

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Discussions

A total of 35 questionnaires were received from respondents (100 %). The respondents indicated serving in different management positions, including human resource managers, chief executive officers, operations manager, events manager, catering manager, sales and marketing manager, lodging manager and maintenance manager. The table below summarizes the position representation.

Figure 1: The position and the number of participants

Position	Number of participants
Human resource manager	3
Chief executive officer	2
Operations manager	11
Events manager	3
Catering manager	2
Sales and marketing	1
Lodging manager	5
Maintenance manager	4
Front-office manager	2
Meeting manager	2

As it can be inferred, several management positions are represented, which hints of the strength of the study to accommodate different managerial views regarding sustainability. The diversity management representation is also reflected in the hotel of work. When asked the hotels that they work, the respondents mentioned a number of hotels in Inle lake region, including,

Royal NyaungShwe Hotel, The Hotel Emperor-Inle, Thiri Nanda Villa, Inle Cottage Boutique Hotel, Myanmar Treasure Resorts Inle, Hotel Maineli, Sanctum Inle Resort, ThanakhaInle Hotel, Paramount Inle Resort, ManawThukha Hotel and Sandalwood Hotel. Although these are not all the hotels in the region, this representation is potentially advantageous because it allows the findings to be generalized to other contexts.

All respondents (100 percent) had been working in the hotels for at least 3 years. The distribution of age of service in the hotel in Inle Lake is summarized in the table below.

Figure 2: The duration of service of participants

The Duration of service in Inle Lake hotels	Number of participants
Below 2 years	0
2-5 years	10
5 to 7 years	9
7 to 10 years	15
Over 10 years	1

The fact that all of the respondents have worked in the regional hotel for at least 3 years is a prerogative to find reliable responses, considering they would be versed with the sustainable practices of their hotels.

The respondents gave several perspectives regarding sustainability, including caring about the environment, the people, the law, the economy and the environment. Some of the definitive themes of sustainability that were highlighted in the questionnaire responses include “social and economic responsibility”, balancing between the hotel interests and those of the

society” and “being conscious about the environment”. This level of knowledge shows that managers in the hotel industry in Inle lake region are aware of the criticality and significance of sustainability pursuit.

Nevertheless, the question of whether the hotels pursue sustainability standards was perhaps the most important question. Although the respondents acknowledged working towards sustainability, the orientation of their initiatives varied, ranging from social sustainability to environmental sustainability, security and infrastructural development, tradition and culture, and globalization measures. The table below summarizes the orientation of sustainability initiatives based on the questionnaire responses.

Table 1: The orientation of sustainability initiatives based on the questionnaire responses

Sustainability aspect	The number of times mentioned
Economic sustainability	29
Social sustainability	11
Environmental sustainability	35
Security and infrastructural development	25
Traditional and culture	15
Globalization measure	2

The summary table provides an opportunity to infer several elements regarding the subject. Firstly, the hotels in the Inle lake region have varying priorities regarding the sustainability aspects. The priority is particularly directed towards environmental sustainability, followed by economic sustainability, security and infrastructural development, traditions and culture and social sustainability. The global aspect of sustainability is the less prioritized as it is only mentioned twice. In essence, it means all hotels are striving towards environmental

sustainability, while a few have recognized the globalization measure. Meanwhile, the respondents acknowledged the importance of tourism on economic development, further appraising the role of cultural activities and the benefits of the different sustainability initiative orientation and measures.

Economic Sustainability

The respondents highlighted a number of themes regarding economic sustainability. In general, the respondents conceived economic sustainability as a standard of measure of economic growth, which was otherwise ascertained through different initiatives such as building on the assets available to ensure optimal performance, enhancing reputation with the businesses products, customers and stakeholders, planning on the finances and acting in a fair manner. The respondents indicated that all these areas are the core focus for the hotel industry.

In this regard, it can be inferred that hotels in the Inle lake region are faring relatively well with their economic sustainability goals. This direction, however, is also motivated by initiatives at the government levels. Indeed, economic sustainability is one of the standards and a measure that has been put in place by the government of Myanmar which has impacted positively on the economy of the people living around Myanmar. It has enabled enough revenue collection for expansion of the various service hotel industries that have also regenerated even much revenue. Economic sustainability has entailed putting in place economic measures for regulating the use of a given asset of any organization so as to enable it to function optimally. Optimal functions enable many incoming generating institutions like these hotel industries around Inle Lake in Myanmar to boost their income generating capacity which in turn boosts their economy and promotes their expansion and wider development. The government of the people around Myanmar seems to have focused more on the enhancement of economic

sustainability as a means of promoting livelihood that largely comes through employment. One of the means widely ventured into in order to promote economic growth is the empowerment of citizens to be financially stable. This is often done by increasing the income generation capacity of the various businesses that work well to generate broad vacuum for the rest of the uninvolved population to find a way of generating income. An increase in such kind of opportunities will definitely enhance the growth of the various industries not only economically but also regarding the quality of output will redouble. Economic sustainability as a measure and a standard of promotion of hotel industry growth has been employed by the government in ensuring all businesses and companies are capable of paying all their debts and costs of work to minimize so much dependency.

Social Sustainability

The responses on approaches to social sustainability invited a number of views. While many respondents acknowledged that this aspect was important, they indicated that this area had received less management priority — a lot of focus was directed on economic and environmental sustainability to benefit the businesses and avoiding legal suits associated with the environmental laws. More importantly, social sustainability occurs in both formal and non-formal setups. It is one of the key pillars that can be used to further economic advancement of any given place. In Inle Lake around Myanmar, social pillar has not been left behind. The science of social sustainability enables both the formal and informal sectors of the society to unite in achieving a common goal so as to better the livelihood of those living around the society. Socially sustainable communities have a quality life which ranges from the equitable distribution of resources and wealth, democratic governance and many ways of ensuring there are equity and fairness in service provision of services. Social sustainability is useful in business and in this way

it has been an instrumental standard and measure that has contributed to the economic growth of the people living around Myanmar. Social sustainability enables a broad understanding of how various co-operations help to better the social lives of various individuals living in a given area.

The respondents particularly mentioned several core aspects of social sustainability, which include social equity, local control and community wellness, and cultural wellness. Such responses reveal the knowledge and awareness of the managers regarding the pivotal elements of sustainability. Indeed, social equity helps to provide a widespread and equal distribution of various resources and wealth that are shared by the community at large. Social sustainability was enhanced as a measure and standard of promoting tourism and hotel industry economic growth by ensuring there is equity and fairness in the distribution of the benefits realized to them. The benefits include employment opportunities for those who live around these facilities. Once financially empowered, the people around the locality will be able to afford such form of luxurious lifestyle. This increases the customer base thereby increasing the demand for the services offered. Through this means, there have been increased profits realized and this has helped boost the economic growth of that place. Local control is also another key pillar that has contributed widely to the promotion of the hotel industry economy through social sustainability. Local control is engaging the local communities or residents with the task of decision making especially on various issues that would affect their lifestyle. The local control provides security of thoughts to all the members of any given community and enables them to gather trust with those entrusted in the management and leadership of the various hotel industries around Inle Lake in Myanmar. Example of a local control initiative involves in decision making especially in the decisions that mainly affect them like the effect of tourism. Social sustainability being

instilled measure has thus promoted the wide economic growth of the hotel industry. Finally, cultural wellness entails recognizing and promoting the cultural values of the people.

Environmental and Sustainability

The comments on environment sustainability measure were perhaps the most elaborate and overwhelming. The respondents highlighted that their measures were mainly concerned about protecting and conserving the environment, which was fulfilled through a series of social responsibility initiatives such as cleanup and minimizing pollution through the disposal of wastes. The benefits have been encouraging, including avoiding legal suits, serving as a marketing tool and identifying with the local communities. Environmental sustainability as a measure and standard in Myanmar has also enabled rapid economic growth especially in the field of tourism and hotel industry. Environmental sustainability measure has enabled various tourist attraction sceneries to be preserved and this has further promoted tourism around Myanmar. Lake Myanmar is an example of the results of environmental sustainability. The Lake and many other features around have attracted tourism and this is the main reason for the growth of hotel industries around Lake Inle in Myanmar. Various organized projects and developmental conferences have enabled campaigns for environmental sustainability, a factor that has promoted a healthy life and a growing economy for those who value environmental conservation methods.

The questionnaire responses highlight environmental sustainability pillars such as the environmental purity, resource efficiency, biological biodiversity and physical integrity. In this case, environmental purity refers to various measures and standards put in place to minimize pollution and degradation of the environment. Pollution refers to the contamination of the existing natural resources. There are various forms of pollution that highlighted to be of interests for hotel managers. Since water pollution is a serious type of pollution in Inle Lake Myanmar, it

has been campaigned against and this has tried to enhance the quality of Inle Lake so as to keep it fascinating to the visiting tourists as often as possible.

Resource efficiency helps in the productive management of resources for careful use so as to be put into use for a great period of time. Resource efficiency majorly deals with the renewable and non-renewable sources of energy. Non-renewable sources of energy are discouraged because they often result in environmental degradation while renewable sources are encouraged a lot because they cause too much harm to the environment. Standards and measures put in place to ensure there is resource efficiency that promotes the hotel industry include;

Biological diversity helps in conservation of the natural areas, resources and wildlife which also would attract visitors to the hotel industry and boost its market capacity. Examples of measures and guidelines outlined to ensure biodiversity in Inle Lake Myanmar include ecotourism which is tourism with environmental conservation. Tourists are encouraged to conserve nature both in the lake and in other areas around Myanmar which they also explore. Biodiversity conserves natural resources enabling them to thrive long hence they become constant tourist attractive features. This enables tourists to keep coming in the area making them the economy of the hotel industries around to thrive.

Finally, physical integrity is another method of enhancing environmental sustainability. Physical integrity entails measures that have been put in place to maintain and balance the landscapes present in the area around Myanmar. Physical integrity ensures the physical features around the Lake and around the city of Myanmar are all attractive, it ensures urban planning and management is efficient in enabling people to venture into the area for investments and other business activities, by this means, it helps to promote tourism which in turn boosts the economy of the hotel and hospitality industry.

Security and Infrastructural Development

The respondent acknowledged the importance of security and infrastructural development in sustainability development. However, they indicated that this was largely an area of the government and that hotels only come in to support the government. This is fulfilled through initiatives such as building roads, provisioning clean water and social amenities where convenient.

Security is one of the confidence boosters for all who like to visit the strange land. It has been the same case in Myanmar. The government has enhanced proper details of security in the area, and this has brought about an influx in the number of visiting tourists every year. The tourists consume the services of the hotel industry thereby increasing the economic advantage and growth of that sector. Infrastructural development has also played a key role in promoting the activities of the services of the hotels in Myanmar. The government has established good roads and communication network that has enabled tourism and other business activities to thrive in Myanmar. With good roads and proper communication network, it is easier to navigate through the area with ease and it also promotes the general security outlook of the environment. With the support of the hotels, Inle lake region should be able to address all the current and emerging security and infrastructural issues in the future.

Traditions and Culture

Many respondents indicating prioritizing traditional and cultural aspect measures, considering they were one of the notable factors of tourist attraction. Notably, various customs and traditions of various communities living around Inle Lake have also been the basis of standards and measures that have been instilled so as to ensure the hotel industry keeps thriving during all seasons. Cultural dances and displays that often occur around the lake and in the hotels

around to entertain visiting tourists have also made people love visiting and staying around the area during holidays and leisure time. Cultural heritage has therefore been upheld for a long time so as to keep boosting the tourism traffic in Myanmar region. The national culture often comprise of a system of values and norms that dictate the behavior of a certain group of people. Culture is diverse and several people from various backgrounds all have different beliefs and norms. It turns out that most of these cultures are often attractive to those who have not been used to them thus they turn out to be symbols of national heritage or even lucrative economic activities. The hotel industry in Myanmar has embraced culture as an important aspect of the normal day activities (Buijtendijk&Tschunkert, 2016). By this, it has been able to successfully woo many tourists who in turn become consumers of their services. This leads to an increase in the size of profits generated hence a surge in the general economic growth.

However, some elements of cultural erosion and homogenization have been noted as a challenge. Homogenization of culture has lowered the diversity of culture which is often appreciated by different cultural groups coming together for a common objective. Homogenization has marginalized some culture among' other societies especially those that have been marginalized for a long period of time. Homogenization has also caused similarity of the various destinations thus hindering the uniqueness that was often desired by various tourists. Therefore, this issue presents itself as one of the challenges that will need to be addressed.

Globalization

Although globalization is regarded to be an important aspect of sustainability, it was the least prioritized according to the respondents. Many managers indicated that sustainability measures were largely limited to economic, cultural, environmental and social aspects. Globalization refers to the process by which the constricted network between various countries

in the world is broken down by socio-economic or common political agendas of international interest that promote nation building. Globalization is usually influenced by the fast movement of people, money and fast transmission of ideas in the corners of the world. The socio-economic measures instilled under globalization have contributed to the development of a common world platform especially in the hotel service industry where meals of all international backyards can be served at a common point. The world's diverse culture all being catered for at a common point makes tourists visit the places with these fascinating features for pleasure with ease.

However, there are various gains in Inle Lake hotels and tourism activities associated with globalization. One is exposure to different cultural activities and that has already been broadly discussed. Other merits include improvement of technology, the growth in infrastructure and creation of seasonal employment. In the improvement of technology, globalization has enabled ease of access to various areas in the world that were previously considered remote areas. These areas have developed busy road and communication networks. The result of such improvement has been an increased number of visitors visiting the places that were once out of reach for the majority of humanity. Improvement of technology is also one merit that is closely related to the infrastructure of a place. Proper technology in terms of meals, communications, luxurious accommodation services and many more of such have been key areas where globalization has chipped in and provided better solutions. The world today is considered a global village due to the massive effects of globalization. All these advancements are significant in the hospitality industry and have contributed to the general growth and development of hotels. This has contributed so much revenue both for the economic benefit of the hotel industry around Inle Lake, the government and the citizens of Myanmar. These benefits hint the need for the

hotels in the areas to adjust their attention and include globalization aspect in their sustainability initiatives.

Need for Change

When asked whether there was anything that needed to change to support sustainability, various responses were mentioned. These responses revolved around the need for the leadership committed to sustainability, the need to invest more resources in the initiatives, the need to undertake research to understand the nature and form of the Inle Lake sustainability development initiatives, and training and development on sustainability and development among the industrial players. Therefore, on the overall, while sustainability expansion in the Inle Lake region is progressive, it also has several challenges that must be addressed.

The findings create the allowance to dismiss hypothesis 1 and uphold hypothesis 2. The hotel industry in Inle Lake region is faring well in pursuing sustainability standards and needs to be commended, albeit a few areas of weaknesses. On the overall, the nature and form of the sustainability focus of the hotel industry in Inle Lake can be summarized in the SWOT table as follows.

Figure 3: SWOT table based on the findings and discussion

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers have awareness for different aspects of sustainability. • The hotels are pursuing different aspects of sustainability. • Government is supporting the hotels in their sustainability initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is the lack of equal attention on all sustainability areas. • Globalization aspect of sustainability has received little attention.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The industry can benefit from training and development • Research can help identify the areas of weaknesses in the industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The limited resources threatens sustainability goals • The lack of committed leadership is also a major challenge.