


Uncontrollable experiments and false negatives – the importance of researcher embeddedness in changing behaviours at tourist accommodation

Alexandra Coghlan, Susanne Becken, Stefen MacAskill, Christopher Warren

*3rd Critical tourism studies – Asia Pacific Conference
BUV Hanoi 13-17 February 2023.*

The why and how of the study

- Not making much progress towards sustainability
 - Buildings account for high proportion of energy usage
 - Tourists have high energy usage
 - Experiments are a better way of getting to sustainability than surveys, and observable, measurable behaviours better than self-reports
 - Scoping review of 28 experimental studies
 - 8 pro-environmental behaviours, 13 theories.
- 

The what of the study (spoiler alert)

Four findings emerged:

1. Almost no consistency in results
2. theory-based predictions are relatively rarely born out by the findings.
3. Intervening factors are SUPER important
4. Replications studies rare (unlike in the sciences) and almost no one has published more than one experimental study

WHAT DOES THAT TELL US??

New approaches

Study 20

Modelling/Visible accom.
provider commitment

Changes in
infrastructure to
match request
with action

Nudges

Study 8

Choice architecture changes

Changes in default
settings

Games

Study 16

Humour

Vouchers

Donations

Pleasure

Studies 1, 5, 13, 27

Character strengths

Reciprocation Theory

Reactance
Theory

Positive Psych Theory

Politeness Theory

Study 19

Study 14

Studies

4, 15,

22, 26

Studies 6, 9, 11, 12, 21

Studies 7, 25

Changing beliefs

Studies 17, 18, 23, 24

Value-Norm-Belief
Theory

Attribution Theory
Learning Theory

Construal Level
Theory

Prospect
Theory

Persuasive
communication

Feedback

Behaviourism Cognitivism
Social Constructivism

Actor Network Theory

Cognitive
Dissonance
Theory

Descriptive norms

Injunctive norms

Commitment Theory

Social Norm Theory

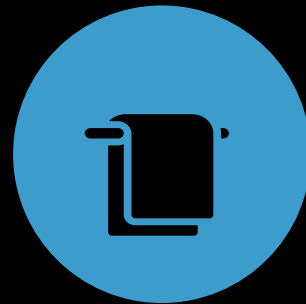
Social norms

Studies 2, 3, 10

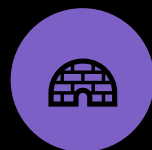
Why “researcher embeddedness”?



Goldstein et al. (2011) report that *“data from several room attendants who did not understand our directions during training due to the language barrier or who did not follow our instructions throughout the study were excluded from the analyses”* (p.449).

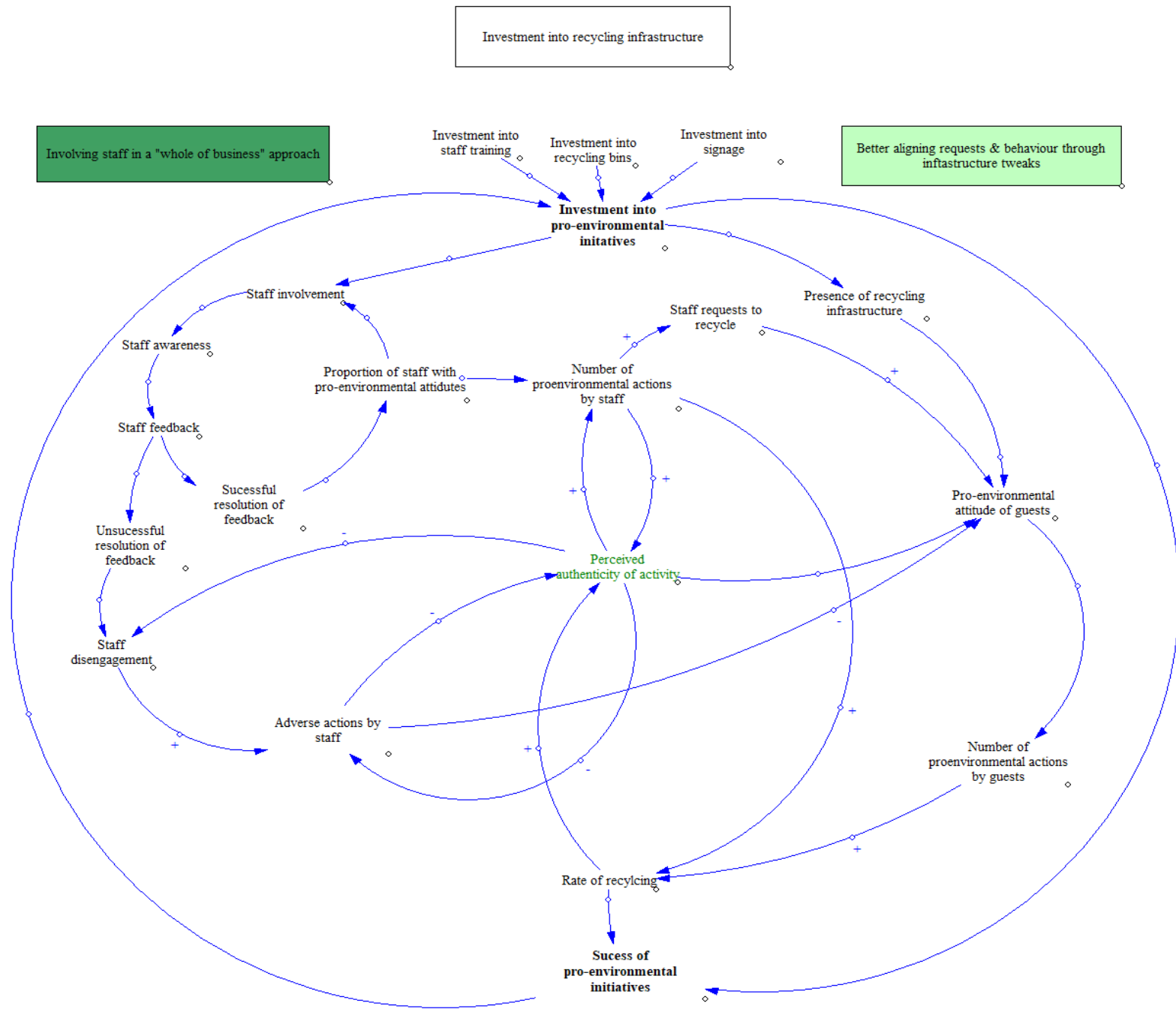


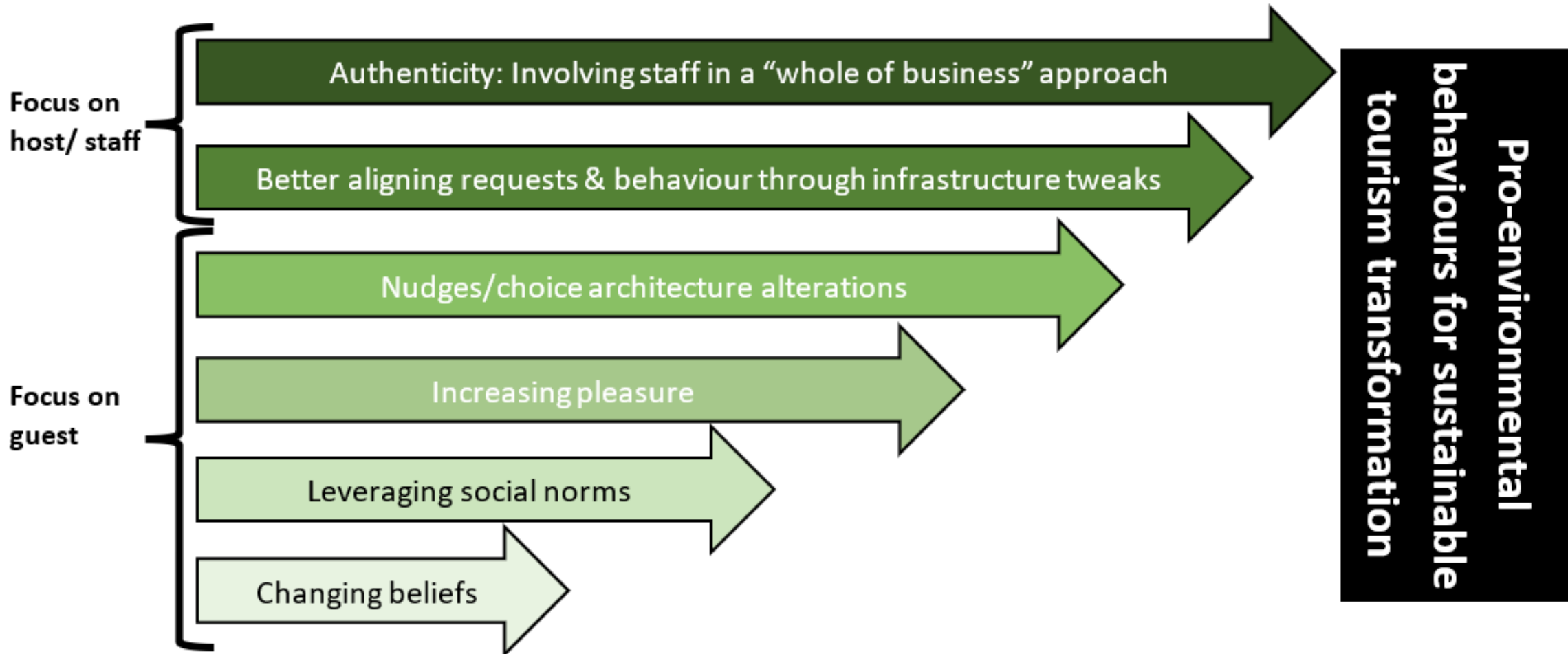
Bapuji et al.’s (2012) study of towel reuse reports that housekeeping often guessed what guests wanted done with their towels as guests “throw their towels all over the place: tub, floor, counter tops, bed, chair, everywhere” (p.1593).



Our own experience....

Systems diagram





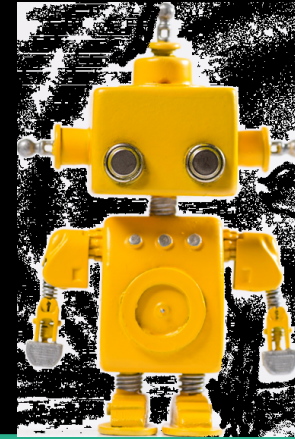
Authenticity & a crisis of consciousness

EXTERNAL

THEY
(policies, systems, etc)



IT
(technology)

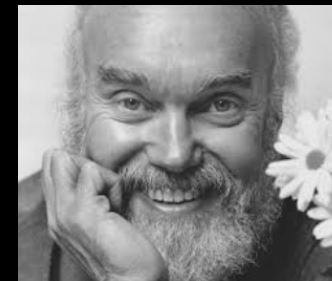


COLLECTIVE



WE
(grassroots, social norms, etc)

INDIVIDUAL



I
(beliefs, values, etc)

INTERNAL



Thank you.

