Sustainability in lodging, a great challenge or utopia?
An on-site case study in Sri Lanka

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Abstract
The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges of leaders (lodging owners) when implementing sustainable practices in the lodging industry in Sri Lanka. The authors have used two established models (SPM3 & STM) to create the new model called SLM3, which was used to extract data and measure the perceptions of leaders with a sustainable narrative, when implementing sustainable practices within their lodging in Sri Lanka. This was done in order to bridge a gap for the authors, since there was no established model yet, that could be used for the purpose of this research. After using the model for the current research in the context of Sri Lanka, the authors conclude that the model mostly fulfilled the aim that it was created for, although some minor alterations were made to improve its simplicity and make it more understandable. The main findings are that the main challenges of lodging owners with a sustainable narrative, when implementing sustainable practices are gender equality, lack of collaboration and networks, limited influence, the hierarchical system and long-term thinking related to education. The reported challenges prevent the lodging owners in Sri Lanka from implementing sustainable practices to the extent to which they would like to.

Keywords: sustainability; sustainable tourism; lodging industry; sustainable lodgers; transformational leadership; culture; stakeholder management
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Abbreviations and definitions

Abbreviations

3BL - Triple Bottom Line  
SD - Sustainable Development  
SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals  
PM - Project Manager  
SM - Stakeholder Management  
STM - Sustainable Tourism Model  
SPM3 - Sustainable Project Management Maturity Model  
SLM3 - Sustainable Lodging Manager Maturity Model

Definitions

**Sustainable development (SD)**  
The authors have used the definition of The UN World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) in its 1987 report, Our Common Future, who described SD as “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987). Doppelt (2017) then provided a practical definition as “Sustainability—the goal, and sustainable development—the behaviour needed to achieve that goal.” (Doppelt, 2017).

**Sustainable tourism**  
This article will base its definition of sustainable tourism on the work of Stoddard (2012)

“... sustainable tourism refers to a level of tourism activity that can be maintained over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural, and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place. For now, the term sustainable tourism (encouraged by both the UNWTO and the United Nations) is used as an umbrella concept under which terms such as eco-tourism, heritage and cultural tourism, as well as geotourism, may fall.”

**Triple bottom line**  
“The term sustainability has been defined in many ways, often focusing on environmental concerns. However, a more comprehensive definition that has gained worldwide use defines the term sustainability in three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social, often referred to as the “triple bottom line” (Elkington 1999; United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2018).

**Sustainable practices**  
The authors define sustainable practices as any effort to incorporate the 3BL and/or the SDGs.
I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background
This chapter provides a setting for the thesis providing background information that is necessary to understand the context in which the research problem was formulated, and the data was collected and analyzed.

1.1.1. Geographical context
The geographical and organizational context for this paper is the lodging industry in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka provides an interesting view of the lodging industry on the possibility of a positive environmental and social impact. Following the 26 year-long civil war that ended in 2009, the country has been in post-war development (Rotberg, 2012). Furthermore, the two decades of domestic war have resulted in the eastern province being in a state of neglect (Robinson & Jarvie, 2008). Adding to this, parts of Sri Lanka have encountered a post-disaster development phase due to the Tsunami that hit the southern coast in December of 2004 (Robinson & Jarvie, 2008).

1.1.2. Tourism trends: globally, and in Sri Lanka
The United Nations World Tourism Organisation, UNWTO, (2018) estimates that in 2030 global international tourist arrivals will reach 1.8 billion in comparison to 2016’s 1.2 million. The global tourism industry is so large that it provides one out of ten jobs, contributes to 10% of global GDP and consists of 7% of the worlds’ exports and 30% of service exports (UNWTO, 2018). The Sri Lankan lodging industry is growing at a steady rate and has emerged as a frontrunner of the country’s economic activities (Sri Lanka Tourist Board, 2016; Richter, 1999 cited by Robinson & Jarvie, 2008; PWC & World Bank Group, 2013; Tuppen, 2015). This situation is not unique, according to Prud’homme and Raymond (2016), but a global phenomenon of the lodging industry which has almost had a constant growth since the 1950’s. Even at a low point in Sri Lanka’s history, the tourism sector generated over 52,000 primary jobs and a secondary effect of an additional 73,000 jobs such as handicrafts, small enterprises, transport services and small-scale agriculture (World Bank, 2014). This is a point that Merrill Fernando, an award-winning sustainable Sri Lankan hotelier, is optimistic about. He states that Sri Lanka has a great opportunity, with the growth of tourism, to address the social issue resulting from the export of unskilled labour and give Sri Lankans a opportunity to secure employment (Tuppen, 2015).

Sri Lanka’s tourism industry has been rapidly increasing since 2009 and since has hit two major milestones. For the first time it had reached the one million tourist mark and one billion dollars generated from tourism. Since then it has more than doubled every other year and at the end of 2016, it reached over two million tourists and generated more than 3.5 billion dollars in revenue (Sri Lanka tourism development authority, 2017). The Sri Lankan economy is moving along a fluctuating but increasing growth path since 2009, with an average GDP growth rate of around 5.8 percent (World Bank, 2018). Both the inflation (Statista, 2018) and unemployment rates have dropped to single digit figures (Trading economics, 2018).

1.1.3. Effects of increased tourism
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO (2018), classifies tourism’s impacts using environmental, social and economic as the main categories.
Environmental impacts are loss of pristine natural areas, cultivated lands and other types of biodiversity loss through the increase of tourism and its effects on climate change. Social impacts are rooted in degradation of culture which has a major effect on society and value systems in the community. Economic impacts are due to loss of local business and products as most revenue is tied up in package deals and international organisations.

The tourism industry in Sri Lanka has had a positive impact on the countries’ economic growth (Srinivasan, Kumar & Ganesh, 2012). However, as the tourism industry in Sri Lanka is set to continue to grow based on current trends and global statistics, there is a real threat that with this new-found revenue stream with all its additional bells and whistles of creating new jobs, skills and opportunities, might end up hurting the very community, environment and culture it was originally meant to support. Examples of unsustainable tourism development include but are not limited to Fiji (Bernard & Cook, 2015), Turkey, Iran, the United Arab Emirates (Riasi, 2016) and the recent case of temporarily closing down the island of Borocay for tourists (BBC, 2018). It is important for Sri Lanka that it learns from best practices around the world (Samaranayake, Lantra & Jayawardena, 2013) and avoids similar situations.

1.1.4. Sustainability in the lodging industry

The lodging industry is an interesting subject based on a range of diverse organisational sizes, ranging from small family owned hotels to multinational lodging chains. The global lodging industry has the possibility to make a positive impact through sustainable development. As the development of tourism is based upon nature and culture, the size and growth potential of this industry tends to outweigh the concerns about its detrimental effects on tourist destinations (Lindberg, 1991; Middleton & Hawkins, 1998).

With sustainability’s environmental, economic and social aspects of the 3BL (Elkington, 2004), and sustainable development being accepted as the societal norm (Melissen, Cavagnar, Damen & Duweke, 2016), customers are more likely to approach a lodging industry that has adopted sustainable practices than not (Auger et al., 2003; Clarke, 1997; Varadarajan et al., 1992 cited by Prud’homme & Raymond 2016). The Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs in Sri Lanka states in their Strategic Plan for 2017-2022:

“The industry is poised to offer great growth and investment potential. The underlying goal of all efforts is to improve visitor experiences so that they are world class and sustainable while still being firmly rooted in the inherent natural, cultural, historic and social capital of Sri Lanka and its people.”

(Sri Lanka tourism strategic plan, 2017:3).

Fernando views sustainable tourism development as a great prospect of developing Sri Lanka as a nation through infrastructure and economic development (Tuppen, 2015).

A research paper by Jayawardena (2013), which was a collaboration with professionals from the Sri Lankan tourism governing bodies, stipulates that the lodging industry is on the path of understanding the importance of sustainable tourism and becoming sustainable. The author also states that a good cross-section of hotels and other tourism accommodation providers are starting to embrace greening practices and realising that good sustainable practices are an absolute need for development (Jayawardena, 2013).
1.1.5. Recurring themes within sustainable tourism in the lodging industry
The authors have done extensive literature research on sustainable tourism within the lodging industry and have identified three key themes relating to leadership and organizational management. The following section will introduce these themes.

The role of leadership
Current literature has shown that leaders or managers play an important role in implementing, maintaining and inspiring sustainable practices in their organisation. Waldman (2006) for example, states that the integrity and vision of a leader will enhance the social responsibility values of followers but specifically shareholders and other stakeholders.

The leadership perspective of sustainable development is driven through authentic, moral and ethical values of a leader but also through making complex decisions and understanding how those decisions affect overall stakeholders (Metcalf & Benn, 2013). Furthermore, a sustainable leader needs to find the balance between simultaneous and often contradictory demands for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable solutions. The ability to do this is deeply grounded in a personal ethic and the ambition to reach beyond self-interest (Ferdig, 2007).

The literature clearly demonstrates the complexity of being a sustainable leader and the extent to which it is based on the leader's characteristics and core values. Additionally, leaders are often linked directly to establishing, driving, and monitoring the core culture of the organisation through their beliefs, values and assumptions (Jaskyte, 2004).

Furthermore, the lodging owner or manager is the representative, decision maker and spokesperson of the organisation, therefore confirming the importance of the role they play in leading for sustainability in tourism (Tuppen, 2015).

The role of stakeholder management
The second theme, stakeholder management (SM), has grown to become an important topic in sustainable tourism development (Inskeep, 1991; Southgate & Sharpley, 2002; Yuksel, Bramwell & Yuksel, 1999 as cited in Byrd, 2007). Stakeholders can be defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by...” tourism in the area (Freeman, 2001). According to Byrd (2007) there is a need to involve and include both internal and external stakeholders in the process in order to create successful sustainable tourism development. This will be further elaborated on in the theory section.

The role of culture
The third theme, culture, poses its own challenges as lodgers are interacting with employees, communities and stakeholders from different cultures and experiences.

In the quest of sustainable tourism, Jurowski and Gursoy (2004) states that the endorsement by the host population is essential for the development, successful operations and sustainable tourism. As a leader, one has to be aware of these values and cultural differences (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2011). Lodging owners potentially come from countries that have vast cultural differences from their new host countries.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011) and Hofstede (2011) describe the differences in values between cultures based on societal needs and how we deal most effectively with our environment. As an example, the most basic value people strive for is survival. Therefore, groups of people organise themselves in different ways as to increase the effectiveness of their problem-solving processes. As different groups have developed in different geographic regions, such as Sri Lanka, they have formed different sets of logical assumptions (Hofstede, 2011; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2011).
1.2. Problem formulation
According to literature, sustainability practices are not yet embedded within the tourism sector, even in developed parts of the world (Prud’homme & Raymond, 2016). As a result of this observation, the question that rises is, are there leaders and organisations in the industry that could implement the changes that are necessary to bring the industry to a higher level, regarding sustainability (Melissen et al., 2016:232)?

The literature suggests that implementing all three aspects of the 3BL in sustainable development within the lodging industry is a challenge. For example, the larger hotels that try to implement sustainable practices are mostly focusing on the environmental sustainability (PwC & World Bank Group, 2013; Font et al., 2012 cited by Melissen et al., 2016; Bonilla Priego and Palacios, 2008; Stalcup et al., 2014 cited by Prud’homme & Raymond, 2016). The initiatives are not conceived to obstruct guests in experiencing specific levels of luxury or quality (Melissen et al., 2016). In fact, most hoteliers state that they do not want to bother guests with their pursuit of more sustainable operations. However, this results in neglecting the interconnections of economic and social parts, thus creating weak sustainability (Neumayer, 2003; Melissen et al., 2016). Fernando (2015) states that the growth of the lodging industry should include the local communities in which the lodgings operate so that the industry does not develop in isolation and shares the success with the surrounding local community and environment (Tuppen, 2015). Houdré (2008) points out in his report on SD in the hotel industry that this transparency and inclusion is often not the case in reality:

“The goal of Sustainable Development is clearly to secure economic development, social equity, and environmental protection. As much as they could work in harmony, these goals sometimes work against each other”.

Furthermore, previous research shows that many hotels are confronted with simultaneous goals that seem to be opposed, attempting to create, establish and implement environmental hotel policies, versus pampering their guests with services such as unlimited hot water and abundant supplies of food (Element, 2007; Kirk, 1995; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007, as cited in Barber & Deale, 2014).

Melissen et al. (2015) conclude on this subject that the hotel industry is not ready to make an optimal contribution to global sustainability, however, the potential is there, and it should be possible to implement sustainable practices in the tourism sector.

Sri Lanka has seen a boom in tourism in the last three decades and since sustainability has not even been embraced yet by the lodging industry in developed countries, Sri Lanka, being a developing country, find itself in a plight.

1.3. Structure of the thesis
The structure of this thesis from this point on starts with Chapter 2, Purpose and research questions, where the authors describe the purpose and the aim of the research and the questions that they aim to answer. Chapter 3, Theory, describes the most relevant themes and models used to extract and analyse the empirical data, based on extensive literature research. Chapter 4 Methodology describes the ontology and epistemology of the study, followed by Chapter 5, Methods. In this section, the authors describe how they collected and analyzed the data. Chapter 6, Results, presents the analysis of the data and the findings from the research and concludes with a general summary. Chapter 7, Discussion, presents a further analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings, through a conceptual framework.
And finally, in Chapter 8, the authors will present their conclusion, contributions to the field and suggestions for future research.
2. **PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

2.1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the challenges of leaders (lodging owners) when implementing sustainable practices in the lodging industry in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka was chosen for this research, as tourism is an emerging industry in the country, since the devastating effects of the tsunami in 2014, and the end of the civil war in 2009. Sri Lanka is relatively unspoilt by tourism and is in its starting phase of growth. Therefore, the island is in a unique situation from a sustainability approach, where it has an opportunity to develop in a way where it can avoid and learn from poor decisions and mistakes made by other countries. Other geographical locations were considered, but didn’t offer the authors this unique opportunity in relation to the aim and purpose of this research paper.

According to the literature discussed in the introduction, sustainable development is not yet the norm in the lodging industry (Ferdig, 2007; Waldman, 2006; Metcalfe & Benn, 2013) in either developed or undeveloped countries, and if it is, this is mostly focused on environmental sustainability, creating weak sustainability (Melissen et al., 2016).

Since research shows that the norms and leadership behavior of a leader play an important role in the greening of organisations and change towards sustainability (Robertson & Barling, 2013, Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010), the authors focus on lodging owners. Furthermore, the motivation for integrating sustainable practices within the lodging industry is often based on the manager’s perception of sustainability (Melissen et al., 2016; Glorieux-Boutonnat, 2004; Stone and Wakefield, 2000; Ayuso, 2006 cited by Prud’homme & Raymond, 2016).

2.2. **Research questions**

1. What are the perceived challenges of the lodging owners in implementing sustainable practices?
2. What models, theories and frameworks are applicable for identifying and analyzing the challenges of the lodging owners’ perceptions of implementing sustainable practices?
3. **THEORETICAL PRE-UNDERSTANDING**

This chapter provides an overview of the theories and models used for this research. It introduces the three most prevalent themes (leadership, stakeholder management, culture) within the field of sustainable lodging, in order to provide support for the use of these theories. These were used for later data analysis. In the absence of any existing models for the purpose of data collection in this research, two models were combined to form a applicable model, and named Sustainable Lodging Manager Maturity Model (SLM3).

### 3.1. The three most prevalent themes

The next three sections will elaborate on the most prevalent themes based on relevant literature on the topic of sustainable practices in the lodging industry.

#### 3.1.1. Transformational leadership

Literature shows that in the field of sustainable tourism, and in the field of implementation of sustainable practices in lodgings, transformational leadership styles are found to be most effective (Mackenzie & Peters, 2014; Patiar & Wang, 2016). This section will introduce transformational leadership theory and relevant literature regarding this research.

Transformational leaders aim to improve the performance of followers and developing them to their fullest potential (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990a, as cited in Northouse, 2016:191). Leaders who exhibit transformational leadership behavior motivate others to act in ways that support something greater than their own self-interests (Kuhnert, 1994, as cited in Northouse, 2016:186). The term transformational leadership was first used in the year 1973 (Downton, as cited in Northouse, 2016:186), and in this research, the influential model, based on earlier work by Burns (1978, as mentioned in Northouse, 2016:), by Bass (1985) is used. Bass (1985) describes in his transformational leadership model that this kind of leader often has a strong set of internal ideas and values. The theory describes four important factors within this kind of leadership. Idealized Influence or charisma is the emotional factor of leadership (Antonakis, 2012, as cited in Northouse, 2016:191), which describes the leader as a role model that is deeply respected by followers. Inspirational Motivation, the second factor, describes leaders who motivate others to achieve something for a greater good, and not just for their own self-interest. Intellectual Stimulation is a way a leader can support followers to be innovative and challenge their own beliefs and values. Individualized Consideration describes a leader who acts as a coach and who listens to what his or her followers need.

Current research on the topic of sustainable development in the lodging industry shows a positive connection between supportive and transformational leadership styles of lodging owners and implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or sustainable development (Mackenzie & Peters, 2012, Anoop & Ying, 2016). A consultative leadership style where the hotel manager is involved, gives direction, guidance and support is positively related to CSR awareness (Mackenzie & Peters, 2012). Transformational leadership in combination with organisational commitment of the leader is positively associated with sustainable performance dimensions of hotel departments (Patiar & Wang, 2016). These dimensions include environmental (energy, water, waste and the use of local suppliers) and social indicators, such as support for the local community (Patiar & Wang, 2016). Furthermore, according to an Australian study conducted by Patiar and Mai (2009) on hotel managers, a transformational leadership style contributes to employee satisfaction, as it leads to motivating subordinates and creates high job commitment.
Related research on environmentally specific transformational leadership, in the context of climate change, shows that leaders with environmental descriptive norms demonstrate environmentally specific transformational leadership qualities, which predicts employees' harmonious environmental passion. The findings show that the norms and leadership behavior plays an important role in the implementing sustainable initiatives (Robertson & Barling, 2013). One explanation of this relationship is that transformational leaders have a clear vision to realize success and they can inspire others to commit to their objectives (Keller, 2006, as cited in Partiar, Anoop & Ying, 2016). This means they have the potential to accomplish performances within their organisations beyond expectations (Bass, 1985; Wang et al., 2011, as cited in Partiar, Anoop & Ying, 2016).

Concluding, there are numerous publications that show the connection between a transformational style of leadership and the implementation of sustainable practices.

### 3.1.2. Stakeholder management

While there is not much published on stakeholder management within the lodging industry, there have been publications relating it to sustainable tourism. Lodging is a part of tourism and the authors have therefore chosen to use literature on the topic of stakeholder management within sustainable tourism to be able to shed light on the lodging industry as well.

A stakeholder perspective can create competing demands and colliding interests. A stakeholder perspective can create competing demands and colliding interests (Werther & Chandler, 2011). In the case of Sri Lanka this could be eg. cultural context or the struggle to create a sustainable supply chain without lowering the customer quality. A stakeholder perspective helps organizations to identify constituents in its environment that are impacted by the organization's operations. Allowing them to prioritize among those stakeholders often create competing demands (Werther & Chandler, 2011).

This demonstrates the necessity of including and managing an organization's stakeholders. As mentioned above, there is a need to involve and include stakeholders and SM in the organization's process in order to create successful and sustainable tourism (Byrd, 2007). Furthermore, there are many examples of how tourism projects fail if no SM is present (Byrd, 2007) but also success stories when implementing SM.

Furthermore, Byrd (2007) connects SM and sustainable tourism to the decision making process. When it comes to organizational sustainability as a whole and SM it “depends not only on what the firm does but also on how it does it” (Werther & Chandler, 2011:179). Byrd (2007) raises the issue that traditionally the decision making process within tourism development is a top down process in which experts take the decisions (McGehee, Knolleberg & Komorowski, 2015). Another issue is that the decisions that are taken are based on the business perspective and might have competing issues when it comes to stakeholder management, as mentioned above (Beierle & Konisky 2000 cited by Byrd, 2007). Hence, stakeholder management is a vital component in reassuring that organizational sustainability becomes implemented. Furthermore, without consulting and managing stakeholders there will not be any organizational sustainability.

Stakeholder participation is key in SM. There can be both formal (active) and informal (passive) stakeholder participation (Byrd, 2007). In the context of sustainable tourism within a developing country, there is need for not just stakeholders participation, but also
stakeholder empowerment them (Teare, Bandara & Jayawardena, 2013). According to Carmin, Darnall, Mil-Homens, 2003, as cited by Byrd, 2007 different

“Approaches to stakeholder participation that empower stakeholders to make decisions are regarded as more inclusive forms of stakeholder involvement”.

In Sri Lanka’s case, the government aims to use participatory SM in the decision-making process, thus creating sustainable tourism development through the empowerment of the local communities (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, 2007 cited by Teare, Bandara & Jayawardena, 2013).

One successful participatory way of managing external stakeholders is through the local community. This gives the leader a participatory way of SM, thus giving legitimacy and providing longevity of the business (McGehee, Knolleberg & Komorowski, 2015). Furthermore, this is giving the communities an opportunity to voice their concerns and preferences regarding sustainable tourism in relation to local culture, economy, environment and community relationships (McGehee, Knolleberg & Komorowski, 2015).

One might argue that SM is interconnected to the leader itself through the management of the internal stakeholders, such as employees. The leader should be inclusive to stakeholders’ voices, concerns and opinions. The leader should provide a reciprocal communication platform which leads to stakeholder inclusion and participation. As mentioned above, the incorporation of sustainable initiatives depends heavily on the managers’ perceptions and role. Managing the internal stakeholders is the first step in incorporating the internal sustainable practices.

Concluding, as previously mentioned, according to literature there is a connection between stakeholder management and creating sustainable tourism. Thus, proving to be a relevant theme to investigate for data analysis.

3.1.3. Culture

For this research, the authors have chosen the theme culture based on literature to provide insight into the contextual cultural perspective of Sri Lanka. This will strengthen the research by adding a contextual layer on the interviewees responses.

Sustainability and culture in the lodging industry is premised on the view that ST is only attainable if there is harmony, synergy and alignment between the objectives of cultural diversity and that of social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability (Nurse, 2006). As this research is conducted in Sri Lanka and has a contextual angle, the authors will analyze the findings on a cultural theme and theories.

Culture is seen as a collective phenomenon, but it can be connected to different collectives (Hofstede, 2011). Culture in this context can be defined as the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, values, beliefs, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a member of a group in the course of generational through group and individual striving” (Hofstede, 1997, as cited in Csapo, 2012).

This research aims to investigate and understand the contextual culture of Sri Lanka from an organisation and leadership perspective. Therefore, cultural themes were selected for understanding cultural differences and to analyze the results of the research.
3.2. Sustainable Lodging Manager Maturity Model, SLM3

The following section will elaborate on the construction of a model that was used in this research. Based on literature research, the authors concluded that no current model for the aim of this research exists, therefore the Sustainable Lodging Manager Maturity Model (SLM3) was developed. The model consists of a combination of the Sustainable Project Management Maturity Model (SPM3) (Silvius & Schipper, 2015) and the Sustainable Tourism Model (STM) (Hall, 1998, Fons, Fierro & Patiño, 2011), both based on the 3BL. Figure 1 shows the SLM3, consisting of the two established models described below.

![Figure 1. Sustainable Lodging Manager Maturity Model](image)

3.2.1. Sustainable Project Management Maturity Model, SPM3

The first model in the SLM3 is the SPM3 (Silvius & Schipper, 2015), which has a focus on the project manager’s perceptions of sustainability in projects. The model can be found in appendix A. The SPM3 is derived from various business models (Silvius & Schipper, 2015). This model shows the project manager’s perceptions of where they are today and future aspirations regarding sustainable practices. The model can be used as a practical tool to assess and develop the integration of sustainability in projects. The aim of the model is to enable project managers and organisations to turn abstract concepts of sustainability into practical actions (Silvius & Schipper, 2015). The SPM3 measures the maturity levels of the project managers on different aspects of sustainable practices (Silvius & Schipper, 2015). The SPM3 uses four states of maturity, which are compliant, reactive, proactive and purpose. For the SLM3, no modifications regarding these states were required, since the authors decided that the original maturity measuring scales were a good fit for the purpose of this research. The authors chose SPM3, because of the similarities between the responsibilities of a project manager and a lodging owner. The SPM3 was specifically developed for sustainability practices in projects, and the aim of this particular research is to explore sustainable practices within the lodging industry. The authors therefore argue that there are enough similarities between these two, to be able to effectively use the SPM3 model for this research. Furthermore, the SPM3 reflects perceptions of project managers, and the aim of the current research is to explore perceptions of lodging owners. To the authors’ knowledge, no maturity model for sustainable lodging owners exists. The authors have therefore based the SLM3 partly on the SPM3.
3.2.2. Sustainable Tourism Model, STM

The second model within the SLM3 is the Sustainable Tourism Model (STM) (Hall, 1998, as cited by Fons, Fierro & Patiño, 2011). This model can be found in appendix B. The STM is based on the 3BL, but is adjusted in a way that the three aspects are more aligned with important themes within sustainable tourism. Social impact is renamed as social equity, economic impact as economic efficiency and environmental impact as preserving the environment (Hall, 1998). These three sustainability aspects were used in the final SLM3. Subcomponents of the aspects were used to create questions for the interviews. There have not been any publications that propose alternatives to this model, therefore the authors chose to merge this model in combination with the SPM3, the authors have therefore based the SLM3 partly on the STM.
4. METHODOLOGY

The authors have chosen an exploratory and inductive research approach for this thesis, which means that the data is gathered before pre-conceptions about the outcomes of the data are made. The research questions for this paper are not based on preconceived assumptions, but are constructed in a way that the raw data can be explored and analyzed from an objective perspective. The concepts, themes and links should be able to emerge from the data through interpretations by the researchers (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, as cited in Thomas, 2006). The authors primarily conducted interviews followed by a literature review to discover themes for data analysis. The data was analyzed using themes relevant to the aim of the research, to support the interpretation of the data. The themes were introduced in the first chapter of this thesis. In the case of this research, this implies using existing theories and adapting them to the geographical, cultural and organizational context of sustainable lodgings in Sri Lanka.

4.1. Ontology and epistemology

Ontology is a representation of how the researchers view reality (6 & Bellamy, 2012). Epistemology focuses on how knowledge for the research is gained. There are two general ways of looking at reality. Realism means that the truth can be measured objectively, and relativism means that the gathered data will be subjective. The authors’ ontology and epistemology are founded on relativism, as the authors gather data using semi-structured interviews, that measure lodging managers’ perspectives, which is subjective data. The personal perception of ontology and epistemology of the authors will play a role within the research. For example, the perspectives taken by the researchers were anchored in a Master’s program with a focus on organizational and leadership theories, and these preconceived notions shaped the design of this research.

4.2. The research design

The research design is based on a qualitative research approach, which strives to understand why things are as they are. One of the most common ways of collecting empirical data in qualitative research is by conducting interviews (Bryman, 2015). Furthermore, Bryman (2015) defines three major types of interviewing techniques; unstructured, semi-structured and structured. The usage of semi-structured in-depth interviews with open-ended questions gives the opportunity for exploration and elaboration for further comprehension of the subject (Creswell, 2003, 2007). In-depth interviews can also provide the study with vital insight in understanding the context through monitoring the interviewees behavior (Silverman, 2011). The qualitative research method emphasises that merely analysing numbers and statistics cannot be used to understand everything.

To answer the research questions, a case study in Sri Lanka, using semi-structured interviews, was chosen as the most appropriate research design. The aim was to be able to explore lodging owner’s perceptions and be able to dig deeper into relevant topics while conducting the interviews. As the research is focusing on the leader and the challenges that they face, the optimal way to illustrate this is to research lodging owners’ perceptions. By measuring perceptions and not simply looking at the current situation from an objective perspective, the authors are able to find out more in-depth information. Thus, understanding why thing are as they are and why certain challenges are present. This is in line with the authors’ aim and purpose of this research. Furthermore, it takes several years to research the outcome of a sustainable initiative and its impact. The authors therefore focused on lodging owners’ perceptions, as time and resources were limited to be able to measure long term impact as well.
Sri Lanka was chosen for the case study as tourism is an emerging industry in the country since the devastating effects of the tsunami and the civil war ended. Sri Lanka is relatively unspoilt by tourism and is in its infant stages of growth. Therefore, the island is in a unique situation from a sustainability approach, where it has an opportunity to develop in a way where it can avoid and learn from poor decisions made by other countries. Other geographical locations were considered, but didn’t offer the authors this unique opportunity in relation to the aim and purpose of this research paper.

Furthermore, since the chosen ontology and epistemology was relativism, and the chosen method to explore the research questions was semi-structured interviews, the authors decided that an on-site case study would be the best fit. Conducting the research from another location would limit the authors with for example conducting interviews, where digital communication would remove much of the personal and contextual approach and non-verbal communication that the authors wanted to experience. Personal conversations provide more in-depth analysis compared to digital communication.
5. METHOD

This section describes the methods used for this research. It gives an overview of the primary data collection, the data analysis, the validity and reliability, limitations and ethics of the methods used.

5.1. Primary data collection

The primary data collection methods section consists of the sampling design, semi-structured interviews and the SLM3.

5.1.1. Sampling design

The target group that was aimed for, were leaders with a sustainable narrative in the lodging industry in Sri Lanka. They were selected by the authors based on the perception of the authors on the lodging. Some lodgings clearly stated on for example social media to be engaged in sustainability practices, but most lodgings were less vocal about this. Through word of mouth, and simply asking possible candidates for their opinion about sustainability in lodging, and assessing their accommodation, the authors selected their interviewees.

The interviewees were selected and contacted through several different methods which were based on availability, access, initial online research, through snowballing and exploration of the geographical area. The snowballing technique can be defined as a process of referring one person to another. This technique quickly builds up a network, credibility and trust between the interviewer and the interviewee (Denscombe 1997, as cited by Streeton, Cooke & Campbell, 2004:37-38). Exploration of the geographical area was done to avoid ending up with lodgings from just one particular network, which is a risk when using only the snowballing technique.

The interviewed subjects were kept anonymous and were informed of this prior to the interview. This choice was based on the assumption that the subjects would be more willing to share their honest opinions and perceptions when they are anonymous. Before travelling to Sri Lanka, the authors conducted initial randomized research and selection of different types of lodgings with a sustainable narrative as seen in the definitions. This resulted in a handful of interviews with lodging owners, thus opening up for the possibility of snowballing and referrals from the interviewees.

Furthermore, a geographical exploration of the surrounding area in which the authors stayed opened up to several interviews. All but one of the interviewees were owners of the lodgings, where the non-owner interviewee was a general manager. Consequently, the interviewees were the decision makers of the organization and responsible for implementing and maintaining sustainable initiatives.

All of the interviewees were comfortable in speaking English and had sufficient English skills. The majority of the interviewees were fluent in English, thus providing reliability for the data. No translators were required.

The interviews took on average one hour, of which 10 minutes were devoted to informal conversation, 40 minutes for the semi-structured interview and the last 10 minutes were used to complete the SLM3.

5.1.2. Semi-structured interviews

The authors collected empirical data through semi-structured in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. Using this technique gives the authors the opportunity to elaborate further on the questions, increasing the possibility to gather additional data.
(Bryman, 2015). In-depth interviews can also provide the study with vital insights in understanding the context through monitoring the interviewees behavior and surroundings (Silverman, 2011). Furthermore, the choice of semi-structured interviews gives the authors the possibility of understanding the lodging owners’ perceptions and therefore, the method is essential for the study (Rowley, 2012).

The authors constructed the interview guide by using the STM, as mentioned in the Theory chapter, to serve as a base for the interview (Bryman, 2015). All three main aspects in the STM have several sub-themes. The authors chose the ones relevant for the lodging industry and constructed the interview questions accordingly. This resulted in an interview guide with 25 open questions related to sustainability practices, excluding introductory questions. The introductory questions, such as ‘can you tell us a bit about yourself and how this lodging came to be?’ were asked to create a more personal atmosphere and gather relevant background data on the lodging. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and were all held face-to-face.

### 5.1.3. SLM3

The SLM3 was constructed using the identified relevant sub themes from the STM as described in section 5.1.2 and from the SPM3 described in section 3.2.1. The SLM3 was used to collect lodging owners’ perceptions of their sustainable practices. The model also uses four states of maturity that the lodging owner selects based on their perception of their sustainable practices. These states are compliant, reactive, proactive and purpose. Once the semi-structured interviews were conducted, the authors asked the interviewees to complete the SLM3 with guidance from the authors if something was unclear. The majority of interviewees were self-critical to their answers as it made them contemplate that they were actually doing regarding sustainability. The interviewee would have to make a mark on the model as to confirm their answer. All responses were captured by the authors and stored for further analysis. Table 1 shows an example of one of the sections used in the SLM3. In this example the interviewee chose that he/she considered himself/herself to be proactive on the area of gender equality. An example of this could be proactively searching for female employees. The complete findings from the SLM3 are presented in appendix B, this will be discussed further in the chapter 6.1.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 - Example of a category in SLM3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2. Data analysis

For the analysis of the collected audio data, the authors used transcriptions of interviews to create raw textual data. The authors have afterwards used content analysis, in order to find patterns, associations, clusters and explanations in the text (Richie & Spencer, 1994, Ritchie, Spencer & O’Connor, 2003, as described in Silverman, 2011). This method firstly recommends that notes should be taken during the interview and this along with the questions will be the foundation of identifying a coding framework and categorization scheme within the data. Once the categories are established and defined, the linkages between them will be explored and patterns will be further investigated. The further analysis of the data will be analysed from different perspectives, based in theory. Table 2 gives a visual example of how a typical analysis would be done. The next sections will elaborate on the analyses from the perspective of different theories.
Table 2 - Example of a typical data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Key statements</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory: Transformational leadership theory</td>
<td>I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before.</td>
<td>“We try to influence our guests about sustainability and hopefully they will influence the community” (L1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.1. Transformational leadership

To analyze the interview data from a transformational leadership perspective, the authors used the four main factors of the transformational leadership theory by Bass (1985). Bass introduced a way to measure and classify different attributes of transformational leadership, and based on that, a questionnaire was constructed. This questionnaire is widely used and is therefore an established way to explore transformational leadership. The authors therefore chose to use the four factors and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio, 1990) to be able to identify key statements that could indicate the presence of one or more of the four factor. In the MLQ, all four factors have several related statements that leaders can score themselves on. The five scoring options range from ‘not at all’, to ‘frequently, if not always’. These statements were used for the analysis of the interviews. For example, to identify the factor Inspirational Motivation, one of the statements in the MLQ is “I help others find meaning in their work”. Any statements related to this statement were identified as indicators of the presence of this factor in the interviewees leadership style. The factors were later used to classify the themes in the presentation of the results.

5.2.2. Stakeholder management

The authors have chosen to use a proven and peer-reviewed stakeholder model as a part of the data analysis. The authors’ assumption that the stakeholder management model by Werther and Chandler (2011) is fit to be adapted for stakeholder management in the lodging industry, as any lodging is an organization, the mentioned stakeholder management model based on organizations will be used. As mentioned before, there is a correlation between the inclusion of stakeholders and successful sustainable tourism. Below a model from Werther and Chandler (2011) will be presented along with the connection of stakeholder management to sustainable tourism.

Werther and Chandler (2011) divide their stakeholder model into three different layers, which is inspired by other stakeholder theories (Freeman, 1984; Clarkson, 1994 cited in Hillman & Keim, 2001). The three layers are divided into the organizational stakeholders, which are internal to the organization, the economic stakeholders, which are external to the organization and the societal stakeholders which is overarching both economic and the organization (Werther & Chandler, 2011:207-210). The stakeholder model drawn up by Werther and Chandler (2011) was used in order to analyze the raw data in regard to stakeholder management. It was applied in the context of Sri Lanka to determine who the influential stakeholders regarding sustainable practices and tourism are. The model contains three stakeholder categories; organizational, economical and societal. These categories were used as themes in which the stakeholder data was clustered into. The
authors classified the stakeholder data based on information from the transcriptions. The authors analysed the transcriptions by classifying statements made by the interviewees according to the three aforementioned categories.

5.2.3. Culture

To gain insight on the interviewees responses, the authors analysed the cultural contextual data using Hofstede’s six dimensions of cultural values. All six dimensions were originally used to analyse the data but only four dimensions had any significant relevance while the remaining two lacked data. The four dimensions can be used as a framework to describe cultural context in Sri Lanka. Each response based on culture and context was analysed using a relevant dimension as to avoid drawing stretched assumptions and additional dimensions were necessary where further explanation was needed or relevant.

The authors analysed the transcriptions, by exploring statements made by the interviewees, that could be fitted into one of the six dimensions. This resulted in four relevant dimensions for this research and these were further explored and explained in the results section.

5.3. Validity and reliability

5.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

The authors are aware of certain implications regarding validity and reliability of semi-structured interviews. According to Silverman (2015:172), interviews do not appear to give direct access to the facts or to events. Interviews do not tell the researchers directly about people’s experiences, but offer indirect representations of those experiences (Silverman, 2015:172). Semi-structured interviews will generate subjective data (Hammersley, 2007). This occurs both from the authors’ and interviewee perspective. According to Silverman (2015:14)

“What people say in answer to interview questions does not have a stable relationship to how they behave in naturally occurring situations”.

The authors recognize the limitations of using semi-structured interviews and have clearly stated that the aim is to measure perceptions, and not facts. For the reason of possible subjectivity, a majority of the interviews were conducted and transcribed by all three authors. All interviews were conducted in English as the lodging owners where proficient and no translation was required. Furthermore, to enhance validity and reliability, the authors aimed for at least 10 interviews from multiple locations and managed to get 15. After several interviews, the responses of the interviews started to become repetitive and saturated. The authors therefore concluded that the number of interviews was sufficient as no new knowledge was gained.

5.3.2. Data analysis

The data was analysed using existing theory and a conceptual framework based on established models was created. The transcriptions were analysed multiple times by the authors to conclude an objective analysis. The transcribed data was analysed through the conceptual model multiple times and the results remained the same.
5.4. Limitations
The authors have made numerous limitations throughout the study. The following sections will elaborate on the externally imposed limitations, and delimitations, which are the parameters that were selected by the authors.

5.4.1. Externally imposed limitations
The time frame for this research was limited to several weeks. Due to the lack of time and other resources, only a limited geographical area could be covered. Furthermore, due to the ‘age’ of tourism in Sri Lanka, externally imposed limitation was that all lodgings were only a few years old. Some questions, for example regarding access revenue, were difficult to answer based on experience.

5.4.2. Delimitations
The authors have limited themselves to a target group of only sustainably minded interviewees, which resulted in relevant data on lodgings that know about the subject but leaves out the perceptions of anyone with a negative or impartial view on sustainability practices in lodging. However, for the purpose of this research, it was most important to grasp the perceptions of owners with a sustainable narrative, which is why this choice was made. Furthermore, as mentioned in the above sector, only a limited area could be covered, therefore the authors chose to focus on the areas with the highest concentration of tourism. The authors chose to not limit themselves to a particular size of the organization, since this did not contribute to the purpose of the research. By using data collection techniques such as snowballing and word of mouth, there is a risk that lesser known lodgings, or anyone who is not connected to other lodgings are left out. The authors were aware of this limitation and added exploration of the area to limit this risk. By choosing the research method semi-structured interviews, the authors were able to explore perceptions of the interviewees. By choosing a qualitative research method, no quantitative or objective data could be gathered. Even though this is in line with the purpose, it is a limitation that should be mentioned. The choice to measure perceptions was partly based on limited time and resources, since there was no possibility to do a follow up on, for example, the actual implementation of sustainable practices.

5.5. Ethical considerations
The study will be permeated through the four ethical principles of Bryman (2015:125-132). These are “Whether there is harm to participants”, “Whether there is a lack of informed consent”, “Whether there is an invasion of privacy”, “Whether there is deception involved”. Bryman (2015) elaborates further and concludes that harm to participants can entail a number of facets such as stress, physical harm or loss of self-esteem. He continues exemplifying that lack of consent is often traced to disguised observations, but also stresses that lack of information fit in this category. He further recommends a usage of informed consent forms, to avoid lack of informational consent. Bryman states that privacy is a right that many of us hold dear and the size of our comfort zones varies. He makes the assumption that as long as the researcher has a foundation in informational consent, the interviewee will accept private questions within the comfort zone (Bryman, 2015).

Ethics are important as the authors are responsible for the well-being of the person or persons being observed or written about. They are also accountable and responsible for
what is presented in their findings which must be a true representation of an unbiased study.

5.5.1. Ethics and the semi-structured interviews

As mentioned above, Bryman’s (2015) four ethical principles have permeated the study, as well as the methods section in regarding the interviewees. The authors asked the interviewees for consent to record the interviews and told them that their names along with the name of the lodging would be anonymized. It was also made clear that they were free to leave the interview at any moment, should they feel uncomfortable. The interviews were conducted in their environment at their lodging to provide a sense of safeness and security. If anything was said off the record the authors did not write this down in the transcriptions. Furthermore, the questions asked were non-suggestive, objective and unbiased to avoid the interviewees feeling criticised or unsafe. In regard to ethics in the data analysis the authors did not manipulate the answers. In addition to this, the authors will send the thesis to the interviewees upon completion.

Therefore, the authors believe that the ethical principles of Bryman (2015), “Whether there is harm to participants”, “Whether there is a lack of informed consent”, “Whether there is an invasion of privacy”, “Whether there is deception involved”, were adhered to and that the ethical boundaries were not overstepped.
6.  RESULTS

In this chapter the authors present the findings of the conducted research. The SLM3 was constructed for the purpose of collecting data to answer our research questions on implementing sustainable practices in lodgings in Sri Lanka. Two theories and a model, based on the selected themes were used to analyse this data from different perspectives. The first section in this chapter gives an overview of the sample data and the results of the SLM3. The second section in this chapter exhibits the results of selected theories and model. In the last section, the application of the SLM3 will be analysed.

6.1.  General sample data

The following section includes the background data that provides the reader with an overview of the sample data of the target group, and the results of the SLM3.

6.1.1.  General information of lodgings (sample data) extracted from interviews

This section provides a general overview of the most important data regarding the 15 lodgings that make up the dataset of this research. All lodgings were located on either the east, south or southeast coast of Sri Lanka. On average the lodgings had been in business for 7,5 years. The average amount of beds in the lodgings was 27, in an average of 10 rooms, where on average 16 employees were employed, mostly all year round. An average of 30% of employees was female. 7 lodgings were located on the south coast, 3 on the south-east coast and 5 on the east coast. Of the 15 lodgings, 5 were owned by a Sri Lankan national. The ten others had owners from different but all western countries. Of the 5 nationals, only one has been living in Sri Lanka his whole life, the 4 others have lived abroad, mainly due to the effects of the civil war. All 15 interviews proved to be useful for analysis, so no results needed to be excluded. All but one interview was held with the owner of the lodging, the one exception was a lodging manager, due to access and availability. A table with all data of these findings can be found in appendix C.

6.1.2.  SLM3 results overview

All interviewees filled in the SLM3, so that a table with general statistics could be created. The percentage of interviewees reported to be compliant, reactive, proactive and purpose on 14 subcategories, with three main categories (economic efficiency, preserving the environment and social equity) were calculated. The results show that most interviewees (56%) reported to be proactive on all three general sustainability factors. Of most importance on being proactive were the subcategories sourcing locally, fair wages and gender equality. The results also show that all, but one participant reported not to care about sustainability related accreditations. Only three times did the interviewees report to be purposeful about a category. The results of the SLM3 can be found in appendix D.

6.2.  Transformational leadership

The following sections describe the analysis of the data from a transformational leadership theory perspective, using the four factors of Bass’ transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1996, as cited in Northouse, 2016).

6.2.1.  The theory, the four factors and method

Transformational leadership theory focuses on leaders with a clear vision and a distinct way of motivating and inspiring followers. There are four different factors within the
chosen theory of Bass (Bass, 1996, as cited in Northouse, 2016), and these can be measured in a leader to determine transformational attributes. The four factors, or four I's are Idealized Influence or Charisma, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individual Consideration.

The following analysis highlights each of these factors in relation to the acquired data on lodgings in Sri Lanka, by presenting and connecting key statements made by the interviewees. The key statements, as described before, were compared with statements taken from the MLQ questionnaire for leadership styles, as explained in the methods section.

6.2.2. Idealized Influence or Charisma

The factor Idealized Influence has a focus on how the followers perceive the leader and their behavior. This kind of leader is someone with strong values and a vision, who others want to follow and perceive as a role model. Since the interviews in this research focused on the perceptions of the leader, this factor was specifically hard to correctly measure, since it requires the perception of followers. One interviewee, L11, though, made a clear statement regarding being a role model and taking the lead, and stated:

"You have to really lead by example to get anything done. And hopefully people will follow".

With this she meant that her employees are not assertive in implementing sustainable practices, and her strategy is to literally show them her own behavior. However, this same interviewee explained how difficult it was to be a role model to her followers. She explained that because of her gender, her male employees don’t see her as a role model and therefore do not engage in the sustainability practices that she tries so hard to implement. They don’t seem to respect her or have faith in her. This finding is consistent with findings on cultural aspects, that show a very male-dominated culture. Another observation the authors made was regarding interviewee L8. This interviewee was regarded by the authors as charismatic during the interview, towards them and towards the employees. These employees rewarded him with commitment and respect. This was observed by the authors when (during the interview) one employee respectfully approached L8 with a question and L8 friendly took the time to instruct the employee. L8 reported on his own leadership style by saying: “I’m demanding as a leader, but fair”. All lodging owners reported that their behavior towards sustainability practices came from a deep belief in that it is the right thing to do, based on their own morals and values. L8 states for example that it is a conscious decision to be sustainable, but it’s nothing that they promote. The interviewees are convinced of their moral values and don’t want to use the results for self-promotional purposes. One interviewee stated: “I don’t care too much about the economic side, as I have a vision”, meaning that having a strong vision should be enough to start and maintain a successful lodging business. L2 explained that she has clear personal values that she puts in her business, when asked if she would use sustainability for marketing purposes, saying “I didn’t try to be sustainable, this is just what you do where I come from”. According to the theory and specifically this charisma factor, these values in combination with having a vision and being intrinsically motivated are the key to be a role model for others.

6.2.3. Inspirational Motivation

This factor regards leaders inspiring others through clear communication of expectations, and by showing followers their role in a bigger picture than themselves. Many
interviewees reported on their efforts to inspire others to act more sustainably, by creating awareness, which will provide meaning for them. L3 stated

“We did a waste awareness campaign for the five and six-year olds and their parents, and teachers. We did a beach walk after that and picked up plastic and showed them what it can do.”.

This particular interviewee showed a great passion for plastic waste problems and educating children from a young age, while involving their parents to create more support. By going outside and showing what kind of damage plastic can do, he tried to involve his followers (in this case, the children and their parents) in his vision. He reported that this way of educating, by inspiring, was very well received by both the parents and the children.

L7 demonstrates his idea regarding inspiring others by stating that his vision is to create a permaculture structure in the garden and integrate a composting system in it as well. What he really wants to do is to organize workshops to teach locals and other businesses how easy it actually is and inspire them to take the same steps.

Another interviewee, L8 explained about his efforts to involve his followers and his peers (other lodgings in the area) to think about them as all connected, instead of only self-contained lodgings. He started an association with 15 local property owners, which he describes as “the setup of a common voice”. The aim is clear; work together for a bigger goal, because alone, you won’t be able to reach that goal.

6.2.4. Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual Stimulation involves stimulating followers to be creative and innovative in dealing with issues. Most interviewees talked positively about their followers and about finding ways to teach them and make them more independent. They talked about the challenge the difference in cultures and experience poses for them. For example, one interviewee explained that none of his employees had been in a restaurant before they started working in his restaurant and hotel. Another interviewee, L3, explained how he attempts to give them more independence:

“We lay the rules down and tell them what we expect and then we ask them to solve it in their best way”

Not only the employees are seen as followers by some of the interviewees, and they are not the only ones that need to learn how to think about old problems in new ways. For many lodging owners, their guests are a possible receiver of their stimulation as well. As L1 states:

“We try to influence our guests about sustainability and hopefully they will influence the community.”

Although none of the interviewees reported to deliberately focusing on educating their customers, they all hope that their efforts are noticed and that they will have a spillover effect on their guests.
6.2.5. Individual Consideration

This factor poses leaders as coaches and advisors to followers, who exhibit a very personal and supportive way of interaction with followers.

Some interviewees did show some signs of performing as a coach for their employees, for example L9 stated that he aims to inform his staff about their personal career path within the business, and that if they support the business, it will support them as well. However, there seemed to be an absence of personalised coaching, and a certain distance between the leaders and the followers was present.

6.2.6. General summary

The data shows that all interviewees can to a certain extent be regarded as transformational. Especially the factor idealized influence or charisma was present in all of them. All interviewees show they have strong values and morals, a vision and are intrinsically motivated to be a role model for others. Furthermore, many interviewees reported on their efforts to inspire others to act more sustainably, by creating awareness, or organizing collaborations, which shows the factor inspirational motivation. Another finding was that most interviewees reported on wanting to stimulate their followers to be more assertive, by giving them more independence. This shows the aim of intellectually stimulate followers. On the fourth factor, individual consideration, the least results were found. There is a certain distance between leaders and followers in Sri Lanka’s lodging industry, preventing the personal relationship that is needed for this factor.

6.3. Stakeholder management

The following section describes the analysis of the data from Werther and Chandler’s (2011) stakeholder management model.

6.3.1. The model, the three levels and the method

Stakeholder management subject that have received much attention both in literature and by the interviewees, hence its own section in the results. According to Byrd (2007) there is a need to involve and include stakeholders in the process in order to create successful and sustainable tourism. Hence, stakeholder management can itself lead to sustainability and is therefore an essential part in order to create sustainable tourism. The lodgings stakeholders, according to the stakeholder model of Werther and Chandler (2011), are organizational, economical and societal. The organizational stakeholders consist of the organization’s employees and managers. Most of the interviewees pointed out the connection between community engagement and employing locally. This is related to the next level, economic stakeholders. The societal stakeholders that the interviewees cooperate with are diverse, they are both NGOs, non-profits and communities. Based on the data from the transcribed interviews the government was frequently mentioned as a societal stakeholder.

6.3.2. Organizational stakeholders (internal)

6.3.2.1. Employees

Looking inward at the organisational stakeholders, it can be determined that the leader and the employees are the major contributors to sustainable initiatives. A majority of the interviewees has stated that employee engagement into sustainable practices is lacking.
Some have mentioned that there is no responsibility and accountability even when there is a monetary incentive to participate. L11 states that “People in this country have no sense of responsibility and accountability, also in their jobs”. The issue of employee engagement is vivid amongst a majority of the lodging owners. They find it hard to find the right staff, especially when catering to western customers. L9 states that “When providing a western product, you can’t have an eastern standard”. This quote is not explicit to the relationship of the employees but to the lodging as a whole. Different lodgings have different incentives to spur the employees into gaining the mentioned responsibility and accountability. In Sri Lanka the restaurants and bars add an extra 10% sales tax. The lodging owners disperse this percentage differently. A majority give most of the tax to the employees as a commission and a way of incentivising the workers to work harder and earn more money and some of the owners keep a small percentage for wear and tear.

Terms of employment is an important factor for managing internal stakeholders within the lodging industry in Sri Lanka. According to the interviewees, a majority of the employees within the lodging and hospitality industry as a whole in Sri Lanka are seasonally employed. However, a majority of the lodging owners hire their staff year around with a few people as exceptions during peak season weeks. This provide the manager with a lower employee turnover rate and the employees with job security and an attractive work environment.

Since, a majority of the lodging managers hire mostly local employees, training becomes a big part of managing the internal stakeholders. Most of the lodging owners hire local employees without experience for 'unskilled' positions and they provide training for them, giving them the opportunity to rise in rank, wage and gain experience. This is also in line with what L9 stated when giving information to his staff about a career path within the business, and that if they support the business, it will support them as well. Furthermore, L12 thinks that it is beneficiary to hiring local employees, when stating that “My personal view is that when you hire people locally you receive loyalty”. Another benefit might also be that the lodging owners have a natural contact into the community and the societal stakeholders through their employees.

L3 has two local managers who the lodging works in close connection with. L3 spoke about the importance of providing expectations, but trusting the managers to do what is best in the local context:

“We lay the rules down and tell them what we expect and then we ask them to solve it in their best way”.

6.3.3. Economical stakeholders (external)

6.3.3.1. Suppliers

The economic stakeholders, such as suppliers, have been mentioned in the interviews as a barrier and cause of reduction of sustainable incentives and practices. A majority of the interviewees wanted to source locally but had a partial local supply chain. But there are instances where that variety and consistency is a challenge in the geographical context and therefore lodging owners need to source nationally or internationally. As L9 states "When providing a western product, you can’t have an eastern standard”. When ordering a product that isn’t available locally, the owner often ships it from the capital region. With that said, a majority of the interviewees cooperate with local business and aim to keep their supply chain as local as possible. This simplifies the stakeholder management for the manager as the supply chain is a part of their own community. There are some contextual factors that have proven to be hard to overcome, especially when cooperating with local businesses.
One example is the lack of trust between business partnerships. L5 and L6 stated that “Businesses are based on partnerships and people don’t trust each other, so you can’t do any business”. Additional challenges within the supply chain are lack of competition, quality and availability of resource, which makes it hard for the manager to have a local supply chain. Therefore, it’s challenging to have a sustainable supply chain and implement sustainable initiatives and practices.

### 6.3.3.2. Customers

A vital part of the economic stakeholders according to Werther and Chandler (2011) is the customers. As no lodging can afford to ignore the interests of core stakeholders, such as customers, they become an important group, which was evident in the interviews. The quote above from L9 “When providing a western product, you can’t have an eastern standard”, also demonstrates the customer as an important stakeholder. According to previous mentioned literature, sustainable development is being accepted as the societal norm (Melissen et al., 2016) and customers are more likely to approach a lodging industry that has adopted sustainable practices (Varadarajan et al., 1992; Clarke, 1997; Auger et al., 2003 as cited by Prud’homme & Raymond 2016). In the case in Sri Lanka when the interviewees were asked about this, one of the answer was “The type of traveller that goes to Sri Lanka are generally more into the spiritual and cultural side” L3. This was in line with what most interviewees answered. Therefore, the interviewees made the assumption that their customers are more conscious and more focused on sustainability than other popular tourist destinations.

Managing customers as stakeholders can also imply being influenced by them. This can be seen through the perspective of the sustainable consumer. A sustainable consumer is one that selects their preferences through the consumer’s sustainable thoughts (Barber & Deale, 2014). It can also be said that the sustainable consumer preferences impact and influence the lodging and it’s supply chain as L1 states that “Food has changed dramatically from vegetarian to vegan in the last two years” and connects that to customer preferences.

Customers influence the organization, but the owner also influences the customer, which is synergetic with transformational leadership mentioned above (Bass, 1996, as cited in Northouse, 2016). The choice of being a sustainable lodging and managing stakeholders can also limit the customers in what kind of experiences the lodging provides. This is in line with what L1 means when saying that

“We support local dog charity. We don’t offer whale watching as we don’t like the way its done when they’re chasing them down”.

Furthermore, most of the lodging owners are passionate about educating about plastic consumption, as it is a major issue in Sri Lanka. Some lodgings have posters or information on how to limit plastic use and what plastic does to the environment. L1 says that they “… try to influence our guests about sustainability and hopefully they will influence the community”. Others have stated that re-education or education about sustainable practices is conducted by the lodging themselves as this is not discussed on a wider scale. The sustainable practices could be recycling, not burning plastic or other long-term commitments such as partnering up with schools. Partnering up with schools is a popular preference and this can be explained through what L11 proposes, when stating “It’s re-education at a grass-roots level, that’s what Sri Lanka needs”.

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6.3.4. Societal stakeholders (external)

The societal stakeholders that are most influential, according to the interviews, are the government and the local community. By many of the interviewees the government is seen, from both the foreign and local lodging owners’ perspective, as an elitist male dominated organisation that is not to be trusted. L12 states that “Working with the government is impossible in this country” and “It’s an old boys club and they don’t give a shit”. It has also been mentioned that corruption on all levels undermines the progress of sustainable initiatives and as L12 states, “In Sri Lanka it’s possible to operate underneath the radar, there’s corruption”. Based on the contextual theme, the assumption can be made that sustainable practices are not embraced, as the culture is based on a short-term perspective. This will undermine any policy set in place as its not trusted and culturally, its not seen as providing short term benefits.

6.3.4.1. The community

All of the lodging owners mentioned different kinds of community SM and stressed the importance of it. Several lodging owners have come together in the south-east area establishing an association to provide a unified voice of the bay in which they, according to L8, would be a “strong common voice of the community, forming the community, giving back to the community”. Furthermore, community SM was approached differently from some of the Sri Lankan lodging owners as opposed to the foreign lodging owners. L8 stated that “If you are Sri Lankan you have to go the extra mile, you are also more approachable”. L8 continues with saying that “You are always in the spotlight when running a business as a local”.

Community SM is essential for the lodging owners and the lodgings’ survival in the context. According to L5 and L6 “You have to have a good relationship with your community, otherwise your business just doesn’t work out. You need to support it.” L3 stated that their organization has seen benefits in giving back to the community and being transparent as an organization. They state that “As we grow we intend to put as much as we can back into the community”. Giving back to the community does not only entail people but also animals. A couple of the lodging support local dog pounds, since stray dogs are an issue in Sri Lanka.

6.3.4.1. The government and the municipality

The authors can see from a stakeholder perspective, that the government has a twofold role, both as an economic stakeholder and a societal stakeholder. The government is an economic stakeholder because of the legislative requirements of a 1% tax on annual revenue by lodging owners to the tourism department. The government is also a societal stakeholder that is responsible for sustainable tourism development for the country and its regions. The discourse among our interviewees is that the government support, or rather the lack of it, is one of the greatest challenges for developing sustainable tourism. L11 even states that “Working with the government is impossible in this country”. Furthermore, the same interviewee added a gender aspect on this when saying that “It’s an old boys club and they don’t give a shit”. From a leadership perspective they are struggling to implement sustainable practices, because of lack of governmental support. The lack of governmental and municipal support creates an increased responsibility for the leader and reinforces and amplifies the mediator role of the transformational leader.

The relationship with the government is, according to the lodging owners, is a one-way conversation. L12 mentioned this when talking about the tourism board, a department aimed to help and develop the tourism in Sri Lanka. L12 stated that “The tourism board is
useless, I give 1% of my revenue to them but get nothing in return”. The lodging managers also take responsibility for their surroundings as infrastructure is an issue. L8 was clear about this and stated that “We funded the road coming in to the bay”. Having sufficient and good infrastructure is in the favour of the lodging, therefore they fund these kinds of projects. L12 has similar thoughts on the topic of waste management when stating that “The municipality itself needs to support us better, the main thing is to get rid of the trash”.

L5 and L6 state that some of the lodging owners have mistrust towards the societal stakeholders, some more than others. When given the question of if there is going to be societal change in Sri Lanka in the near future, L9 stated that “I think it's not likely to see any significant improvement at all, um, ever!”. Furthermore, regarding governmental support L8 states that

“If the government is trying implement something, it needs to be inclusive, and bring most of the players to the table. From larger to small and medium organizations.”.

However, this is not the case in Sri Lanka today.

6.3.5. General summary

Stakeholder management is a very important success factor as both the literature and interviewees point out. The authors have used Werther and Chandler's stakeholder management model to analyse the data. Based on these three stakeholder dimensions and interviewee responses, it can be concluded that the lodging owners are active in their stakeholder management and are striving towards an active stakeholder participation. One can also notice that the participatory stakeholder management is explicitly evident throughout the different levels of the model. An interesting part is that most interviewees stressed the importance of being active in their community engagement but also that there is a frustration and lack of support in the governmental relationship. The categories aligned with subcategories provides a comprehensive analysis of how the lodging owners manages stakeholders. The theories of the stakeholder model and transformational leadership model help to understand the connections to the theme and context.

6.4. Culture

The following section describes the analysis of the data from a cultural perspective, based on Hofstede’s six cultural dimensions (2011). Only four dimensions were used to analyse the data due to a lack of data.

6.4.1. Theory, categories and method

Hofstede’s six cultural dimensions illustrate and describes the effects of a society's culture and norms on the values of its constituents. It also describes how these values translate to behaviour. Culture is described as “collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (Hofstede, 2011:385).

The authors use these dimensions to draw analysis on the contextual factors of Sri Lanka that the lodging owners are faced with. Only the most relevant dimensions were used based on the interviewees response and impact.

The sections on the four dimensions are structured starting with Hofstede's (2011) definition followed by Sri Lanka’s global cultural values comparison (figure 2) (hofsbed- insights, 2018) and ending with analysis from the research data. Figure 2 describes the collective mental programming of one group of people to another. This programming influences behaviour and ways of thinking that contribute to the overall picture of culture for a particular country, in this case, Sri Lanka. The cultural value of Sri Lanka (Figure 2) is
based on data collected globally over several decades. This is continuously being updated for relevancy, as this is a broad generalization. The authors used this as a reference point to analyse the interviewees responses of what the they perceive as the truth.

Figure 2. Six Dimensions of Cultural Values of Sri Lanka (hofstede-insights, 2018).

### 6.4.2. Power distance

According to Hofstede (2011:9)

“Power Distance has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society’s level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society. All societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others”

Figure 2 displays a high score of 80, which demonstrates that Sri Lanka is a relatively hierarchical society. This translates into people accepting a hierarchical order where everybody has a place and therefore the people need no further justification. Organisationally, hierarchy is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities and subordinates expect to be told what to do (hofstede-insights, 2018).

The majority of interviewees agree with the above statement, and that there is large power distance. Sri Lanka is based on a hierarchical culture where religion and politics control the distribution of wealth, equality and power. This creates a class system where being told what to do and any challenge on authority is dismissed, covered up or crushed.

These types of hierarchical cultures put emphasis on the powerful and elders and leaves them unchallenged. This creates scandals and corruption as subordinates are told what to do and what they can’t do and systems where corruption is rife (Hofstede, 2011).

L11 describes the extent of the problem with the acceptance of the large power distance in the Sri Lankan society, “Working with the government is impossible in this country” and that “It’s an old boys club and they don’t give a shit”. L12 continues to describe the situation in Sri Lanka, “In Sri Lanka it’s possible to operate underneath the radar, there’s corruption”.

The female lodging owners described the situation of being a female leader in Sri Lanka as a challenge as they don’t have the same power and authority as men. Women are deemed ‘loose’ if they work in the company of foreign men, such as the lodging industry. However, Sri Lankan men working with foreign women, or anyone, is never an issue.
The authors noticed that the sign of respect for elders and individual status is prominent. When they were in a position of power, they were commonly referred to as Sir and Ma’am.

### 6.4.3. Individualism versus Collectivism

Hofstede (2011:11) defines Individualism as...

"... as a societal, not an individual characteristic, is the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find cultures in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side we find cultures in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty and oppose other ingroups)."

In figure 2, with a low score of 35, Sri Lanka is considered a collectivistic society. This is evident in a close, long-term commitment to the member’s ‘group’, such as family, extended family, or extended relationships. The collectivist culture is stooped in loyalty and foremost, it overrides most other societal rules and regulations. The community builds and maintains strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. As collectivist communities are committed to individuals in the group, offences lead to shame and loss of face. Recruiting and the employment process is connected to the employee’s network to a specific ‘group’ (hofstede-insights, 2018).

Based on the results of the interviews, there seems to be a culture of hand-to-mouth in Sri Lanka. This is what L9 called “survival culture”, a cultural mentality born out of necessity. As competition is rife within the tourism sector in Sri Lanka and combined with this “survival culture”, there is very little collaboration when it comes to sharing best practices if members in society are not in the same ‘in-group’. This ‘in-group’ could be anything from family members, village members or religious affiliations. This poses a challenge for lodging owners that are not part of these ‘in-groups’. An example is when L12 states that, “We have a colonial past engrained in ourselves, we can’t get along with ourselves”. This illustrates the in-group or out-group culture.

L15 describes the situation that if the lodging is not run by an ‘in-group’ member, that it’s a challenge to work in Sri Lanka. L15 also describes that the religious barriers are a challenge to navigate, stating that “Culture and politics is difficult to work here. It’s a Muslim town”. For L15 being a local Sri Lankan, sees it as a challenge to make a positive sustainable impact as non ‘in-group’ members are not accepted. L15 would like to see everyone as Sri Lankans, regardless of which ethnicity, religion or political preference they have, but this is not reciprocated by Sri Lankans. This shows the difficulty of being accepted even if you are from Sri Lanka, but not from the same ‘in-group’. This difficulty is compounded for lodging owners who are not from Sri Lanka.

Finally, not being part of the ‘in-group’ results in wide scale jealousy among multiple stakeholders. This is confirmed by the majority of the interviewed lodging owners. L8 states that “Sri Lankans are kind and generous people but also to a certain extent jealous people.” This illustrates that jealousy is a cultural characteristic and not just towards foreign lodging owners.
6.4.4. Femininity versus Masculinity

Hofstede (2011:12) defines this dimension as

“Masculinity versus its opposite, Femininity, again as a societal, not as an individual characteristic, refers to the distribution of values between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society, to which a range of solutions can be found. The assertive pole has been called ‘masculine’ and the modest, caring pole ‘feminine’.”

Figure 2 shows that this dimension scores low at 10. Sri Lanka is considered a Feminine society due to the low score of masculinity. In Feminine societies, the focus is on ‘working in order to live’, employers strive for consensus, employees value equality, solidarity and quality. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as work-life balance are favoured. Status is not a dominant trait and focus is placed on well-being (hofstede-insights, 2018).

Based on the definition of the effect of masculinity and femininity on values, the interviewees seem to challenge this score for Sri Lanka. Gender equality in the workspace is not present, as women are treated differently by their peers. As one example, L11 has stated that the local community deem women ‘loose’ if they work in the industry. This illustrates that local culture does not see men and women equally in the lodging industry and society.

Female lodging owners have also stated that they have additional struggles with employees merely for being women. They have provided examples of situations where they try implement or direct a sustainable initiative and are either ignored or challenged compared to when their husband or male business partners instruct the same request.

Especially at the governmental level in Sri Lanka, the interviewees have stated that it is male dominated and that it is based on the legacy of who you know. One interviewee described it as a ‘boys club’ and that they simply don’t care about what the community thinks.

6.4.5. Long term orientation

This dimension is defined by hofstede-insights (2018) as how society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future (hofstede-insights, 2018). Societies that are short term orientated are steadfast on tradition and view problem solving in a pragmatic way. Societies that have a long-term orientation develop at a faster pace and are more accepting to change (Hofstede 2011).

Again, according to figure 2, Sri Lanka’s society is impartial with an intermediate score of 45.

What was evident during the interviews in Sri Lanka is that there is a constant battle between the old and new ways that is brought forward by tourism. Sri Lanka is ready to receive the economic benefits from tourism but not the cultural and societal changes that it brings.

L9 has provided insights into why it is a challenge to introduce something new like sustainable practices. According to L9, the big challenge is that religion is considered first before ethical practices. An example of this is the way women are treated in the hospitality industry from a social aspect and environmentally, how certain animals are treated, such as a chained-up elephant, is seen as a religious right and symbol. This is
confirmed by L10 by giving input on the local community, "They (the locals) view western women as a different breed" and that "Sri Lankan women are good women". These statements illustrate the old Sri Lankan values versus the new influx of tourists that influences their traditional ways.

L5, L6 and L10 also comment on this cultural battle with tourism. They state that it is a challenge to navigate the cultural context in Sri Lanka as there are so many rules and you have to be careful as not to upset anyone. They continue by saying that their neighbours and community gets upset with them when their female guests walk around in bikinis even though they have no complaints about the men. L10 classifies these individuals as the "Bikini police".

The lodging owners perceive that they have a responsibility to educate their guests and community to bridge this cultural gap, old and new ways, and secure the longevity and legitimacy of tourism in Sri Lanka. This is a social sustainable practice that the lodging owner needs to understand and be engaged in.

6.4.6. General summary

The authors have used four out of six dimensions of Hofstede's theory (2011). These are Power distance, Individualism vs Collectivism, Masculinity vs Femininity and Long-term orientation, to analyse the data. Uncertainty avoidance and indulgence vs restraint was omitted due to a lack of data and interviewee responses. Based on these four dimensions and interviewee responses, it can be concluded that Sri Lanka is hierarchical with men dominating the head positions from government to family. This translates into inequality between men and women. Long term thinking is abandoned for short term gains of wealth, status and position. This facilitates corruption, scandals and cover-ups which undermines any sustainable initiatives.

6.5. The SLM3

This model was successful in extracting data from the interviewees. The data was relevant to the research questions and assisted in conducting the interviewees in an in-depth manner. The SLM3 made it easy to structure the interviews in order to have a natural conversation. Categories in the SLM3 were structured in line with the 3BL.

Interviewees reported that it was an easy yet comprehensive model to follow. Furthermore, the interviewees commented on the process of completing the SLM3. They had one criticism, which was that it could have been clearer on how to practically fill in the model and what certain categories meant. The interviewees were not able to fill in and complete the SLM3, without some guidance and explanation from the researchers. Their final comment was that the whole process was enjoyable and a way of putting their sustainable narrative into words.

The authors have found that the model in combination with the chosen themes has proved to be a useful frame for this research. The implications of this finding will be elaborated on in the discussion section.
7. DISCUSSION

The following chapter will discuss the findings mentioned in the previous section based on the research questions.

7.1. Research question one

The following section will discuss thematic connections in regard to our research question one. As previously mentioned our first research question states: “What are the perceived challenges of the lodging owners in implementing sustainable practices?”

7.1.1. Thematic connections

The figure below demonstrates the thematic patterns that stem from the results. The authors have classified these into six different categories which are reciprocal connected.

![Thematic connections diagram](image)

Figure 3. Thematic connections according to results.

7.1.1.1. Gender inequality

According to the results of the SLM3, one of the three most important sustainability factors that the interviewees mentioned and on which they were proactive, was gender equality. Furthermore, implementing gender equality is a sustainable practice in itself, and can be found in the SDGs. The analysis showed that in all three themes challenges regarding gender equality could be found. The specific relations can be found in figure 3.

The results show that first of all, even though all interviewees find gender equality very important, it poses a great challenge in the lodging industry in Sri Lanka. From a leader’s perspective, female lodging owners report they are being ignored and disrespected, by their employees, but also by the government, which is described as an old man’s club, in which women are not included in the decision-making process. Thus, making their role insignificant. Local employees do not consider women to be fit as a role model, which is
constraining for the female lodging owners when attempting to implement gender equality as a sustainable practice. This finding is consistent with results on cultural aspects, that show a very male-dominated culture. From a cultural perspective, women who decide to work in the lodging industry and who will thus be in contact with foreign men, are deemed loose. They will often have trouble finding husbands after they have chosen to work in a lodging. Not only does this seem very unfair towards these women, it poses a great challenge for the leader when hiring employees. Therefore, the inequality in Sri Lanka transcends the employment process of the lodgings. Most of the lodging owners actively search for female employees but are unable to find them. This is due to the cultural prejudices by society as women do not want to be deemed as loose in their community. According to the previously mentioned sample data the interviewed lodgings have an average of 30% female employees. The inability to hire women relates to the cultural construct of masculinity and femininity within the Sri Lankan culture. Thus, creating a male dominant workforce impacting organizational stakeholder management and leadership.

As said, all interviewees stated to work proactively on having a gender equal workforce, but because of these cultural aspects, an overwhelming majority of the interviewees have not been able to reach their goals. The gender balance in the workforce is especially unequal in the east of the of Sri Lanka, demonstrated by the low percentage (0-14%) of female employees. This result can be explained by the dominant religion in the area. The area where this low percentage is found, had a bigger Muslim community than the other areas. The interviewees pointed out that the inequalities were enhanced by this factor.

7.1.1.2. The lack of collaboration and networks

The challenge caused by a lack of collaboration and networks was found in different components of all three themes. The most reported cause of the lack of collaboration was the deeply rooted jealousy in the Sri Lankan culture. This jealousy hinders cooperation/collaboration between organizations, because the perception is that if others succeed, you will not. The more an individual is perceived as an out-group member, the bigger the jealousy and distrust. Of the 15 lodgings that were interviewed, five were owned by Sri Lankan nationals and even they were not considered to be locals and thus lacked any kind of network and acceptance. This factor has a significant impact on possibilities to implement sustainable practices.

A clear example of this jealousy is of one lodging owner, who is originally from Sri Lanka, but is not regarded as a local, since he is from a different area. He started an association with other business owners in the area, in order to build a network for implementing sustainable practices such as infrastructure and a waste management system. He saw his role in this as the facilitator of collaboration towards sustainability. Other aims of the collaboration were to find common alternatives for the use of plastic and knowledge sharing. This effort was a way of the founder to bring about collaboration in his effort to lead through inspirational motivation. However, not everyone, specifically local business owners, wanted to be a part of this association, even though there were clear financial and communal benefits to work together. According to the founder of the collaboration, this unwillingness to share and work together is a directly linked to the deeply rooted jealousy within Sri Lankan culture.
7.1.1.3. Limited influence

A recurring topic within the results of all three themes is influence. The first point of reference is the sustainable leader’s influence when it comes to her/his employees or followers. As the leader of the organization with a sustainable narrative the leader is a major influencer of the employees when it comes to sustainability.

It was clear throughout the interviews that the lodging owner has limited influence on hers/his followers. Even though the employees showed signs of respect towards their (male) leaders, this was clearly based on hierarchy, fear, power (distance) or status. As the analysis on individual consideration shows as well, the interviewees demonstrated little personal relationship with their employees, which makes sense as respect is not coming from non-intrinsically motivation. Therefore, the leader has limited actual influence on sustained behaviour change of employees, which poses a problem when implementing sustainable practices. Furthermore, there are additional external factors contributing to limited influence, such as infrastructure for recycling.

Respect and influence can, in some cases, be found within the lodgings. However, there is no mutual respect between lodging owners and external stakeholders. Thus, the lodging owner does not have influence on them, due to their lack of affiliation. Being a role model is even more challenging for lodging owners coming from different regions of Sri Lanka as they are seen as ‘out-group’ members and have no authority. Therefore, being part of the out-group poses a challenge for implementing sustainable practices in lodgings, internally as well as externally.

When it comes to implementing sustainable practices, the leader should serve as an influencer but in the context of Sri Lanka this proved to be an issue due the lack of affiliation. Stakeholders such as customers and suppliers, can be influenced into becoming more sustainable. The results from the SLM3 show that the leaders prioritize being proactive and highly influential on the subcategories of sourcing locally, fair wages and gender equality. These are all categories in which the leader can play a major part in contributing to sustainable initiatives. Most of the interviewees state that they are driven to implement these sustainable initiatives, coming from a clear vision, because they feel it is morally correct. Consequently, resulting in ingraining this in their customers, suppliers and communities through being a sustainable role model. This becomes evident in their lodgings through different artefacts such as written statements, such as posters, on the property, encouragements and vendor selection.

One example of this is the use of plastic, which is a huge issue for the Sri Lankan lodgers. From visiting the interviewed lodgings, the authors can conclude that they try, not only to limit their plastic usage, but also to influence and educate any stakeholder. Their passion is driven from the point that education about sustainable practices is not discussed on a wider scale and therefore it becomes their purpose.

Even though the leader is the primary influence one should mention that the leader can be influenced by the sustainable consumers. This can happen through requesting options based on their specific preferences, such as adding vegan or vegetarian options to a lodging’s menu.

7.1.1.4. Hierarchical system

The challenge of hierarchy was identified by all three theories. In Sri Lanka, the challenge is that decisions are made in a hierarchical way or from a top-down approach. This means
that decisions are made by governmental bodies, communities and family members in high positions, mostly men. The challenge with this is that the leader’s word is final and there is no democratic process to challenge their decisions.

According to the research, the most influential stakeholders are the government and local communities when it comes to implementing sustainability in Sri Lanka. The government is seen as an elitist male dominated organisation that is not to be trusted. This system contributes to favouritism that creates inequality in areas such as decision making, employment, promotability and regulation. Favouritism combined with hierarchical decision making creates an environment for corruption, scandals and cover-ups. For example, the results of the SLM3 show that all but one interviewees reported not to care about accreditations related to sustainability due to corruption. According to the lodging owners this was due to the fact that these accreditations can easily be bought and therefore hold no value. Furthermore, the interviewees were all asked if they were familiar with the Sri Lankan tourism strategic plan and the majority of the interviewees responded no, emphasizing the lack of trust in governmental bodies. This distrust in public office combined with favouritism is a major challenge in implementing sustainable practices in Sri Lanka.

A transformational leadership style is conflicting with a hierarchical society. In a hierarchical system, leadership and management is conducted from a top down approach whereas transformational leadership, attempts to influence, inspire and motivate his/her follower on a personal level, therefore the power distance can’t be too big.

7.1.1.5. Lack of long term thinking - education

The final challenge relevant to Sri Lanka is the lack of long term orientation of the society and the lack of knowledge of sustainability. This is evident through multiple aspects such as, corruption, jealousy and education. The lack of long term orientation was identified in all three themes and is closely related to all other challenges mentioned in this chapter.

During the interviews, the authors observed that these aspects introduced above proved to be a major challenge in implementing sustainable challenges in the lodging industry. The interviewees found it difficult to pinpoint the exact cause and reason why sustainability is not practiced in Sri Lankan. Some suggested it was due to being misinformed and uneducated in sustainability, while others suggested it was due to the survivalist culture and corruption.

Due to the hierarchical culture in Sri Lanka, it should be easy for lodging owners to implement new practices, as they have the role of leaders within their organisation. Lodging owners discussed that hierarchy dictates in their culture that orders are taken from above and done without challenge. What the lodging owners observed is that the employees were not knowledgeable on why being sustainable was important and if they did, did not practice it outside of the organisation. Therefore, sustainable practices require more from the employee than just doing their job, and if there is no intrinsic motivation to do so, this extra effort won’t be made.

The lack of intrinsic motivation and knowledge is directly linked to the lack of education. Interviewees described that if their employees followed through on sustainable initiatives, it would be mainly because it was their work task. The interviewees reported having difficulties in making their employees realise and understand the importance of being sustainable. Due to the lack of knowledge, that stems from the lack of education, a hierarchical approach is not an effective way of implementing sustainable practices.
In general, sustainable practices can either originate from a top down or bottom up approach, the latter is otherwise known as a grass-root approach. A grass-root approach provides a more robust implementation of sustainability as it is embedded in culture, regardless as to whom is in charge. As interviewees have stated, it is re-education at a grass-root level that will make the difference in Sri Lanka. Interviewees have stated that children should be taught from a young age about the importance of sustainability. The majority of the interviewees are engaged in some type of sustainable education partnerships and they understand the long-term effects of its successful implementation and attempt to include other stakeholders as well.

The lodgers use these partnerships with local schools, on a grass-root level, in order to create educational awareness of different sustainable topics, such as plastic. Initiatives was also aimed to a wider audience, not only the school but also to their parents and the community.

7.2. Research question two

In this section the authors address the second research question. As previously mentioned our second research question states “What models, theories and frameworks are applicable for identifying and analysing the challenges of the lodging owners’ perceptions of implementing sustainable practices?”

Figure 4. Conceptual Framework, consisting of the SLM3 and the three identified themes.

The authors have used two established models (SPM3 & STM) to create the SLM3, which was used to extract data and measure the perceptions of leaders with a sustainable narrative, when implementing sustainable practices within their lodging in Sri Lanka. This was done in order to bridge a gap for the authors, since there was no established model yet, that could be used for the purpose of this research. After using the model for the current research in the context of Sri Lanka, the authors conclude that the model mostly
fulfilled the aim that it was created for, although some minor alterations were made to improve its simplicity and make it more understandable. Additional relevant themes were added through a literature review, in order to be able to analyse the data that was collected through the SLM3. These themes, based on literature, proved to be relevant in the context of Sri Lanka as well. While aiming to answer research question two, the authors developed a conceptual framework, which consists of the SLM3 and the three themes. Figure 4 gives a visual representation of this framework. The authors see this conceptual framework as the start of a applicable tool for future application. The future application will be further elaborated on in the concluding section.
8. CONCLUSION

The following section will conclude the study, demonstrate contributions and provide recommendations for further research.

8.1. Concluding remarks

The main challenges of lodging owners with a sustainable narrative, when implementing sustainable practices are gender equality, lack of collaboration and networks, limited influence, the hierarchical system and long-term thinking related to education. The reported challenges prevent the lodging owners in Sri Lanka from implementing sustainable practices to the extent to which they would like to. In order to alleviate the challenges of implementing sustainable initiatives the lodging owners are working at a grass-roots level. To answer the second research question, the authors provided a conceptual framework, based on the research that was conducted. The model can be used for future research on similar topics, with some minor alterations.

8.2. Contributions

The authors’ contribution is three-folded, with contributions to theory, practice and research in the context of sustainable tourism and leadership.

8.2.1. Contributions to theory

The SLM3 along with the three themes serves as a comprehensive framework and foundation for understanding which challenges and roles lodging managers face when implementing sustainable practices. As this conceptual framework is created by the authors it is novel and contributes to theory by serving as a methodological contribution. Not only does the framework contribute to theory but also the SLM3, which is a part of the framework. It has been used to measure the perceptions of maturity of leaders with a sustainable narrative implementing sustainable practices within their lodging in Sri Lanka. The study also contributes to the field of leadership and sustainability and how leaders in general implement sustainable practices.

8.2.2. Contributions to practice

The conceptual framework that was presented in the discussion section can be used by researchers as a practical tool to investigate similar phenomena. Furthermore, all interviewees requested a copy of this final paper, showing that they recognized importance in this research. The authors believe the 15 researched lodging owners have many challenges regarding implementing sustainable practices in common. This thesis can be used as a guiding document into forming different networks and collectively findings solutions.

8.2.3. Contributions to research

This paper contributes to research on the broader topic of sustainable tourism. The topic is relevant since it is related to one of the greatest challenges of our time: reaching global sustainability. The research is conducted in a novel context which is Sri Lanka. The context posed unique and unexplored opportunities, due to the rather new but fast-growing industry of tourism in the country. The typical tourist in this area has unique characteristics such as being more aware of the surroundings, more spiritual and connected to nature. The unique context in combination with the emerging industry brings novelty to the research and contributes to the field of sustainable tourism.
8.3. Further research
This section provides recommendations for further research.

8.3.1. Conceptual framework
The conceptual framework can be used as a comprehensive practical tool and would benefit from being tested through the following three areas of further research.

Firstly, the authors have proven that the conceptual model is applicable to the context of Sri Lanka, with minor alterations to the model. However, further research can investigate if the conceptual model is applicable to other geographical contexts, such as different countries and regions.

Secondly, the authors have successfully applied the conceptual framework to fit the lodging industry. Therefore, it would be of interest for further research to investigate the applicability of the model to other industries other than the lodging industry.

Thirdly, the authors have successfully used the model on lodgings with a sustainable narrative, which may have a specific organizational structure. Furthermore, the interviewed lodging was not connected to a chain or franchise. Future research would therefore benefit from investigating how the model is applicable to lodgings without a sustainable narrative, lodging chains or temporary organizations.

8.3.2. Future research in general
The authors decided to measure perceptions, which provided them with the right data. For future research the authors suggest researching the actual effects of the efforts of the sustainable lodging owners. This will provide insight into which challenges can be overcome and which are harder to overcome and give an in-depth overview of the current state in Sri Lanka.

Further research could expand on the similar target group that was left out in this research, which is the group of lodgings that have no affiliation with sustainability. It would provide a way to compare the different groups and contribute to the field of sustainable tourism.

The context of Sri Lanka was chosen carefully, but similar situations and problems can be seen in other tourist destinations. By conducting a similar research in a different country, a comparison can be made between the two (or more) countries, in order to identify challenges or even solutions.

One interesting finding that could not be explored further in this research, showed that lodging owners receive most of their customers through online platforms. However, these platforms don’t provide opportunities or space for lodging owners or customers to select sustainable lodgings. Customers therefore often don’t know if they have chosen a more sustainable option, until they get to the location. The impact of this on sustainability tourism in general could be an interesting research topic towards the sustainable tourism industry.

8.4. Conflict of interest
There was no conflict of interest in this research. It was not conducted or written on behalf of any of the interviewees, and no parties had a stake in the research.
REFERENCES


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UNWTO, (2018). *Why Tourism Matters.* Available at: http://media.unwto.org/content/infographics


### Appendix A - The Sustainable Project Management Maturity Model (SPM3) (Silvius & Schipper, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Indicators</th>
<th>Economic Sustainability</th>
<th>Environmental Sustainability</th>
<th>Social Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Return on investment</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Labor practices and decent work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business agility</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive potential</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Ethical behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Business) Continuity</td>
<td>Eco system</td>
<td>Soc, cust and prod responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation and incentives</td>
<td>Waste and Packaging</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk reduction</td>
<td>Materials and resources</td>
<td>Human capital development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emissions</td>
<td>Corporate governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spatial planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nuisance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Integration of sustainability:
- Level 1: Compliant
- Level 2: Reactive
- Level 3: Proactive
- Level 4: Purpose
Appendix B - The Sustainable Tourism (STM) (Hall, 1998).
# Appendix C - General information of lodgings extracted from interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lodging</th>
<th># Beds</th>
<th># Rooms</th>
<th># Employees</th>
<th># Female Employees (% of total)</th>
<th># Age of Hotel (years)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Owner is Sri Lankan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12 (50%)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>South coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>South coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>South coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>South coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8 (40%)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>South coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10 (40%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>South coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>South coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7 (29%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>South-east coast</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L9</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>South-east coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2 (17%)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>South-east coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>East coast</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>East coast</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>East coast</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>East coast</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>East coast</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix D - SLM3 results overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triple bottom line</th>
<th>Compliant</th>
<th>Reactive</th>
<th>Proactive</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic efficiency</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROI – Social</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROI – Environmental</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preserving the environment</strong></td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditations</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable energy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of natural resources</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing locally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social equity</strong></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair wages</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder influence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>