to be encouraged it is crucial to understand the process by which it occurs and the factors that influence it. By investigating environmentally active firms, this paper offers an empirical understanding of how a sample of businesses actually 'did' go green. In the context of this study, going green refers to the adoption of environmental management practices, intended as practices aimed at minimising the detrimental impact on the environment, in

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terms of both resource depletion and pollution. See Table 1 for a list of measures implemented by respondent businesses.

2. Decisions and decision-making defined

Most simply a decision has been defined as "an act of choice between alternatives" (McGrew and Wilson, 1982, p. 4). A later elaboration viewed it as the point in an ongoing process of evaluating alternatives for meeting an objective at which the decision-maker selects the action most likely to attain that objective (Harrison, 1996, p. 46). It follows that decision-making is a dynamic process that occurs over a period of time and, as many argue, in a particular order. Within a managerial context, it has been defined as the organisation, prioritisation and sorting of information (Simons and Thompson, 1998, p. 7). Hence, its portrayal as a "rational, deliberate and purposeful process" (Tarter and Hoy, 1998, p. 212), though real-life decision-making rarely is logical or sequential. Rather it involves considerable backtracking and repetition. Several are the classifications of decisions found in the literature. Simon (1960) originally distinguished between non-programmed decisions, requiring unique solutions to their unique complexity, and programmed decisions, which are repetitive and routine. Ansoff (1969) later viewed them as a function of the organisational structure and distinguished between strategic, administrative and operating decisions, depending on their long versus short-term implications and the management level at which they are taken. In owner-managed firms this distinction vanishes, as the owner is the central decision-making unit. More recent classifications have kept the distinction between operational decisions, concerning day-to-day management, and strategic decisions, concerning organisational policy and direction (Dearlove, 1998).

Few studies have however considered small firms' perspectives and their distinctive features, namely: the fact that decision-making tends to rest with one or two owners; that direct involvement in the daily running of the business diminishes the need to formally collect information and that small businesses often face financial instability and greater risk exposure (Gore et al., 1992). A strong need for independence combined with lack of expertise often compounds the issue, preventing the adoption of a prescribed approach to growth and development (Ennis, 1999). The ensuing lack of structured, rational and long-term decision-making is reflected in simpler structures and strong evidence of personality-driven firms (Culkin and Smith, 2000). Further, owners' values play a key role, just as personal ethics act as the greatest determinant of ethical behaviour (Quinn, 1997). The strong degree of identification between owners and their business is in fact another characteristic feature of small businesses. This notion is emphasised by Greenbank (2000, p. 408) who recognises small firm decision-making as the product of a complex interaction between the owner-manager's individual, social and economic context. This leads to the argument that intuitive methods may represent the more appropriate and therefore 'rational' form of decision-making in small firms.

2.1. Environmental concern and behaviour

A prominent feature in public opinion surveys, environmental concern has been labelled as "an extra, affordable in a time of plenty, but disposable when hard times come" (Taylor, 1997, p. 113). Viewed as a general environmental attitude, concern was initially measured in relation to specific issues and correlated to socio-demographic and personality variables. Van Liere and Dunlap (1981) later disputed the uni-dimensional measurement of concern, with subsequent studies identifying a correlation between cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural variables using a multi-dimensional scale (Schlegelmilch et al., 1996). A gap nevertheless remains between concern and behaviour, as a high degree of environmental consciousness does not necessarily translate into pro-environmental behaviour. Studies aiming to prove the existence of this correlation followed various approaches. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991) produced reliable estimates, with Hines et al. (1987) identifying, additionally, situational and personality factors, knowledge of issue and action strategies and locus of control. To date, Gustin and Weaver (1996) remains the only successful application of the theory within a hospitality context. Research following Schwartz's (1977) norm-activation theory found that individuals engaging in pro-environmental behaviour exhibited an eco-centric value orientation and a stronger moral obligation to protect the environment (Nordlund and Garvill, 2002). Studies investigating environmental behaviour from a motivational perspective, conversely, mainly evolved from De Young's (1986) and Vining and Ebreo's (1990) research, which established the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

2.2. Hospitality businesses and the environment

Interest in the environmental response of hospitality businesses has been scarce (Schaper and Carlsen, 2004) and mainly focused on the corporate sector, despite small concerns representing over 40% of the UK hotel and restaurant industry (DTI, 2005). Low levels of action were first exposed by Stabler and Goodall (1997), while Kirk's (1998) survey of Edinburgh hotels found that action primarily occurred where direct financial gains could be achieved. Similarly, Knowles' et al. (1999) and Donovan and McElligott's (2000) research on, respectively, London and Irish hotels revealed a shallow integration of environmental concerns into business values. Studies investigating small firms painted a similar picture, with action revolving around simple, low-cost measures, many "established priorities that do not necessarily involve owners in active and innovative environmental work" (Hobson and Essex, 2001, p. 141). Further, measures tended to be implemented

Table 1
Practices implemented by respondent businesses

Recycling glass, paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminium, cooking oil
Composting food and garden waste
Reusing leftover soaps/toiletries for personal or staff use, or use in public washrooms; reusing foil, paper, envelopes, menus
Using natural cleaning alternatives (e.g. lemon juice, vinegar, salt)
Fitting energy saving devices (e.g. dimmer/time switches, sensors, energy efficient lightbulbs); using energy efficient appliances
Supplying guests with small kettles, TV remote controls with rechargeable batteries
Monitoring consumption
Improving insulation
Installing water saving devices (e.g. flow regulators, waterless urinals)
Using economy wash cycle; towel/linen policy
Providing information on public transport, walks and cycle routes
Environmental policy; communicating policy to customers
Involving guests in waste segregation
Purchasing ethical and environmentally friendly products
Environmental training
Membership of environmental bodies/charities
Establishing a wildlife area in the garden; putting up bird/bat boxes

ad hoc (Dewhurst and Thomas, 2003), rather than within a coherent environmental management strategy, though survey evidence indicates a move towards the formal integration of environmental responsibility, with 22% of the smallest businesses (0–9 employees) having an environmental policy in place (NetRegs, 2005). Small firms' limited awareness of their environmental footprint remains, however, a barrier (Vernon et al., 2003), not only in the UK tourism industry (Mensah, 2006). Moreover, research on European hotels found that inaction reflected a perceived lack of customer demand for environmental improvements, a reminder of the importance of raising both operators' and customers' awareness for action to occur (Bohdanowicz, 2005).

3. Methodology

Positivism has traditionally informed the line of research in a hospitality context (Lynch, 2005), contributing little to an understanding of small firms' environmental attitudes and behaviour. The adoption of an interpretivist stance in this study enabled the exploration of participants' personal worldview, outwith the parameters of predetermined analytical categories. Purposive criterion sampling (Patton, 1990) was used to identify independent, environmentally certified, serviced accommodation businesses. Independent ownership was a selection criterion because an investigation into decisional factors must take place with the decision-maker, i.e. the person responsible for making, not implementing, the decision, as may be the case in chain-owned operations. Explicit indication of environmental action (GTBS accreditation) was also a criterion, since a written environmental policy cannot be taken as the sole indicator of a business' environmental status; equally the lack of one does not imply the absence of involvement. The

GTBS was the chosen sampling frame. Unlike other schemes, it counts a large number of smaller sized operations, primarily independent ones. Scotland was the area of study, as this is where the GTBS operated at the time of the research. Information from the GTBS website and the regional VisitScotland accommodation brochures was used to identify the sample. Following a telephone enquiry to confirm ownership status and obtain contact details, a sample of 48 businesses willing to participate was identified out of 96 which met the criteria. A letter detailing the nature of the study and requesting participation was sent to prospective informants. Subsequent to a follow-up telephone call to schedule interviews the sample figure fell to 39. Access and issue saturation determined the size of the final sample, which consisted of thirty lodging operations (see Tables 2 and 3). Geographically, the sample was spread across Scotland, though clusters occurred in the South West and North of the country, broadly matching the GTBS' distribution pattern, where the greatest concentration of members per area is in the Highlands, possibly because the scheme was first piloted there.

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity of the research design. One-to-one, semi-structured interviews with the owner-manager (the decision-maker) were used to collect the data. To supplement the information obtained documentary evidence was also gathered. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Data were first analysed following Crabtree and Miller's (1992) template approach to coding, whereby a list of codes (template) representing the themes identified is developed, continually refined in the light of emerging data and used to guide the identification and interpretation of themes. Secondary analysis saw the use of cognitive mapping as a means of identifying the decisional factors leading to the adoption of environmental measures. The approach followed was that developed by Eden et al. (1983), based on Kelly's Personal Construct Theory (1955), whereby individuals' perception of an issue (constructs) are uncovered and portrayed in the form of cognitive maps. The software Decision Explorer was used as the analytical tool. The development of cognitive maps from interview transcripts poses an issue of validity; participants were therefore sent a copy of their interview transcript and corresponding map and asked to return it stating their dis/agreement. A 100% agreement rate was obtained out of a 66% response rate.

Table 2
Sample profile by establishment type

Type of establishment	No. of businesses
Small hotel	11
Guest house	7
Bed and breakfast	6
Hotel	5
Restaurant with rooms	1

Table 3
Sample profile by establishment size

No. of letting rooms	No. of businesses
5 or less	12
Between 6 and 10	10
Between 11 and 15	2
Between 16 and 20	3
Between 21 and 50	3

4. Findings

Firstly, businesses were found to have been environmentally active long before joining the GTBS. This indicated that participation in the GTBS was not a premise for action, but an incentive for further action. Also it meant that a distinction should be made between reasons for joining the scheme, and factors that influenced the adoption of environmental practices, which this paper now examines.

The 'path to greenness' varied as no individual or business is the same. Operators acting on cost grounds saw the introduction of environmental measures as a means of increasing operational efficiency. Operators acting in response to a growing environmental concern, conversely, viewed going green as a mere "evolution" to their way of thinking, thus a natural course of action. Lastly, a minority claimed to have always lived and operated sustainably in line with their environmental ethic. Respondents did not trace the adoption of environmental measures back to a particular point in time or a deciding moment, but identified factors that had influenced the process.

One key influence was the development of an environmental consciousness, to the extent that many directly associated it with their subsequent consideration of environmental practices. When probed, all respondents did in fact declare themselves environmentally concerned, though the extent of that claim varied. Indicatively, half of the sample viewed the environment as a "great concern", while the other simply regarded it as "a concern". Many took this as an opportunity to vent their frustration at the shameful waste of resources. Age was sometimes used to explain such reactions and greater levels of concern, as in this case:

…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!

Widely acknowledged was the role played by parental education:

…paper! I used to think I was hard done by as a child 'cause I never got clean pieces of paper to draw on, it was always scrap and that had a big influence on me. I was always encouraged not to waste, it was sort of ingrained in me! So, now, I am very careful about resources…

Events such as having a family also proved influential. The most concrete example was that of a participant who, once a keen fisherman, had stopped fishing after becoming a father, as he felt unable to justify to his young daughter the act of killing a fish. Education and vocational background were other influences, together with personal experiences. For some, exposure to the values of countries with a more explicit environmental culture had been crucial in awakening a sense of responsibility and desire to contribute, just as the experience of living in less affluent societies had proved enlightening for this respondent:

…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…

Similarly, exposure to local environmental initiatives had raised the awareness of some respondents who now actively participated in green activities. Others simply attributed their concern to their interest and love of nature and country life, or to their vegetarian ethic, as this hotelier explained:

…I am very aware of the environment, I've always been and I am vegetarian. I often wondered how I became one, my parents aren't, but these things came about because of beliefs. From a very early age I've been aware of the environment, I think there is definitely a connection there…

In one isolated case, a respondent referred to an eminent figure in the hospitality scene whom he greatly admired, as his source of inspiration. Surprisingly, only a few participants viewed customers as influential, as in this case:

…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 another instance, a Scandinavian guest had insisted her towel did not need to be replaced daily; a request which had bemused the owner but was not acted upon. Media influence, in contrast, was widely acknowledged. Watching a documentary on animal cruelty had induced one respondent to only buy cruelty-free products, while a programme on slavery in coffee and cocoa plantations had prompted instant action in this young hotelier:

…it really got to my conscience, so the next day I phoned the supplier and switched to fair-trade coffee and tea. Now the new menus are coming out with fair-trade information, it's in all the rooms so hopefully the message will spread…

Interestingly, when questioned on the perceived worth of their contribution most respondents contended that "…you have to think you are making a difference, no matter how small you are…", or as this owner argued:

> …it's very easy for people to feel totally pressurised and swamped especially on global issues because they feel the whole thing is out of your control, you are a tiny piece and your influence is negligible, so what's the point of making an effort? But no, I think it's like charity boxes, if everybody gave a penny then none of the charities would be short of money. Unfortunately it's hundreds of people out there who never even put one penny out and one or two people who put a fiver…

The exception were those who argued that no matter how much an individual contributed, responsibility for action lay with the big players, i.e. the government or the United States. Legislative pressure was rarely acknowledged. Location, on the contrary, was widely regarded as an influence, particularly by rural business owners, as stressed by this participant:

> …after all, our guests come here because they enjoy our pristine landscape, it all revolves around it, so it's extremely important to ensure we look after it.

5. The green journey

The fact that the adoption of an environmental profile had not been the fruit of a given decision at a particular point in time, nor represented a means to an end, is significant. With the exception of two medium-small hotels where measures had been introduced as part of a strategy to improve the overall performance of the business, action had in all other cases occurred in an evolutionary form under circumstances that, though particular to the individual and the business, shared elements of commonality, in terms of the contextual factors that influenced the process. Going green may thus be conceptualised as a journey, which saw the greening of business practice mirror the greening of the individual, with action originating, predominantly, in the domestic environment and gradually permeating through to business activities. Only where the owners did not live on site, as in the larger establishments, had the business acted as the vehicle for action. The clearer divide between the private and business domain in such cases is the distinctive feature here, and points to the idiosyncrasies of small, owner-managed operations where the family home fulfils a commercial purpose.

The absence of a deciding point explains the apparent lack of deliberation reported by participants and brings into question the relevance of much of the decision-making literature, which is more relevant to a decision made at a single point in time than to a series of events. According to conceptualisations found, strategic decisions are made by top management and influenced by their values; have major resource implications; are characterised by a high degree of risk and uncertainty and are accomplished through a rational thought process (Dearlove, 1998). Using this description, all decisions could technically be strategic, since the owner-manager is the single decision-making unit in the firm. Going green had also been a value-driven process, thereby fitting another criterion, but here is where similarities end. The implementation of measures did not have major resource implications, in that where a large capital outlay was required it matched the needs of the business, for example in terms of refurbishment or expansion. Accordingly, and because it happened gradually, it did not involve a high degree of risk. Lastly, the extent to which it occurred as a result of a rational thought process is debatable. Whilst the decision to use, for example, energy efficient lighting may have occurred following a rational evaluation of pros and cons, greening itself had not been the product of a rational and deliberate thought process, planned at the outset. Instead, it essentially reflected a personal lifestyle choice. The adoption of measures at a business level followed subsequently, their wider implementation often prompted by participation in the scheme, as, according to respondents, certification legitimised practices in the eyes of customers.

Central to the greening process had been the presence of an environmental consciousness, its development in turn influenced by factors that contributed to greening the individual and business practices. This is consistent with the notion that pro-environmental attitudes positively influence environmentally responsible behaviour (Hines et al., 1987). Also, stronger socio-environmental values have been attributed to small firm-owners (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000). The tracing of action to an existing and/or rising concern is not surprising given the nature of the sample, which consisted of environmentally active businesses that had mostly acted out of their own initiative. Because no attempt was made to measure the extent of these claims in a statistically valid fashion, these reported levels of concern are only indicative, also owing to the potential for biases and over-claiming. Nevertheless, they provide interesting insights. Noteworthy is the apparent association between concern and action levels. Cross tabulation revealed that respondents claiming to be greatly environmentally concerned had also reached higher GTBS award levels (Silver & Gold), contrary to those claiming a slight concern, who mostly held a Bronze award. Though not a measure of concern, the award level is indicative of the level of action undertaken, since the number and range of measures implemented determine the level of accreditation reached. The question rises as to whether action levels represent a true measure of concern. In this respect, the data showed that the greater the concern claimed, the more ethically motivated respondents claimed to be with regards to their grounds for action. Conversely, the lower the level of concern claimed, the more financially oriented the motivation for action (see Fig. 1).

This suggests that though higher levels of concern may be manifested in greater levels of action (e.g. Silver and

LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL
CONCERN
HIGH

Ethically-motivated Greens

MOTIVATIONAL
ORIENTATION
COST

Ethically & Cost-
motivated Greens

MOTIVATIONAL
ORIENTATION
ETHICS

Cost-motivated Greens

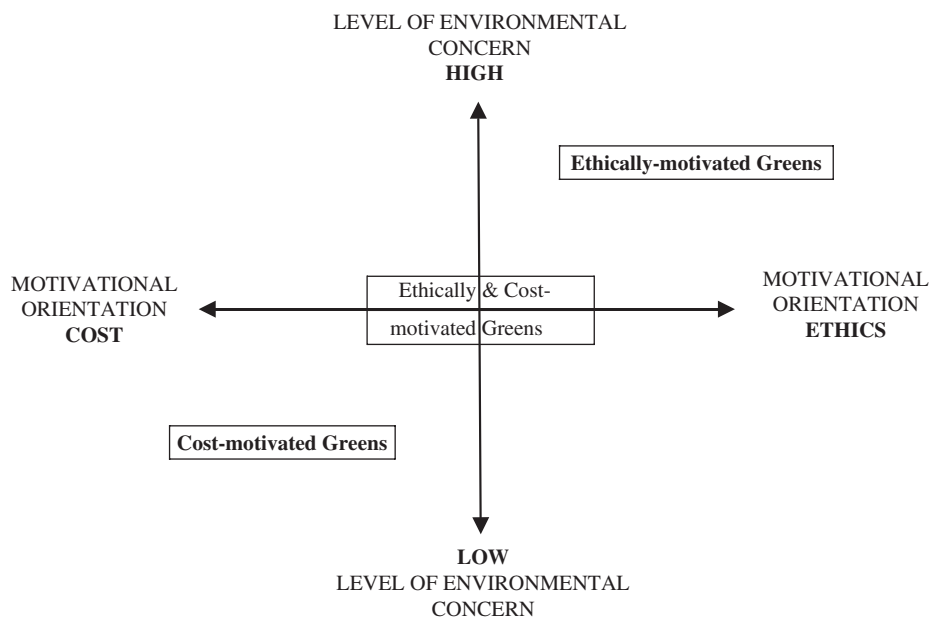**LOW**
LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL
CONCERN

Fig. 1. Level of concern and motivational orientation.

Gold award), one should steer clear of the assumption that the reverse is true, i.e. that greater levels of action imply higher levels of concern, as the underlying motivation for action (ethics, profit-maximising or both) becomes *the* determining factor. Further research could statistically validate this correlation, contributing to the understanding of environmental behaviour.

Noteworthy is also those influences predominantly related to the individual's personal life; an indication of the need to appreciate the complex set of circumstances surrounding owner-managers' personal sphere to understand their business behaviour, as echoed by Greenbank (2000) and Dewhurst and Thomas (2003). Formative had been the influence of upbringing, its effects still evident in some "ingrained habits". Many environmentally friendly activities were in fact none other than inherited thriftiness, thus explaining why some respondents took these activities for granted, in some cases not even regarding them as ecological, possibly because of a limited understanding of environment friendly action. Hence, there is scope for awareness-generating initiatives that can capitalise on the level of 'green' action already undertaken, often unknowingly, to recruit new members. Significant too is the fact that some participants attributed their environmental consciousness to their past occupation or vocational interest, despite circumstances being distinct for each respondent. This supports the notion that events are open to as many constructions as there are persons engaged in them (Kelly, 1955). The fact that justifications were a direct function of respondents' personal worldview also explains the diversity of influences, adding difficulty to, but simultaneously strengthening the case for, research into small business decision-making.

Also of interest is that rising levels of concern and engagement were attributed to age. Arguably, with maturity comes an increased sense of responsibility and awareness about the impact of one's actions. These changes are often compounded by value and priority shifts, which may engender greater interest in the environment. Only a few respondents openly acknowledged this influence, possibly because one may be less conscious of gradually occurring changes, or altogether not perceive them. Likewise, the responsibilities of parenthood had contributed to a renewed interest in environmental degradation and prompted behavioural changes. Perhaps less evidently green by some standards was the decision to "forgo fishing". Though not relating to a business situation this episode is indicative of the role personal circumstances play in decision-making. Similarly, the example of the young hotelier, whilst idiosyncratic of the respondent's temperament, further attests to the level of emotionality involved in decision-making where, in practice, rationality often succumbs to spontaneity. This contrasts with rational theory that purports the sequential consideration of alternatives in search of the highest payoff. In this case, switching to ethical products was a potentially risky decision, as public scepticism towards the quality of alternative products is still rife and their costs often higher. This behaviour also testifies to the owner's commitment to his stance, further illustrating the significance of personal values in decision-making. It thereby lends support to theories of decision-making that attribute a central role to intuition and emotion (Mellers et al., 1998).

Limited awareness amongst small business owners of their environmental footprint has consistently been identified as a barrier to change. This is where the study paints a rather encouraging picture, as most respondents seemingly felt strongly about the worth of their contribution, and valued it in the full realisation that its effect would be minimal in global terms. Though not a direct indication of

greater awareness, the data goes some way to suggest that participants were conscious of their impact, and had acted upon that knowledge. Being aware and concerned is one thing; believing that one's actions bring positive change is another; one does not imply the other. A possible explanation as to why participants gave no indication of discounting their business' environmental footprint by virtue of its small size may be that they had a strong internal locus of control; in other words, they believed in making a difference. In the absence of a valid measurement of this trait, this remains a tentative suggestion, which further research may help validate. Similarly, it is interesting that only one respondent acknowledged the influence of another business as a driving force toward the adoption of an environmental profile. The spirit of independence that characterises many small business owners who may be unwilling to admit to following the example of other or larger establishments may be an explanation, as may be the absence of such role models. Locational aspects also emerged as influential in terms of fostering a conservation ethic. This was evident particularly amongst "amenity-seeking migrants" (Carlsen et al., 2001, p. 282) who exhibited a stronger inclination to preserve the environment, possibly a reflection of their original motivation to establish the business and ensuing recognition of the importance to preserve its major asset. Sensitivity to locational benefits has been recognised as a characteristic of tourism operators (Thomas, 2004).

Awareness of possible financial gain had also played a role in line with Bohdanowicz's (2005) findings. Recent efforts to promote environmental best practice have resulted in funding initiatives and partnerships agreements between the government and trade associations. Widespread promotion of the financial benefits associated with environmental improvements may thus have borne its fruits. That said, small business owners' awareness of energy efficiency funding schemes and support is limited (NetRegs, 2005). Coverage in the press and trade literature of the impact of environmental taxation may nevertheless have raised awareness, though legislative pressure was rarely acknowledged. Whether this indicates that proactiveness among small businesses-owners is confined to a minority is debatable, as arguably, all participating businesses were being proactive in addressing environmental pressure. In this respect, the study provides evidence that a number of hospitality operators are being environmentally responsible. Though the fact that only a minority had acted under legislative pressure raises doubts on the effectiveness of government policy, in comparison with other industries hospitality operators are also relatively unaffected by environmental legislation. The fact that those who mentioned it had all undertaken environmental improvements for cost-reasons, may also be interpreted as the product of resentment, since industry figures point to a 15% increase in energy bills following the introduction of the Climate Change Levy by the UK Government (HCIMA, 2003). On this basis, it can be

speculated that businesses with a prevalent profit-maximising orientation may be more responsive to environmental taxation than businesses with dominant social values, whose acceptance of the 'polluter-pays-principle' might be greater. Further research may illuminate this aspect.

6. Conclusion and implications

This paper reported on the factors that influenced a number of hospitality operators to adopt an environmental profile. The uniqueness and size of the sample limit the applicability of the findings, as does the purposeful selection of informants. These limitations should however be set against the contribution the study has made to the subject discipline. In uncovering the dynamics of the decision-making process, it addressed an under-explored area of research, both in terms of the issues explored (small firm decision-making and going green) and the context (hospitality). The fact that going green was not a decision taken at a single point in time, but can be seen as a journey reflecting a series of personal lifestyle choices has various implications. Firstly, it points to the role played by personal values in small firms' decision-making, thus pressing the case to understand how owner-managers view the world in order to make sense of how decisions are made. In this respect, the findings support the notion that personal ethics are a key determinant of business behaviour, especially with regards to ethical/environmental issues. Secondly, it attests to the importance of understanding the context in which decisions are made, as this in turn can help ground the investigation of the motives driving small business owners, not least in relation to environmental performance. Thirdly, it highlights some of the difficulties of formulating an intervention approach, given that going green was largely an intrinsically driven change, and its seed planted long before. Greening the values and behaviour of individuals who do not share a similar outlook as the participants in this study is an arduous task, and one that will take a long time, but one that should nevertheless be pursued. The difficulties become greater in the absence of a decision point or triggers. Whilst influences were identified, these had contributed to, rather than prompted, greening. Moreover, these had not acted in isolation but within the social and personal complexities of the owner-manager. Thus, scope for manipulation at this stage becomes limited. Nonetheless, the fact that personal values and beliefs were a powerful motivating force also means that if current barriers are removed, positive action is likely to follow. Finally, uncovering the dynamics of going green has provided a further insight into how owner-managed firms operate. In this sense, the gradual ad hoc implementation of measures outwith the parameters of a specific business strategy is consistent with the lack of formal planning and policy formulation so often encountered in small businesses. This same degree of informality is reflected in the traditionally low numbers of establishments addressing

environmental issues through a formal environmental policy. In itself, this points to the importance of formulating initiatives in accordance with the needs of the target market in terms of its sectoral and size characteristics, whilst acknowledging the diversity of environmental motivators.

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