

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL ECOLOGES: EVIDENCE FROM THE PERUVIAN AMAZON

Fiorella Amelia OROZCO-SIBILLE ¹, Franklin CORDOVA-BUIZA ^{2*}, César Enrique NAVARRO-TERRAZAS ³, Renzo Antonio SOLARI-GARCÍA ¹, Juan Ignacio PULIDO-FERNÁNDEZ ⁴

¹ Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas, Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Lima, Peru; fiorella.orozco@upc.pe (F.A.O.S.); pctursol@upc.edu.pe (R.A.S.G.)

² Universidad Privada del Norte, Research and Innovation Department, Lima, Peru; franklin.cordova@upn.edu.pe (F.C.B.)

³ Amak Perú Hoteles, Lima, Peru; e.navarro@amakperu.com; e.navarro@amakperu.com (C.E.N.T.)

⁴ Universidad de Jaén, Department of Economics, Laboratory of Analysis and Innovation in Tourism, Jaén, Spain; jipulido@ujaen.es (J.I.P.F.)

Citation: Orozco-Sibille, F.A., Cordova-Buiza, F., Navarro-Terrazas, C., Solari-García, R.A., & Pulido-Fernandez, J.I. (2026). Responsible Tourism and Cultural Sustainability in Rural Ecolodges: Evidence from the Peruvian Amazon. *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 66(2spl), 1562–1570. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.662spl27-1788>

Abstract: Responsible tourism has established itself in recent decades as a key approach to reducing the negative impacts of tourism while generating sustainable benefits for host communities. Within this framework, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has taken on a strategic role in the hotel sector, especially in rural environments where sustainable practices can contribute to cultural conservation, social cohesion, and economic strengthening. However, academic literature shows that there is still a gap between the intentions declared by companies and the effective implementation of responsible initiatives, which raises the need for studies that delve deeper into their scope in specific contexts, such as rural Amazonian ecolodges. The objective of this study is to analyse the CSR practices implemented in a rural ecolodge in the Peruvian Amazon and their contribution to social, economic, environmental, and cultural sustainability at the community level. The research adopted a qualitative approach, oriented towards an in-depth analysis of the perceptions and experiences of the actors linked to the Amak Iquitos Ecolodge. Twenty-four semi-structured interviews were conducted with three stakeholder groups: 13 ecolodge employees, 8 guests, and 3 travel agency intermediaries. The criterion of theoretical saturation guided the determination of the sample, while the information was processed using content analysis with the support of NVivo software. The validity of the instrument was ensured through expert judgement in sustainable tourism and qualitative methodology. The results show that CSR at the ecolodge manifests itself in four interrelated dimensions. In the social dimension, the hiring of residents, gender equality, and respect for cultural traditions stand out. In the economic dimension, local purchasing initiatives and the ‘zero-kilometre gastronomy’ model, which strengthen transparent value chains, are noteworthy. In the environmental dimension, energy-saving actions, waste management, and the use of renewable energies are identified, although partial dependence on fossil fuels persists. Finally, the cultural dimension emerged as a cross-cutting theme that integrates the Amazonian worldview and the preservation of ancestral knowledge, strengthening community attachment and the authenticity of the tourist experience. In conclusion, the study shows that CSR practices in rural Amazonian environments not only generate positive social, economic, and environmental impacts but also consolidate the cultural legitimacy of ecolodges. This finding reinforces the importance of considering the cultural dimension as a fourth pillar of CSR and contributes to the academic literature with a framework that connects corporate sustainability with the preservation of local identities in emerging tourist destinations.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, community-based tourism, sustainable tourism, Peruvian Amazon, Iquitos

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has gained substantial relevance globally, being particularly crucial in the hotel sector, where environmental and social impacts are more clearly perceptible (Rahman et al., 2024). This sector faces complex challenges related to the management of natural and non-renewable resources; the absence of sustainable management strategies can have severe environmental consequences, due to the significant demand for resources generated by its daily operations (Wang et al., 2021; Usuriaga-Medrano et al., 2023).

In the Latin American context, CSR represents a crucial challenge, as the implementation of sustainable practices becomes essential for strengthening the resilience of the hotel sector (Peña-Miranda et al., 2022; Cordova-Buiza et al., 2021). Crises caused by natural disasters and pandemics have repeatedly disrupted tourism operations, creating vulnerabilities that affect the ability of establishments to operate sustainably and responsibly (Wut et al., 2021). In this

* Corresponding author

context, CSR becomes a strategic driver that shapes operational decisions and mediates the relationship between tourism development and community well-being. Given the pressure that tourism exerts on the environment and local communities, companies in the sector must take responsibility for the socio-economic and environmental impacts they generate. The adoption of CSR can mitigate the negative effects of their operations, such as the depletion of water and energy resources or the production of waste (De Grosbois, 2012; Rhou & Singal, 2020).

In Peru, the hotel sector has taken steps towards sustainable practices to strengthen customer and employee loyalty. Nonetheless, major challenges remain in achieving effective CSR implementation. Evidence shows a gap between intention and action, with limited progress in areas such as the environment and community relations, while immediate economic benefits are prioritised over long-term sustainable impacts (Bernal et al., 2018; Sotomayor et al., 2021). The main challenge is to integrate CSR genuinely and strategically into the organisational culture and hotel business model, ensuring that responsible practices are central to daily operations and not just a response to social or market pressure (Carro-Suárez et al., 2017). Despite these limitations, small hotel businesses develop unique approaches to CSR, motivated by their entrepreneurial orientation and a strong commitment to their employees (Tomasella et al., 2024).

Based on these considerations, the research problem is formulated in the following question: What CSR actions are being implemented in the hotel sector of a developing country, and how do they contribute to sustainable development and the well-being of local communities? Within this framework, the main objective of the study is to analyse the CSR practices applied in a rural ecolodge in Peru and their contribution to strengthening social, environmental, and economic sustainability. The research contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of CSR in tourism contexts in developing countries, with a special focus on the tension between stated intention and effective action in the hotel sector. From a practical perspective, the study offers recommendations for staff training models, local purchasing strategies, and environmental governance mechanisms to support companies in genuinely integrating CSR into their daily operations. Finally, the article is organised as follows: first, the conceptual foundations and background of the research are presented; then, the methodology adopted; next, the results and their discussion; and, finally, the conclusions, implications, and future lines of research.

Scientific literature offers various theories on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the hotel sector, understood as the ethical and strategic commitment of companies to contribute to social welfare, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation in the territories where they operate (Carro-Suárez et al., 2017; Mesta-Cabrejos et al., 2023). In the case of tourism, CSR takes on additional symbolic value, as it links business management with the protection of intangible heritage, local traditions, and the identity of host communities (Stylidis et al., 2017; Su et al., 2020).

Although CSR is traditionally conceptualised through three pillars, social, economic and environmental, recent studies in tourism highlight the emergence of a cultural dimension linked to heritage, identity and local traditions, particularly in rural destinations, where tourism contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, local identity, and community development (Adamkulova et al., 2026; Zayed et al., 2026).

In the hotel sector, social responsibility is geared towards balancing the well-being of employees, contributing to the development of local communities, and protecting the environment in which they operate, given their direct impact on the environment and society (Ma et al., 2024; Correa-Delgado et al., 2024).

Hotels should consider both their financial decisions and the well-being of stakeholders, integrating sustainable practices such as reducing resource consumption, generating decent employment, and promoting local culture. These actions create shared and lasting value for the benefit of customers, employees, and residents (Friedman, 1970).

Currently, a recent and widely accepted approach divides CSR into three pillars: social, economic, and environmental. Each responds to specific stakeholder expectations and reflects the comprehensive impact of companies on the community and the environment (Ubrežiová et al., 2015; Cordova-Buiza et al., 2022). The social aspect of CSR focuses on companies' commitment to the well-being of employees, local communities, and society as a whole (Meriem et al., 2024). This pillar involves practices that promote decent working conditions, respect for human rights, and inclusion in the workplace (De Almeida et al., 2024). At the community level, it also encompasses collaboration with educational, health, or infrastructure programmes that improve the quality of life. In this way, companies strengthen relationships with the community, build trust, and bring tangible benefits to their social environment (Sharma & Sathish, 2022). From an economic point of view, CSR not only considers the generation of profits for shareholders but also the contribution to the overall prosperity of society (Ionescu et al., 2018; Espinoza-Rivera et al., 2023).

This pillar is reflected in responsible financial management that ensures the long-term sustainability of the company and the equitable distribution of profits (De Almeida et al., 2024). In practice, it involves maximising profits while supporting the local economy by creating quality jobs and strengthening local supply chains (Choi et al., 2019). This approach promotes inclusive and equitable economic growth (Vărzaru et al., 2021).

The environmental aspect of CSR focuses on reducing the negative impact of business activities on the natural environment (De Almeida et al., 2024). It includes measures such as reducing emissions, saving energy and water, and adopting renewable energies (Li et al., 2019). Environmental responsibility also involves promoting a circular economy and adopting clean technologies (De la Garza et al., 2024; Riofrio-Carbajal et al., 2023). By prioritising environmental protection, companies not only comply with regulations but also respond to the growing expectations of consumers and business partners who value a commitment to sustainability (González-Rodríguez et al., 2015).

In recent years, numerous studies have been conducted linking CSR to the accommodation sector. Kennedy (2013) examined the CSR reports of four large hotel groups in Zimbabwe. Analysis of websites, annual reports, and mission

statements revealed that financial information predominated over social and environmental information. The results also showed a lag compared to hotels in developed countries, suggesting a need for greater transparency and accountability. Subsequently, Cherapanukorn & Focken (2014) analysed how luxury hotels in Asia communicate their CSR policies through the websites of ten leading brands. Although most followed international standards such as ISO 14001 and ISO 26000, much of their CSR activity was confused with common business practices, limiting its real and measurable impact. That same year, Park & Levy (2014) examined the CSR perceptions of 575 front-line employees in US hotels.

The results showed that workers' perceptions included dimensions related to the community, colleagues, and customers, and that these positively influence organisational identification and the quality of the relationship with the hotel. Later, Rhou & Singal (2020) conducted a review of 170 studies on CSR in hotels between 1990 and 2017. Their findings indicate that, although CSR improves financial performance and customer satisfaction, the literature still lacks studies exploring its role in sustainable development and community well-being, especially in developing countries.

Along the same lines, Pham et al. (2022) conducted a comparative case study on Six Senses Hotels and Air Canada, exploring how they respond to the 17 SDGs in their operations. The results suggest a positive relationship between CSR and quality of life, with conscious efforts to maintain this relationship. Similarly, Dung et al. (2024) studied 646 hotel managers on the south-central coast of Vietnam. Applying a structural equation model, they found that CSR directly improves hotel performance, and that this positive effect increases when employee engagement, corporate reputation, and pro-environmental practices are strengthened. For their part, Cao et al. (2024) analysed how CSR communication in a developing country influences green loyalty among customers. The results show that strategic CSR communication on social media significantly promotes green loyalty ($\beta = 0.301$, $p < 0.001$), strengthening corporate reputation and environmental sustainability. In the case of Bangladesh, Rahman et al. (2024) explored the relationship between CSR and green financing to promote sustainable tourism. Their results suggest that the integration of CSR and green financing promotes greater sustainability and supports the local economy ($p < 0.05$).

Similarly, Sarwar et al. (2024) investigated the influence of human resource management on CSR and sustainable performance in 1,312 hotels in the United Kingdom, Italy, and Pakistan. The results confirmed a positive impact of HRM on CSR ($\beta = 0.33$; $p < 0.001$) and sustainable performance ($\beta = 0.23$; $p < 0.001$), which was stronger in five-star hotels. Finally, Ahmad et al. (2024) assessed the relationship between CSR and creativity among 428 employees in the hospitality sector in an emerging country. The results indicate that CSR fosters creativity through the promotion of altruistic values and contributes to community well-being by encouraging participation in social and environmental initiatives.

Despite broad academic support for the importance of CSR, the literature shows a significant gap between stated intentions and actual actions. Many hotels adopt a discourse of sustainability, but the practices implemented are partial or insufficient, especially in environmental management. This intention-action gap highlights the challenge of translating commitments into actionable plans, thereby increasing the risk of greenwashing practices (Rhou & Singal, 2020).

Although 'buy local' is promoted as a CSR strategy, some authors warn that it can create risks of economic dependence of communities on hotel chains. If not accompanied by participatory governance and economic diversification, it can weaken local resilience (Sharma & Sathish, 2022). Likewise, ecolodges face energy dilemmas: the adoption of renewable systems reduces emissions, but can increase operating costs or limit scalability, affecting competitiveness (Li et al., 2019). A third challenge is the measurement of results. Although international frameworks such as ISO 26000 exist, the literature highlights the lack of standardised metrics for assessing social and environmental impacts in the hotel industry. This shortcoming limits the ability to objectively demonstrate how CSR contributes to sustainable development and community well-being (Cherapanukorn & Focken, 2014; Rhou & Singal, 2020).

When considered collectively, these tensions show that CSR should not be understood solely as a set of good practices, but as a field where strategic, social, environmental, and cultural dilemmas converge. This critical perspective allows us to understand CSR as a process of identity and territorial construction that reflects how rural communities reinterpret sustainability from their own worldviews. Consequently, there is a reinforced need for research that analyses the interaction between corporate responsibility, local culture, and sustainable tourism in developing countries, comparing cultural dynamics that allow lessons to be extrapolated to rural contexts in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted is qualitative and comprehensive, aimed at an in-depth analysis of the experiences and perceptions of local communities, the understanding of which can serve as a methodological reference for similar studies in community-based ecolodges in other rural regions. This approach not only enriches academic knowledge about responsible tourism but also has practical implications by offering tools and recommendations for ecolodge managers, responsible tourists, and policymakers (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza-Torres, 2018). This research was developed from 24 in-depth interviews, divided into three groups: 13 employees of the ecolodge (administrative and operational areas), 3 travel agency intermediaries, and 8 guests who stayed at the establishment located in the city of Iquitos, Peru. The Amak Iquitos Ecolodge is located in the Nanay River basin, 23 kilometres from the city, and operates under a responsible tourism model that combines sustainable hospitality with community participation.

Its low-impact infrastructure, built with local materials, integrates with the Amazonian ecosystem and promotes responsible consumption practices. In addition, it maintains partnerships with the communities of Las Palmas and Timicuro for the supply of food, handicrafts, and complementary services, making the ecolodge a regional benchmark for intercultural collaboration in rural environments. The interviews were conducted based on a guide of 11 questions,

designed around three categories: social dimension, economic dimension, and environmental dimension. The guide was reviewed by experts, including a specialist in sustainable tourism and an expert in qualitative methodology. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted in two ways: in person, in the case of guests and intermediaries, and via video calls through the Zoom platform for ecolodge employees. The criterion of theoretical saturation was used to ensure that the number of interviews was sufficient to identify patterns and construct solid categories of analysis. Theoretical saturation was reached when no new codes or thematic patterns emerged from the interviews.

In terms of processing, the interviews were transcribed and then subjected to content analysis. The information was classified and coded according to the three previously defined categories: social, economic, and environmental. NVivo software was used to organise the information, which allowed for the construction of a thematic coding tree that facilitated data traceability and the identification of relationships between categories. The codes were assigned uniformly using an E001–E024 format, ensuring consistency and methodological rigour in the traceability of the interviews.

From an ethical perspective, this study was conducted in accordance with the principles established by the APA standards (7th edition). Before each interview, informed consent was obtained from the participants, guaranteeing the confidentiality of the information and respect for the rights of the interviewees. Likewise, all sources, concepts, theories, or definitions used have been correctly cited and referenced, ensuring transparency and respect for academic authorship.

Table 1. Groups of interviewees and identification codes (Source: Own work)

GROUPS	DESCRIPTION	INTERVIEWEES
Contributors	Administrative staff who work remotely in administrative roles in the city of Lima.	E002, E004, E011, E024
	Operations in the areas of Food and Beverage, Housekeeping, Maintenance, and Security.	E001, E003, E005, E006, E007, E008, E009, E010, E023
Customers	Domestic and foreign guests who visit the ecolodge, some for tourism and others for research purposes.	E012, E013, E014, E015, E016, E017, E018, E019
Intermediaries	Travel agency operators who have commercial partnerships with Amak Iquitos Ecolodge.	E020, E021, E022

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the analysis of interviews conducted with the three stakeholder groups. The research identified and analysed the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions implemented by Amak Iquitos Ecolodge, highlighting how these initiatives contribute to sustainable development and the well-being of local communities.

Social dimension

A key finding is the company's strong commitment to the communities of Las Palmas and Timicuro, both in terms of direct employment and indirect job opportunities. With two exceptions, all permanent and temporary staff come from these localities, and the company trains residents to sell agricultural products to the ecolodge or other communities.

‘In various ways or through multiple forms of engagement, the ecolodge is always reaching out to the communities, as I said, in various ways [sic], we are reaching out. For example, we provide education and also work’ (E005).

In addition, the company promoted the enhancement of the locality by respecting its worldview, customs, and traditions through tourist itineraries that include community visits.

‘One of the ways we work with and support local communities is by developing itineraries that include visits where tourists can go and see a project such as the monkey rescue’ (E022).

Another finding is the inclusive and horizontal organisational culture. Employees and guests highlighted a working environment based on equality, respect, and training in English, food handling, sustainable practices, and external courses according to interests.

‘...the organisational structure is notably horizontal; every person is very important. Working at the ecolodge is like a cog in a wheel; everything is important, we are all equal, no one's opinion is above another’ (E024).

Intermediaries highlighted the commitment to gender equality in hiring women, although they note that in some communities, there is still cultural resistance to their participation in the workforce. Finally, both guests and employees feel satisfaction and pride in belonging, reflected in their attitude of service and benefits such as food, training, and flexible loans.

‘Yes! They look happy and proud to be part of their project’ (E014).

The social dimension showed a CSR model focused on inclusion, local employment, and community strengthening. In addition to employment generation, Amak's practices foster a sense of shared identity among employees and residents, who perceive their participation in the ecolodge as a way of representing Amazonian culture to visitors. This symbolic appropriation strengthens social cohesion and shows how responsible tourism can consolidate territorial pride and cultural belonging. However, challenges remain in gender equality and the full participation of women in some operational roles.

Economic dimension

In terms of the economic dimension, interviewees highlighted that the ecolodge strengthens the local economy through employment and the purchase of supplies from nearby producers, through projects such as ‘km 0’, which prioritises the acquisition of products within a one-kilometre radius for the gastronomic offer.

‘...we have designed our functionality through a trend called gastronomic km zero...’ (E003).

Guests and employees valued the formality of transactions, the perception of fair prices, and transparency in communication, which reinforces confidence in the service.

‘...yes, everything we had planned to do during our stay here has been done...’ (E015).

The economic dimension demonstrated the creation of shared value between the company, customers, and local suppliers, consolidating fair and transparent trade practices. Likewise, travel agency intermediaries highlighted that the commercial alliance model implemented by Amak generates trust and positions the Peruvian Amazon as a competitive destination based on principles of sustainability. This strategy demonstrates that rural economies can develop comparative advantages through local cooperation, creating a model that can be replicated in other Amazonian and Andean regions facing similar economic sustainability challenges.

Environmental dimension

In terms of the environmental dimension, employees highlighted that buying locally not only boosts the economy but also reduces the environmental footprint by minimising transport and fuel consumption. In addition, they highlighted the ecolodge's sustainable infrastructure, which avoids swimming pools, jacuzzis, and hot tubs, prioritising low-impact facilities.

‘...if you consume locally, it's more sustainable. There's less fuel consumption, etc...’ (E006).

Guests and employees valued environmental initiatives such as regulating water and electricity usage, waste separation, the use of solar panels, and active communication of sustainable policies in reservations, arrival, and stay.

‘...we have instructions that we can't have contact with the monkeys, that is, we can see them from a distance, but we can't touch them’ (E017).

Moreover, an operational contradiction was identified: the ecolodge uses a petrol generator to power the main dining room, cold storage rooms, and the water supply, which generates emissions and limits the consistency of its environmental practices.

‘...sometimes we have a bit of a problem with the electricity, suddenly not polluting too much with the petrol...’ (E009).

Overall, the environmental dimension reveals a genuine commitment to sustainability, although this coexists with operational contradictions, such as the use of a petrol generator. This duality reflects the real dilemmas of rural accommodations seeking to balance profitability, comfort, and sustainability. The results suggest that environmental consistency requires investment in hybrid energies and ongoing ecological education for guests and staff in order to transform technical limitations into opportunities for green innovation.

Cultural dimension

The analysis revealed the cultural dimension, evidenced in the appreciation of the Amazonian worldview and the promotion of local traditions. Both employees and guests highlighted that the tourist itineraries not only offer accommodation, but also integrate cultural experiences such as community visits, traditional rituals, and the preservation of ancestral knowledge.

‘What I liked most was that it wasn't just about sleeping here, but that they taught us how they live and their customs, which makes it different’ (E012).

This is also reflected in the pride expressed by employees in linking their identity to the ecolodge, which strengthens community attachment and contributes to a sense of belonging. Furthermore, tensions were also identified around gender roles, as resistance to female participation in the workplace persists in certain communities, showing that cultural CSR combines elements of revitalisation and challenging traditional social norms. A constant element in all dimensions is the training of employees, operators, guests, and local communities. This training strengthens job skills, promotes community development, and fosters environmental awareness. Training is a cross-cutting theme of the ecolodge's CSR, linking the social, economic, and environmental spheres. Across the board, testimonials show that the experience of working or staying at Amak has led to a reevaluation of Amazonian traditions. Several employees said that before coming into contact with visitors, they did not recognise the value of their cultural practices, but now they see them as living heritage. This process of reinterpretation turns the ecolodge into a space for intercultural dialogue, where hospitality also becomes a form of resistance and pride in identity. The lodge's cultural model can inspire similar initiatives in other rural destinations in Latin America that seek to link tourism and cultural revitalisation.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research confirm that Amak Iquitos Ecolodge has incorporated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions across four main dimensions: social, economic, environmental, and cultural. In the social dimension, the commitment to the community is reflected in the hiring of residents, gender equality, and respect for cultural traditions. These findings are in line with the literature that defines CSR as a balance between corporate interests and common welfare (Carro-Suárez et al., 2017; Razeg, 2010; Ma et al., 2024; Correa-Delgado et al., 2024).

However, the perceptions gathered also reveal cultural tensions around gender roles, which coincides with the gap between intention and action noted in previous studies (Bernal et al., 2018; Sotomayor et al., 2021). From a theoretical perspective, this contrast confirms that CSR in rural settings is not uniform but is conditioned by local social norms that can limit the effectiveness of inclusive practices. In the economic dimension, the ecolodge prioritised local employment and the purchase of local supplies through initiatives such as the ‘km 0’ programme.

This finding coincides with studies that highlight CSR as a driver of prosperity through responsible value chains (Ionescu et al., 2018; Espinoza-Rivera et al., 2023; Choi et al., 2019; Vărzaru et al., 2021). Guests also value transparency and fair pricing, reinforcing the consistency of economic practices with sustainability principles. Unlike experiences where CSR **has been limited** to general statements (Kennedy, 2013; Cherapanukorn & Focken, 2014), tangible fair-trade practices **are observed** at the ecolodge. The theoretical implication of this finding is that, in rural contexts, economic CSR can be consolidated not only as a source of social legitimacy but also as a competitive advantage for lodges that manage to integrate the interests of customers, suppliers, and the community.

In the environmental dimension, These findings reinforce that environmental responsibility in rural hospitality depends not only on infrastructural investments but also on the capacity to balance energy demands, operational feasibility and environmental coherence, which coincides with research highlighting the importance of environmental education and clean technologies (De la Garza et al., 2024). By contrast, partial dependence on a petrol generator constitutes an operational contradiction that limits environmental consistency, similar to that described in the literature on the intention-action gap in hotels (Rhou & Singal, 2020).

This finding also aligns with the approaches of Bernal et al. (2018) and Sotomayor et al. (2021), who warn that environmental advances are often restricted by operational and resource constraints. In theoretical terms, the case of the ecolodge demonstrates that sustainability in rural hospitality requires evaluating energy trade-offs and recognising that certain practices, although sustainable in appearance, can coexist with processes that reduce their positive impact.

Training emerges as a cross-cutting finding, as interviewees valued training programmes in languages, hospitality, and sustainable practices, although a comprehensive model has yet to be consolidated. This result is in line with the literature that recognises human capital formation as a driver of sustainability in tourism (Meriem et al., 2024; De Almeida et al., 2024; Sharma & Sathish, 2022; Sarwar et al., 2024). It also corroborates Ahmad et al. (2024), who demonstrated that CSR enhances employee creativity and contributes to community well-being. In contrast to studies that pointed out limitations in the depth of CSR actions (Kennedy, 2013; Cherapanukorn & Focken, 2014), the experience of the ecolodge reflects a sustained effort in education, although it faces the need for a more structured and replicable model. From a theoretical perspective, training can be understood as the axis that articulates the three dimensions of CSR, generating multiplier effects that benefit both the organisation and local communities.

Comparison with international studies reinforces the validity of the findings. Park & Levy (2014) concluded that CSR activities strengthen organisational identification, which coincides with the perception of pride expressed by the ecolodge employees. Sarwar et al. (2024) also demonstrated that human resource management enhances CSR and sustainable performance, which is evident in Ecolodge's horizontal culture. Likewise, Ahmad et al. (2024) confirmed that CSR promotes altruistic values, which are reflected in employee and guest satisfaction. These results contrast with the observations of Rhou & Singal (2020), who emphasise that the literature still lacks studies in rural contexts in developing countries. Consequently, the case of the ecolodge broadens the understanding of CSR beyond urban and luxury hotels, providing evidence from rural ecolodges that are often overlooked in academic research.

On the other hand, Pham et al. (2022) and Dung et al. (2024) highlighted that corporate reputation amplifies the positive effects of CSR. At the ecolodge, its reputation as a responsible ecolodge is strengthened through community inclusion and environmental practices. Cao et al. (2024) also demonstrated that strategic CSR communication fosters green loyalty, coinciding with the perceptions of guests who valued the sustainable policies received before and during their stay. Similarly, Rahman et al. (2024) showed that green financing enhances sustainability, which aligns with the ecolodge's efforts to seek funding for agricultural projects such as organic gardens. From a theoretical point of view, these findings confirm that CSR in rural ecolodges can be strategically linked to global trends such as green financing and digital communication, generating impacts that transcend the local level.

In terms of management implications, the results offer several practical lessons for the hotel sector in rural contexts. The first relates to local purchasing, which should be planned using carbon footprint criteria to avoid dependence on a few suppliers and diversify community opportunities. Secondly, the creation of a formal and certifiable training programme would strengthen employees' job and sustainability skills, ensuring that the benefits extend beyond the organisation. Thirdly, energy management needs to evolve towards a hybrid model that combines solar panels with battery systems, thus minimising dependence on petrol generators.

Finally, communication with guests should include clear explanations of the environmental trade-offs faced by the ecolodge, which not only reinforces transparency but also strengthens trust and corporate reputation. These implications show that CSR, in addition to being an ethical commitment, can become a concrete management strategy to consolidate sustainability in rural hotels. A cross-cutting aspect that emerges from the results is the cultural dimension of CSR at the ecolodge, manifested in the appreciation of local customs, the Amazonian worldview, and the inclusion of tourist itineraries with community visits. These actions allow guests not only to consume an accommodation service but also to participate in cultural tourism experiences that strengthen local identity and generate community pride. This finding is reported by the literature that highlights the role of tourism as a mechanism for revitalising and preserving cultural traditions, while promoting a sense of belonging in host communities (Stylidis et al., 2017; Su et al., 2020).

Likewise, community attachment, understood as the emotional and functional bond between residents and their territory, is evident in the pride of belonging to the ecolodge expressed by employees and in the satisfaction of guests who valued cultural authenticity. Nonetheless, cultural tensions are also identified, such as resistance to female labour in

certain communities, which coincides with research highlighting that tourism can reinforce or challenge pre-existing social norms (Bernal et al., 2018; Sotomayor et al., 2021). In this sense, cultural CSR is not without contradictions, as while it promotes inclusion and equity, it faces barriers derived from traditional cultural patterns.

From a theoretical perspective, the results of the ecolodge confirm that the cultural dimension should be understood as a cornerstone of CSR in rural hospitality, as it articulates social and economic aspects by valuing local identities. Furthermore, this reinforced the idea that community attachment is a determining factor for the sustainability of tourism, as it increases residents' willingness to support tourism initiatives and strengthens the legitimacy of businesses in rural areas (Stylidis et al., 2017). These findings **also show** that CSR in rural ecolodges **transcends** operational management, becoming a mechanism for cultural preservation and strengthening community attachment, in line with cultural studies in tourism, and that it can serve as an interpretative model of cultural CSR for other rural destinations seeking to integrate tradition, equity, and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to determine the Corporate Social Responsibility actions implemented in the hotel sector of a developing country and to understand how these contribute to sustainable development and the well-being of local communities. The results show that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at Amak Iquitos Ecolodge manifests in four main dimensions. In the social dimension, the hiring of residents, gender equality, and respect for cultural traditions stand out, strengthening ties with the host community. In the economic dimension, the 'km 0' model and other local purchasing initiatives boosts the regional economy and reinforced transparency in the value chain.

In the environmental dimension, energy-saving practices, the use of solar panels, and waste sorting demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, although limitations persisted due to partial dependence on fossil fuels. In the cultural dimension, which emerged from the analysis, the Amazonian worldview is valued, and local traditions are preserved through tourist itineraries and community experiences. This component not only strengthens the pride of belonging and community attachment among employees but also offers guests authentic contact with the local identity.

Overall, the findings illustrate that responsible tourism in rural Amazonian contexts requires the integration of community participation, environmental responsibility, and cultural preservation as mutually reinforcing components of sustainability. This approach strengthens local capacities, enhances socio-economic opportunities, and contributes to the safeguarding of cultural identity, demonstrating the relevance of CSR-based models for advancing sustainable development in rural communities. The contributions of this research are relevant both theoretically and practically.

From a theoretical perspective, it contributes to a better understanding of the gap between intention and action in the implementation of CSR practices, especially in the environmental field, and provides empirical evidence on a rural context that has been little explored in academic literature. In practice, the results offer guidance for hotel managers and policymakers by demonstrating that community inclusion, continuous training, and responsible energy management are fundamental pillars for strengthening sustainability in the sector.

Despite its contributions, the research has limitations, such as the fact that the analysis of a single case and the qualitative nature of the study restrict the possibility of generalising the findings to the entire hotel sector, and the use of interviews as the main source of information may introduce social desirability bias in the participants' perceptions. These restrictions, moreover, open up new research opportunities to broaden and deepen the understanding of CSR in rural tourism. In this regard, future research should advance comparative multi-case studies that identify common patterns among rural ecolodges in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, allowing for the validation of the intercultural applicability of the cultural CSR model identified in this study. It is pertinent to develop models that measure not only social and environmental impacts but also the effects on the preservation of intangible heritage, local identity, and community attachment. This will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the interrelationship between culture, sustainability, and tourism development in rural environments.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, F.A.O.S. and C.E.N.T.; methodology, F.C.B. and J.I.P.F.; software, F.A.O.S.; validation, J.I.P.F. and R.A.S.G.; formal analysis, F.C.B. and J.I.P.F.; investigation, F.C. and F.A.O.S.; data curation, R.A.S.G.; writing -original draft preparation, R.A.S.G., F.C.B. and F.A.O.S.; writing - review and editing, C.E.N.T. and J.I.P.F.; visualization, F.C.B.; supervision, C.E.N.T.; project administration, F.A.O.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: Not applicable.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study may be obtained on request from the corresponding author.

Acknowledgements: The research was made possible thanks to the equal scientific participation of all the authors involved and the methodological contribution of Henri Kuokkanen.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Adamkulova, C., Akylbekova, G., Tynaliyev, U., & Kydyraliev, S. (2026). Prospects for the development of rural tourism as a tool for sustainable development of rural regions. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 64(1), 563–572. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.64148-1699>
- Ahmad, N., Han, H., & Kim, M. (2024). Elevated emotions, elevated ideas: The CSR-employee creativity nexus in hospitality [Article]. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 34(6), 891-914. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-11-2023-0288>
- Bernal, J., Leo Rossi, E., & Navarrete, M. (2018). Responsabilidad Social Empresarial de los servicios hoteleros: valoración de los consumidores (Corporate Social Responsibility of Hotel Services: Valuation of Consumers) [Article]. *RAN-Revista Academia & Negocios*, 4(2). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3308089>
- Cao, P., Sial, M. S., Álvarez-Otero, S., Brugni, T. V., & Comite, U. (2024). Eco-engagement: Tracing CSR communication's ripple effect on consumer hospitality loyalty [Article]. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 79, 103879. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103879>
- Carro-Suárez, J., Sarmiento-Paredes, S., & Rosano-Ortega, G. (2017). La cultura organizacional y su influencia en la sustentabilidad empresarial. La importancia de la cultura en la sustentabilidad empresarial [Article]. *Estudios gerenciales*, 33(145), 352-365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.estger.2017.11.006>
- Cherapanukorn, V., & Focken, K. (2014). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability in Asian luxury hotels: Policies, practices and standards [Article]. *Asian Social Science*, 10(8), 198-209. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n8p198>
- Choi, D., Chung, C. Y., & Young, J. (2019). An economic analysis of corporate social responsibility in Korea. *Sustainability*, 11(9), 2676. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11092676>
- Cordova-Buiza, F., Antaurco-Perez, J. J., Espinoza-Prieto, B. E., & Huerta-Tantalean, L. N. (2022). Benefits of CSR Through Quinoa Biotrade in South American Communities [Article]. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, ECIE*, 17(1), 133-140. <https://doi.org/10.34190/ecie.17.1.345>
- Cordova-Buiza, F., Huaranga-Castillo, F., & Trillo-Corales, C. (2021). Corporate social responsibility actions in agribusiness: Towards sustainable community development. *Proceedings of the 2021 IEEE Sciences and Humanities International Research Conference, SHIRCON 2021*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/SHIRCON53068.2021.9652243>
- Correa-Delgado, D. J., Mantilla-Gallardo, S. Y., Vigo, M. D. L. M. E., & Cordova-Buiza, F. (2024). A Community's Perspectives on the Impacts of Tourism [Perspectivas De Una Comunidad Hacia Los Impactos Del Turismo] [Article]. *Revista Ibérica de Sistemas e Tecnologías de Informação*, (E69), 611-624 (In Spanish).
- De Almeida Barbosa Franco, J., Franco Junior, A., Battistelle, R. A. G., & Bezerra, B. S. (2024). Dynamic Capabilities: Unveiling Key Resources for Environmental Sustainability and Economic Sustainability, and Corporate Social Responsibility towards Sustainable Development Goals [Article]. *Resources*, 13(2), 22. <https://doi.org/10.3390/resources13020022>
- De Grosbois, D. (2012). Corporate social responsibility reporting by the global hotel industry: Commitment, initiatives and performance [Article]. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 896-905. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2011.10.008>
- De la Garza Carranza, M. T., López-Lemus, J. A., Ibarra, Q. A., & González, S. H. (2024). Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Results, a Managerial Perspective [Article]. *Revista de Gestão Social e Ambiental*, 18(8), e06101-e06101. <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n8-064>
- Dung, P. T., Hoang, H. T., & Son, N. P. (2024). Unlocking sustainable success: the transformative impact of CSR on hotel performance [Article]. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2392025. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2392025>
- Espinoza-Rivera, F. R., Huertas-Vilca, K. S., Obando-Peralta, E. C., & Cordova-Buiza, F. (2023). Corporate social responsibility in Latin American corporations: role and importance [Article]. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 21(2), 642-652. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.21\(2\).2023.58](https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.21(2).2023.58)
- Friedman, M. (1970). The social responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits [Article]. *New York Times Magazine*, 17, 122-126. https://publish.uwo.ca/~cyano/UWOTrick/Past_Handouts_files/Friedman,%20NYTM%201970.pdf
- González-Rodríguez, M. R., Díaz-Fernández, M. C., & Simonetti, B. (2015). The social, economic and environmental dimensions of corporate social responsibility: The role played by consumers and potential entrepreneurs [Article]. *International Business Review*, 24(5), 836-848. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2015.03.002>
- Hernández-Sampieri, R., & Mendoza-Torres, C. (2018). Research methodology: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods [*Metodología de la investigación: Las rutas cuantitativa, cualitativa y mixta*]. Mc Graw -Hill Interamericana.
- Ionescu, G. H., Firoiu, D., Pirvu, R., Bădîrcea, R., & Drăgan, C. (2018). Implementation of integrated management systems and corporate social responsibility initiatives-a Romanian hospitality industry perspective [Article]. *Sustainability*, 10(10), 3684. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10103684>
- Kennedy, N. (2013). CSR reporting among Zimbabwe's hotel groups: a content analysis [Article]. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25(4), 595-613. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596111311322943>
- Li, H., Sajjad, N., Wang, Q., Muhammad Ali, A., Khaqan, Z., & Amina, S. (2019). Influence of transformational leadership on employees' innovative work behavior in sustainable organizations: Test of mediation and moderation processes [Article]. *Sustainability*, 11(6), 1594. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061594>
- Ma, W., Li, R. Y. M., Manta, O., & Alzuman, A. (2024). Balancing wellbeing and responsibility: CSR's role in mitigating burnout in hospitality under UN-SDGs [Article]. *Sustainability*, 16(8), 3374. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16083374>
- Meriem, B. Z., Abdelhamid, N., & Hamid, H. (2024). Social Responsibility and Financial Performance in The Covid-19 Era: Support For The Experience Of Moroccan Smb [Article]. *Economic and Social Development: Book of Proceedings*, 18(1), 305-314. <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n1-146>
- Mesta-Cabrejos, V. F., Huertas-Vilca, K. S., Wong-Aitken, H. G., & Cordova-Buiza, F. (2023). Corporate social responsibility in the banking sector: a focus on Latin America and the Caribbean [Article]. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), art. no 668. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01950-1>
- Park, S. Y., & Levy, S. E. (2014). Corporate social responsibility: Perspectives of hotel frontline employees [Article]. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(3), 332-348. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2013-0034>
- Peña-Miranda, D. D., Guevara-Plaza, A., Fraiz-Brea, J. A., & Camilleri, M. A. (2022). Corporate social responsibility model for a competitive and resilient hospitality industry [Article]. *Sustainable Development*, 30(3), 433-446. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2259>

- Pham, Q. M., Dhir, M., & Guillomet, T. C. (2022). How do corporate charitable and economic social responsibility practices help to improve the quality of work life for employees? [Article]. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 14(3), 300-311. <https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-02-2022-0021>
- Rahman, M. H., Tanchangya, T., Rahman, J., Aktar, M. A., & Majumder, S. C. (2024). Corporate social responsibility and green financing behavior in Bangladesh: Towards sustainable tourism [Article]. *Innovation and Green Development*, 3(3), 100133. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.igd.2024.100133>
- Razeg, F. C. (2010). Entre el concepto y la práctica: responsabilidad social empresarial [Article]. *Estudios gerenciales*, 26(117), 119-130. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0123-5923\(10\)70137-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0123-5923(10)70137-6)
- Riofrio-Carbal, M., Olavarria-Benavides, H. L., Robles-Fabián, D. A., & Cordova-Buiza, F. (2023). New tourist needs and perceptions on sustainability during the pandemic: An analysis of Paracas National Reserve, Peru [Article]. *Innovative Marketing*, 19(1), 37-47. [https://doi.org/10.21511/im.19\(1\).2023.04](https://doi.org/10.21511/im.19(1).2023.04)
- Rhou, Y., & Singal, M. (2020). A review of the business case for CSR in the hospitality industry [Article]. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 84, 102330. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102330>
- Sarwar, H., Ishaq, M. I., & Franzoni, S. (2024). Influence of HRM on CSR and performance of upscale hotels in developed and developing countries [Article]. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 26(1), 335-357. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-022-02711-x>
- Sharma, E., & Sathish, M. (2022). "CSR leads to economic growth or not": An evidence-based study to link corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities of the Indian banking sector with economic growth of India [Article]. *Asian Journal of Business Ethics*, 11(1), 67-103. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13520-022-00142-5>
- Stylidis, D., Shani, A., & Belhassen, Y. (2017). Testing an integrated destination image model across residents and tourists [Article]. *Tourism Management*, 58, 184-195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.10.014>
- Sotomayor, S., Ventas, N., & Gronau, W. (2021). Corporate social responsibility in luxury hotels in Cusco (Peru) to benefit indigenous communities [Article]. *Hospitality & Society*, 11(2), 137-157. https://doi.org/10.1386/hosp_00036_1
- Su, X., Li, X., Wang, Y., Zheng, Z., & Huang, Y. (2020). Awe of Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Perspective of ICH Tourists [Article]. *SAGE Open*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020941467>
- Tomasella, B., Ali, A., & Gill, D. (2024). Hospitality that cares: a qualitative investigation into small foodservice businesses' social responsibility [Article]. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 27(12), 1853-1869. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2214849>
- Ubrežiová, I., Kozáková, J., & Malejčíková, A. (2015). Corporate social responsibility and perception of environmental pillar in the selected set of the Slovak enterprises [Article]. *Procedia economics and finance*, 34, 542-549. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671\(15\)01666-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(15)01666-4)
- Usuriaga-Medrano, D. J., Farro-Portocarrero, I., Fernandez-Hurtado, G. A., & Cordova-Buiza, F. (2023). Corporate Social Responsibility Latin America: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda. In *18th European Conference on Management, Leadership and Governance. Academic Conferences and publishing limited*, 19(1), 406-415. <https://doi.org/10.34190/ecmlg.19.1.1653>
- Vărzaru, A. A., Bocean, C. G., & Nicolescu, M. M. (2021). Rethinking corporate responsibility and sustainability in light of economic performance [Article]. *Sustainability*, 13(5), 2660. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13052660>
- Wang, Z., Ren, S., Chadee, D., & Sun, C. (2021). The influence of exploitative leadership on hospitality employees' green innovative behavior: A moderated mediation model [Article]. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 99, 103058. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.103058>
- Wong, A. K. F., Köseoglu, M. A., Kim, S. S., & Leung, D. (2021). Contribution of corporate social responsibility studies to the intellectual structure of the hospitality and tourism literature [Article]. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 99, 103081. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.103081>
- Wut, T. M., Xu, J. B., & Wong, S. M. (2021). Crisis management research (1985–2020) in the hospitality and tourism industry: A review and research agenda [Article]. *Tourism Management*, 85, 104307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104307>
- Zayed, W., Hassen, Z., Fridhi, A., & Bali, N. (2026). Sport education, cultural studies and tourism: Interdisciplinary perspectives on identity, heritage, and social development. *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 65(2), 1070–1077. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.65241-1746>

Article history: Received: 18.11.2025 Revised: 14.03.2026 Accepted: 15.06.2026 Available online: 30.06.2026