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Hoteliers' Perceptions of Sustainable Practices on Small Hotel Optimization: A Phenomenology Inquiry

Keneika Rowe
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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Keneika Rowe

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Walden University

2018

Abstract

Hoteliers' Perceptions of Sustainable Practices on Small Hotel Optimization: A

Phenomenology Inquiry

by

Keneika Rowe

MSc, Lehman College, 2012

BBA, Monroe College, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management—Leadership and Organizational Change

Walden University

March 2018

Abstract

The management practices of the hotel industry are under scrutiny for having an adverse impact on the environment. This study addressed the problem that hoteliers in Jamaica only focus on foreign exchange earnings and job creation, rather than on sustainable development in their operations. There is a lack of research on small hoteliers' integration of sustainable practices in their operations. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. The conceptual framework consisted of stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility. Focusing on small hoteliers' perceptions of sustainable practices, the research questions addressed managers' efforts in preserving the local heritage, maintaining the economic and environment and identifying the challenges. The phenomenological design included 8 small hotel managers who participated in telephone, email and Skype unstructured interviews. The data analysis involved transcribing and coding unstructured interviews which resulted in the emergence of 14 themes and 101 subcategories. Results revealed that successful sustainable practices include providing education on the history, culture, and heritage and respecting the environment. The analysis from the transcripts showed that high cost was one of the primary factors for the lack of sustainable practices in small hotels. The findings also showed that there was a need for government assistance in providing funding and education on the benefits of sustainable practices and development. This study could contribute to new and existing hoteliers, government policymakers and business leaders in sustainable strategic planning and development.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my friends and family members who have encouraged me throughout this journey. This dissertation process was a very time-consuming process and required a lot of perseverance, dedication, and commitment to accomplish. I specifically want to thank my two best friends Alecia and Jascynthia who always provided encouragement, thoughts, and prayers. To my siblings, thank you for believing in me that I could accomplish the goals I set in life. To my fiancé, Migains thank you for your love and support and for making sure that I have space and the right resources to complete the final steps of this journey. To my colleagues, cohort members, co-workers who provided support, guidance, and encouragement, I thank you. Finally, I couldn't have accomplished this degree without the grace of God. His guidance, strength, and blessings, helped me to stay healthy so I could have a successful journey. Thanks to everyone, your support, encouragement, and inspiration, did not go unnoticed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Jamaica is one of the most visited islands in the Caribbean (Tourism in Jamaica, n.d.). The Jamaican economy includes tourism, agriculture, bauxite and mining, and manufacturing. Tourism is one of Jamaica's largest earners of foreign exchange (Taylor, 1993). The tourism industry entails hotels, restaurants, cruises, attractions, entertainment, and recreational opportunities. The hotel industry consists of approximately 178 hotels with over 26,000 rooms, most of which are small hotels referred to as the Inns of Jamaica. In 2015, the total number of visitors to the island was 3,691,744, with a total visitor expenditure of US\$2,402,340,000 (Tourism in Jamaica, n.d.). Government agencies and residents in the communities urge hoteliers of small hotels to integrate sustainable development not only into the environment but also into the well-being of their stakeholders and neighboring communities.

Sustainable development is a growing trend in not only the hospitality and tourism industry, but all industries. Sustainable development includes the aim to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Sloan, Legrand, & Chen, 2013). A sustainable hospitality operation is one whose leaders ensure its resources limit adverse effects on the economy, society, and environment while protecting and enhancing these factors for future generations (Küpers, 2011).

This study was important because current management practices in most Jamaican hotels have an adverse impact on the environment, community, and economy where they operate (Bâc, 2012; Mihalič, Žabkar, & Cvelbar, 2012). The majority of hotel leaders in

Jamaica focus solely on foreign exchange earnings and job creation, rather than on sustainable development in their operations (Mensah, 2014). Managers of small hotels do not consider sustainability in their management practices because they believe they do little or no harm to the environment (Mensah, 2014). The social implications of this study were that managers of small hotels could benefit from the effects of sustainable practices and the ways it increases small hotel optimization.

By incorporating sustainable practices, hotel leaders may be able to make a positive contribution to the lives of local people now and for the future. Hotel leaders will also need to consider issues such as public health, social justice, human rights, labor rights, equal opportunities, and maintaining and promoting socioeconomic factors, which all lead to sustainable practices (Sloan et al., 2013). This chapter includes an overview of the background of sustainable development and its effect on hotels, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the conceptual framework that consists of stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The chapter also includes a discussion of the nature of the study, definitions of major terms used throughout the study, assumptions, the scope and delimitations, limitations, a summary of the significance, and a transition to Chapter 2.

Background of the Study

Sustainable development has evolved from 1972 and 1992, when the United Nations had its first global conference on the human environment. The term sustainable development appeared in *Our Common Future*, a report by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), also known as the *Brundtland Report*. The term

sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Sloan et al., 2013) and includes three main area of focus: the development of the economic, environment, and social equity (Chindris-Vasoiu & Tocan, 2015; Drexhage & Murphy, 2010). Since the late 1990s, the leaders of many governmental agencies, businesses, and civil societies have promoted sustainable development as a guiding principle in the development of their organizations' policies and practices.

Researchers have highlighted the importance for hoteliers to integrate sustainable development into their organizations' policies and practices. Radwan, Jones, and Minoli (2012) indicated that not all small hotels have an adverse impact on the environment because of their contribution to solid waste generation and disposal. Managers of small hotels pay little attention to their environmental responsibilities because recycling and reducing waste can be costly and time consuming (McIntosh, 2014).

Mensah (2014) reported that accommodation in the tourism sector is one of the major negative effects on the environment in areas such as energy consumption, water consumption, solid and liquid waste generation and disposal, and emission of hazardous chemicals and atmospheric pollution. Similarly, Sloan et al. (2013) reported hoteliers are known to consume a lot of energy in their operation and not only for the maintenance of their facilities, but for providing their guests with multifaceted products and services. This explains why there is an increasing strain on not only energy, but also the water or raw materials used in the services provided by hoteliers to the growing number of visitors to their properties on a nightly basis. Conaghan, Hanrahan, and McLoughlin (2015)

explained that tourism is a growing sector and has become a high priority for countries globally. There is a need for sustainable practices in hotels.

Sustainable development is a global issue for all companies. Hashmi, Damanhour, and Rana (2015) discussed that sustainability practices are seen in large U.S. corporations both on a domestic and international level. Hashmi et al. analyzed the sustainability of businesses in the United States compared to business leaders abroad in other countries. Hashmi et al. conducted a survey that included 322 corporate chief executive officers who responded to questions related to environmental protection measures and the impact of a corporation's performance on the environment.

The results showed that many U.S. corporation leaders, both domestic and international, integrated sustainability in their practices. These leaders focused on the environmental aspect of sustainability and on the social and economic aspects that can contribute to the well-being of stakeholders (Hashmi et al., 2015). Many leaders participated in sustainability development by mitigating their adverse impact on the environment, which leads to an increase in optimization and the reputation of the organization.

Customers are making decisions on places to stay or do business based on how sustainable corporations are in their day-to-day operation. Heung and Pun (2013) investigated how effective environmental management systems are in hotels operating in Hong Kong by studying 103 hotels. The results showed that customers are more demanding of green properties and therefore many hotels had received certification in green practices. Hoteliers of green properties are more conscious of their impact on the

environment, including the amount of energy, water, and waste used in their operations. Researchers have shown the importance of companies in all industries taking part in CSR. Carlon and Downs (2014) indicated that CSR has changed the way managers within firms see themselves in a competitive market. Leaders of corporations have economic and legal obligations, as well as an obligation to the well-being of the community, society, and environment.

Organizational leaders make decisions about CSR activities that benefit both businesses and stakeholders. Hotel managers and employees in hotels in Hong Kong have incorporated CSR in their organizational strategies to increase overall organizations' performance. Mackenzie and Peters (2014) investigated how managers' perception of CSR influences their employees' contribution to the environment and community. Mackenzie and Peters concluded that if managers provide incentives and activities, employees will have a better awareness of CSR. Researchers have aligned CSR with stakeholder theory by using CSR to enhance relationships with stakeholders. Chan, Hon, Chan, and Okumus (2014) indicated that if managers of corporations view CSR activities as part of a company's strategic plan for satisfying stakeholders' demands, then there will be a positive outcome for the firm's reputation.

Stakeholder theory is prevalent across different organizations because it helps to solve three major problems that affect organizational success: value creation and trade, ethics of capitalism, and managerial mind-set (Parmar et al., 2010). Carlon and Downs (2014) discussed the importance of stakeholder valuing by identifying interrelationships between firm and stakeholder attributes. To incorporate stakeholder value in their

establishments, managers of organizations need to make their firms' strategic planning and mission transparent to their stakeholders, create value for maintaining consistency for identifying the firm, and account for and report the value. Bundy, Shropshire, and Buchholtz (2013) examined the need for firm responsiveness in the relationships between stakeholders and organizations. Firm responsiveness refers to firm leaders giving their undivided attention to the concerns and issues of stakeholders and committing themselves to solving these issues in the best interest of the stakeholders. To eliminate the lack of firm responsiveness, organizational leaders need to develop a strategic cognition view of salience. Strategic cognition refers to prioritizing stakeholders' issues above all.

There is not enough research on how managers of small hotels can incorporate sustainable development in their properties to preserve the local heritage, promote social development, and support economic and ecological sustainability (Mensah, 2014). This study was important because it involved understanding the lived experiences of hoteliers to determine whether sustainable development exists in the practices of small hoteliers. By understanding the findings of the study, I was able to identify how to use these sustainable practices as a common framework that could improve the preservation of local culture and heritage, promote social development, and increase economic sustainability.

Problem Statement

The leaders of most small hotels in the Caribbean have not been able to integrate sustainable practices into their management operations as a way of preserving the local heritage, promoting social development, and supporting economic and ecological

sustainability. Sustainable development is a major trend in the hospitality and tourism industry because it affects the environment and contributes to the well-being of the community (Conaghan et al., 2015). The general problem was that the absence of integrated and sustainable management practices within most small hotels in the Caribbean hospitality industry has a negative impact on the environment, community, and economy where they operate (Bâc, 2012; Mihalič et al., 2012).

I conducted this study to understand the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. The specific problem was the majority of hotel leaders in Jamaica focus solely on foreign exchange earnings and job creation rather than on sustainable development in their operations (Mensah, 2014). Sustainable development is one of the newest and fastest growing trends in the hospitality and tourism industry. Scholars have yet to explore lived experience of hoteliers and their aim to integrate sustainable management practices in small hotels. This study addressed this gap.

Although scholars have discussed the importance of sustainable development in the hospitality and tourism industry (Bâc, 2012; Conaghan et al., 2015; Mensah, 2014; Mihalič et al., 2012), they focused their studies on how hoteliers of large chain properties have incorporated sustainable practices in their organizations and not on hoteliers of small hotels. The study contributed to social change by providing an awareness of the best sustainable practices, the challenges that prevented managers from implementing them and ways in which managers could maintain and support an economic and ecological environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. Sustainable development includes an aim to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A sustainable hospitality operation is one whose leaders ensure its resources limit the adverse effects on the economy, society, and environment while protecting and enhancing these factors for future generations (Küpers, 2011). Hayes et al. (2012) indicated that hotel classification occurs by size, and hotels are small if they have 75 or fewer hotel rooms.

Researchers have not adequately studied the demand for sustainable development in small hotels in Jamaica (Pratt, 2015). To address this gap, I used the qualitative phenomenological design, which encompasses unstructured interviews and observations. I used this approach to understand the lived experiences of the eight participants who took part in the study. All participants were from five of the most visited areas in Jamaica: Negril, Montego Bay, St. Elizabeth, Port Antonio, and Kingston. The results from this study might contribute to a better understanding of the best ways to integrate sustainable practices into management operations of the hotel industry and to assist managers to preserve the local heritage, promote social development, and support economic and ecological sustainability. The effect sustainable practices have on hotels policies and structures might lead to an increase in optimization of revenue, loyal customers, and good reputation.

Research Questions

In this study, I explored participants' lived experiences and perceptions on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. The following research questions were used to guide my exploration of the research problem:

Research Question 1: How do small hotel managers describe their effort in preserving the local heritage in the communities they operate?

Research Question 2: What are small hotel managers' perceptions on the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations?

Research Question 3: How do small hotel managers describe their effort to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this qualitative phenomenology design included stakeholder theory. Tashman and Raelin (2013) indicated that Freeman developed stakeholder theory and brought awareness of the need to involve stakeholders in management decisions, many researchers have used stakeholder theory for decades. Stakeholders are persons affected by a firm's actions and can include owners, management, suppliers, customers, and the local community (Tashman & Raelin, 2013). The theory indicates that management must give equal consideration to stakeholders as they do to stockholders. This means that individuals in management must ensure they consider the effect their operations practices have on the well-being of stakeholders as

well as their investors. The key constructs or propositions underlying this theory are stakeholders' power, legitimacy, urgency, and other interests of the organization. As applied to this study, stakeholder theory will demonstrate what I expect small hotel managers to implement in their policies and structure to promote social development.

The second concept in the conceptual framework was CSR. Carlon and Downs (2014) indicated that CSR has changed the way organizational leaders see their firm in a competitive market. The constructs and propositions underlying this concept are that corporations have not only economic and legal obligations, but also an obligation to the well-being of the community, society, and the environment. Organizational leaders make decisions about the CSR activities that benefit both the business and its stakeholders. Both stakeholder theory and CSR contributed to preserving local heritage and social development and could increase small hotel optimization.

Nature of the Study

The research methodology for this study was qualitative. For a qualitative methodology, the researcher seeks the understanding and perceptions of appropriate individuals; therefore, the appropriate method for this study was qualitative. A quantitative or mixed method study was not applicable because the purpose of this study was not to quantify the problem or test theories or hypotheses. By using the phenomenological approach, I explored the lived experiences of small hotel managers. Researchers who have examined this phenomenon used case study, narrative, or ethnographic approaches because they are all similar regarding the data collection

process, including interviews and observations (Moustakas, 1994). However, researchers who use these approaches only focus on a single individual or case.

Researchers use a case study approach when they want to give a description and analysis of a case or multiple cases. A narrative approach is suitable when researchers want to explore the life of an individual and to develop a narrative about a person's story, and an ethnographic approach is suitable for studying a group that shares the same cultural experience (Simon & Goes, 2013). By using the phenomenological approach, I gained a comprehensive description of the phenomenon. A comprehensive description of the phenomenon was necessary to develop the themes used when analyzing the data collected.

Participant selection involved using a maximum variation sampling strategy. Maximum variation sampling was applicable for this study because of the diversity of participants from various site locations. This type of sampling strategy provided a fair representation of the population. The phenomenology methodology was applicable because it aligned with the conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework included stakeholder theory and CSR. The focus of these two lenses was on how organizations affect the well-being of stakeholders, the community, and the environment (Carlon & Downs, 2014; Tashman & Raelin, 2013). By using a phenomenological approach, I was able to comprehend how this phenomenon has affected the lives of stakeholders, the people within communities, and the environment.

Definitions

Accommodation: The lodging sector of the hospitality and tourism industry that solely depends on room sales (Sloan et al., 2013).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR): Companies that apply CSR have legal obligations but contribute to economic development while maintaining the well-being of the community, society, and environment (Carlson & Downs, 2014).

Environment: The locations and surroundings in which organizations operate. It also involves measuring the company's environmental footprint and its impact on natural resources (Sloan et al., 2013).

Green practices: The performance of green hotels. Green hotels are hotels that minimize their impact on the environment because they have a commitment to ecological practices such as saving water and reducing energy consumption (Kim & Choi, 2013).

Optimization: Performance optimization in which hoteliers may use all their resources to work as effectively as possible to increase the performance of their operation (Makki, Singh, & Ozturk, 2016).

Phenomenon: A phenomenon refers to the problem under study (Kothari, 2004). A phenomenon is studied in its natural setting. For example, a researcher seeks to understand participants' perceptions of a phenomenon.

Small hotels: Small hotels have 75 or fewer guest rooms (Hayes, Ninemeier, & Miller, 2012).

Stakeholders: Stakeholders are the people affected by a firm's performance and output, such as employees, people within communities, government, and customers (Tashman & Raelin, 2013).

Stakeholder theory: Stakeholder theory is a theory that explains the importance of stakeholders' power, legitimacy, and urgency above all other interests of the organization (Tashman & Raelin, 2013).

Sustainability: Sloan et al. (2013) defined sustainability as "the effect goal of sustainable development. It is the ideal end state to which we must aspire" (p. 363). For example, sustainability refers to the ability to sustain the environment by not posing any harm to the natural resources or the ability to consider the well-being of the people within communities.

Sustainable development: Sustainable development refers to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Sloan et al., 2013).

Assumptions

This qualitative phenomenological study included several assumptions. Assumptions are factors that influence the study but that researchers may not or cannot prove after the study is complete (Simon & Goes, 2013). The first assumption of this study was that the participants would answer the interview questions honestly and factually. I assumed by giving participants the informed consent provided by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), they would feel more confident when responding to

the questions. I also assumed that the chosen participants would meet the criteria of the study and answer the questions successfully and voluntarily.

The second assumption was that the instrument used for the interview process was credible. I assumed the central questions of the survey would provide me with the responses necessary to understand the phenomenon. I also assumed that NVivo 11 software would be the best way to analyze the data collected and to present data in a form that my audience will understand. The third assumption was that the sample chosen for the study would be a fair representation of the population and that the data collected may be replicable across disciplines. These assumptions were necessary because certain issues could arise that a researcher may not be able justify or control based on the participants' responses. Simon and Goes (2013) indicated that assumptions are necessary and not including them in the study can lead to questionable credibility and reliability of the study.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was the perspectives of eight small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. The participants responded to a series of unstructured, open-ended interview questions asked on the telephone, via Skype, and through e-mail. These data collection methods served as the scope of the study because the participants had lived the experience of the phenomenon and were able to share their experiences on how hotel managers can preserve the local heritage, promote social development, and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in the local regions.

Delimitations of a study are the boundaries and scope that a researcher decides to include or exclude when developing a study. The inclusion criteria were managers of small hotel rather than managers of large and medium-size hotels. Managers of large hotels have the resources and financial stability to incorporate sustainable development in their policies and structures (Mensah, 2014). Radwan et al. (2012) indicated that managers of small hotels refuse to take part in sustainable development because they either lack the necessary funding or believe they do little to no harm to the environment.

The conceptual framework included stakeholder theory and CSR. This framework was appropriate for the study because the key constructs underlying stakeholder theory were stakeholders' power, legitimacy, and urgency and the other interests of the organization. CSR was an appropriate concept, as corporations have not only economic and legal obligations, but also an obligation to the well-being of the community, society, and the environment (Carlon & Downs, 2014). Both stakeholder theory and CSR contribute to small hotel optimization. The findings of this study may be transferable to all hoteliers of all sizes and types of hotels, many other corporations in the business industry, universities, governmental agencies, and future students in the field of hospitality and tourism management.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the method and design used. A phenomenological study takes place in a natural setting where researchers interview and observe participants. The data collected from participants were not replicable in other settings or environments. The second limitation was the use of the purposeful sampling

strategy. I used a maximum variation sampling strategy to identify eight individuals from five of the most visited areas in Jamaica, and at the participant level which included small hotel managers. The data collected from these individuals may not be generalizable enough to represent the population. The third limitation was the data collection methods. I used a series of unstructured interview questions to conduct interviews on the telephone, Skype, and e-mail. Data quality was an important consideration, and researchers must ensure that data collected over the telephone can be transcribed to maintain credibility.

Significance of the Study

Significance to Practice

The significance of this study was to bring awareness of the challenges that prevented small hoteliers from integrating sustainable practices in their operations and their efforts in preserving the local heritage, economic and ecological sustainability in which they operate. Scholars have investigated the high performance of large hotels and their involvement in sustainable development but not of small and medium-sized properties (Bâc, 2012; Mihalič et al., 2012). This study may be significant because I addressed an underresearched area in the hospitality and tourism industry. Many small hotel managers lack interest in investing in sustainable practices because they believe that they do little to no harm to the environment (Mensah, 2014). Some of the adverse consequences of hotels' impact on the environment are the depletion of natural resources, overuse of energy and water use, overpopulation of the location in which the organization operates, and lack of maintaining the well-being of stakeholders and people in the community (Sloan et al., 2013).

This study confirmed the potential practices that small hoteliers could integrate to benefit financially as well as to increase their contribution to the well-being of the local communities, economies, and environment (Jurdana & Frleta, 2012; Popescu et al., 2014; Stancu, 2014). The study also confirmed that with additional support from the government in training and development of sustainable practices, small hoteliers' participation would increase. Furthermore, most small hoteliers had seen the benefits of implementing sustainable practices, but from the outcomes of the results, the majority confirmed that because of the high cost there is a decrease in their attempt to implement sustainable practices. These results could identify practices that could bridge the gap and improve small hoteliers' performance in strategic planning, development and optimization.

Significance to Theory

Although the majority of theories focused on large hoteliers' contribution to environmental development and other sustainable practices, the findings of this study might emphasize the challenges small hoteliers face when integrating sustainable practices in their operations. The results of the study looked beyond environmental practices and financial gains, but rather on how small hoteliers could put efforts in preserving the local heritage and support and maintain economy and ecological sustainability. This study was important because current management practices in most Jamaican hotels have an adverse impact on the environment, community, and economy where they operate (Bâc, 2012; Mihalič, Žabkar, & Cvelbar, 2012). Sustainable development has been a growing trend in the hospitality and tourism industry (Sloan et

al., 2013). Therefore, the results of this study showed that the need for government intervention could increase the contribution of small hoteliers' implementation of sustainable practices.

Significance to Social Change

The implication for positive social change lies in the potential to increase small hoteliers, government policymakers, business leaders, and communities to participate in sustainable practices and development. Hotel managers also need to consider issues such as public health, social justice, human rights, labor rights, equal opportunities, and maintaining and promoting socioeconomic factors, all of which lead to sustainable practices (Sloan et al., 2013). The results and findings from this study may contribute to hoteliers of all sizes and types of hotels, many other corporations in the business industry, universities, governmental agencies, and future students in the field of hospitality and tourism management.

I hope that these constituencies may benefit from the knowledge that emerged from the results of implementing sustainable practices in organizations. Hoteliers and managers may benefit from the knowledge of making sustainable decisions and contribute to hotel optimization in the communities and environments served. The hospitality industry is diverse and ever-changing. Customers' tastes and preferences also change over time (Hayes et al., 2012). Small hotel managers must compete with their counterparts by implementing sustainable practices in their actions toward the environment and the society.

Summary and Transition

The managers of most small hotels in the Caribbean have not been able to integrate sustainable practices into their management operations as a way of preserving the local heritage, promoting social development, and supporting economic and ecological sustainability. The specific problem was that the majority of hotel leaders in Jamaica focus solely on foreign exchange earnings and job creation rather than on sustainable development in their operations (Mensah, 2014). The three research questions used for the study were how do small hotel managers describe their effort in preserving the local heritage in the communities they operate, what are small hotel managers' perceptions on the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations, and how do small hotel managers describe their effort to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions.

A sample of eight small hotel managers participated in the interview. The conceptual framework aligned with stakeholder theory and CSR, which both take into consideration the well-being of stakeholders, the environment, and people within the local community. The potential contributions of this study might be to show managers of small hotels the importance of sustainable development, as well as how they could contribute to preserving the local culture and heritage and promote social development and ecological stability. The following chapter includes a review of past and current literature research that indicates the gap in the topic under study and the history of the problem. A synthesis of literature that supports the conceptual framework, a review of the

key variables and concepts, and a summary and conclusion of how the research questions in the study align with the literature review were discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I examined relevant literature regarding sustainable practices and development in the hospitality and tourism industry, which contributed to an in depth understanding and investigation of the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. The specific problem is that the majority of hotel leaders in Jamaica focus solely on foreign exchange earnings and job creation rather than on sustainable development in their operations (Mensah, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization.

This chapter includes 14 major sections: Introduction, Literature Search Strategy, Conceptual Framework, Stakeholder Theory, Stakeholder Theory and Sustainability Management, CSR Increases Firms Performance, Economic and Environmental Effects of the Tourism Industry, Sustainable Development, Managers' and Employees' Attitudes Toward Sustainability, Green Practices in Hotels, Community and Stakeholders Involvement, the Gaps seen in the literature, and summary and Conclusion. The review also includes an examination of stakeholder theory and CSR, which served as the conceptual framework for the study.

Tourism is known to be one of the largest employers and industries worldwide (N, & M, 2016). The leaders of the hotel industry under this umbrella face the urgency of integrating sustainable development into their organizational practices. The management practice is under scrutiny for having an adverse impact on the environment because of its exhaustive use of natural resources, the damage it causes to infrastructure, and the lack of

care for the well-being of people within local communities (Bâc, 2012; Mihalič et al., 2012).

Jamaica is one of the most visited countries in the Caribbean. As a result, tourism is one of the largest earners of foreign exchange on the island. There is a need for hoteliers to integrate sustainable development into their management operations as a way of preserving the local heritage, promoting social development, and improving economic sustainability (Svetlacic, 2016). There is a large amount of research on the need for hoteliers to implement sustainable development into their organizational strategies (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2014).

The general problem was the absence of integrated and sustainable management practices within most small hotels in the Caribbean hospitality industry has a negative impact on the environment, community, and economy where they operate (Bâc, 2012; Mihalič et al., 2012). The specific problem is that the majority of hotel leaders in Jamaica focus solely on foreign exchange earnings and job creation rather than on sustainable development in their operations (Mensah, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization.

Researchers have defined sustainable development as using current resources to satisfy the needs of people in the present while maintaining these same resources to provide a better living for the future (Drexhage & Murphy, 2010; Sloan et al., 2013). Leaders of a sustainable hospitality operation ensure its resources limit adverse effects on the economy, society, and environment while protecting and enhancing these factors for

future generations (Küpers, 2011). The demand for sustainable development in small hotels in Jamaica lacks adequate research. Gaining an understanding of the effect sustainable practices have on hotels can lead to an increase in optimization.

Literature Search Strategy

The search strategy in this literature review process involved reviewing approximately 135 academic journals, scholarly articles, and scholarly textbooks. Table 1 includes a list of databases and search terms used.

Table 1

Literature Review Search Log

Database	Search term	Results
Hospitality and Tourism	Sustainable practices and small hotels	4
Hospitality and Tourism	Sustainable practice OR sustainable development and small hotels	10
Hospitality and Tourism	Sustainable practice OR sustainable development and small hotels and optimization	1
Business Source	Sustainable practices and small hotels	2
ABI/INFORM	Sustainable practices and small hotels no dates range	5336
ABI/INFORM	Sustainable practices and small hotels with dates within 4 years	2388
ABI/INFORM	Effect of sustainable practices on small hotels optimization	137
Business Source Premier	Sustainable development	500
Business Source Premier	Sustainable development and hotels or small hotels and hospitality and tourism	47
Business Source Premier	Sustainable development OR sustainable practices and hotels or small hotels and hospitality and tourism	52
Business Source Premier	Stakeholder theory OR corporate social responsibility and hotels OR small hotels	65
Business Source Premier	Preserving heritage OR culture, hotels OR small hotels, sustainable development	7
Books	Sustainable practices, OR preserving local heritage	8

I started the search process by searching the two major databases of the Walden's Library, ABI/INFORM and Business Source Premier, as well as the Hospitality and

Tourism database. I started out the search by using broad key terms that would give me a sense of all the research done on the topic or closely related to the topic. Some of the keywords used in the search were *sustainable development, sustainable practices, small hotels, hospitality and tourism, preserving heritage, culture, green practices, stakeholder's theory, and corporate social responsibility*. The search terms used were *sustainable development OR sustainable practices and small hotels OR hotels*.

In the Hospitality and Tourism database of the Walden library, the key terms used were *sustainable practices and small hotels*, which led to four articles. Adding sustainable development to the key terms resulted in 10 articles. As I continued to search, I realized that the same articles kept appearing. I moved to the ABI/INFORM database of the Walden library and entered the same key words with no date range and got a result of 5,338 articles. Using the same search terms, I narrowed the search to 2012-2016 articles and got a result of 2,388 articles. As the search terms were too broad, I went to the Business Source Premiere database, used a combination of the same search terms within the 4-year period, and received fewer results. For example, I entered *sustainable development* and found 500 articles, *sustainable development and hotels or small hotels and hospitality and tourism* led to 47 articles, *sustainable development OR sustainable practices and hotels or small hotels and hospitality and tourism* led to 52 articles, *stakeholder theory OR corporate social responsibility and hotels OR small hotels* resulted in 65 articles, and *preserving heritage OR culture, hotels OR small hotels, sustainable development* resulted in seven articles.

A search using Google Scholar led to additional literature relevant to the search terms used in relations to the topic being studied. By exploring the Jamaica Tourism Board website and other government websites, such as the minister of tourism in Jamaica and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association. I tried to maintain the requirement for articles to be within a 5-year time frame, so my customized searches led to articles from 2012 to 2016. The articles used in the literature review were a combination of qualitative and quantitative research.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this qualitative study includes stakeholder theory and CSR. Stakeholder theory, developed Freeman, has appeared in studies for decades (Horisch, Freeman, & Schaltegger, 2014; Parmar et al., 2010; Tashman & Raelin 2013). The key constructs and propositions underlying stakeholder theory are stakeholders' power, legitimacy, urgency, and the other interests of the organization (Tashman & Raelin 2013). This theory helps to bring awareness of the need to involve stakeholders in management decisions and is appropriate for this study because I am trying to understand the effect of sustainable practices on small hotel optimization. The research questions relate to this theory, as they ask how hotel managers can preserve local heritage and support and maintain ecological sustainability in the local region. Supporters of the theory believe it is important for managers to consider the well-being of stakeholders in their decision making and the impact of their organizational performance on stakeholders.

Another concept selected for this study is CSR. Carlon and Downs (2014) indicated that CSR has changed the way firm leaders see their firm in a competitive

market. The constructs and propositions underlying this concept are that corporations have not only economic and legal obligations, but also an obligation to the well-being of the community, society, and environment. This concept supports the problem and the questions that were used in this study. The responses to these questions could provide an awareness of how hoteliers of small hotels can affect stakeholders and other members of special groups in the regions they operate. The next sections indicate how scholars have applied stakeholder theory and CSR in similar studies.

Stakeholder Theory

Scholars have used stakeholder theory in many studies when discussing the well-being of people affected by an operation's performance. Stakeholder theory is defined by Parmar et al. (2010) when managers of corporations see the need to not only consider their organizations' goals and objectives but also consider the well-being of lives of their stakeholders. Horisch et al. (2014) mentioned that there are four different types of stakeholder theory: descriptive/empirical stakeholder theory, which includes a focus on the structure and operation of companies; instrumental stakeholder theory, which includes the effect of stakeholder management and how a corporation's objectives affect it; normative stakeholder theory, which includes the morals of a business and how they align with stakeholder theory; and integrative stakeholder theory, which includes all the other forms of stakeholder theory mentioned and how they are linked.

There are many different concepts of stakeholder theory. Horisch et al. (2014) indicated that in research, the focus of stakeholder theory contributes to the impact of the environmental, socioeconomic, and sustainable management of an organization. Parmar

et al. (2010) indicated that stakeholder theory is prevalent across different organizations because it helps to solve three major problems that affect organizational success: value creation and trade, ethics of capitalism, and managerial mind-set. To understand stakeholder theory, there needs to be a clarification of who stakeholders are and how organizational performance affects them.

Stakeholders are persons affected by a firm's internal or external actions (Horisch et al., 2014; Tashman & Raelin, 2013). Stakeholders can include owners, management, suppliers, customers, and the local community. According to the theory, management must give equal consideration to stakeholders as they do to stockholders because their decisions can have a positive or a negative effect on stakeholders' well-being. Carlon and Downs (2014) discussed the importance of managers understanding stakeholder valuing by identifying interrelationships between firm and stakeholder attributes. By identifying stakeholder valuing, managers need to include negating the identity of the firm, creating value for maintaining consistency for identifying the firm, and accounting and reporting the value.

Scholars have reported that a firm's performance must not include a focus solely on economic gains but should include other perspectives that can represent not just one group of stakeholders but everyone affected by the performance of the organization. Bundy et al. (2013) and Harrison and Wicks (2013) indicated that managers must give their undivided attention to the concerns and issues of stakeholders and commit themselves to solving these issues in the best interest of the stakeholders. The basis of stakeholder valuing should not include only one factor, but rather should include all

factors that will meet the needs of stakeholders. By eliminating the lack of firm responsiveness, organizational leaders need to develop a strategic cognition view of salience. Strategic cognition refers to prioritizing stakeholders' issues above all, which will help to build the reputation for an organization and to gain comparative advantage over competitors.

Stakeholder Theory and Sustainability Management

Sustainability management is an increasing trend to the hospitality and tourism industry, but also for all industries. Anca-Letitia (2013) indicated that sustainability should be a long-term process that minimizes the impact of the risks or costs of an operation. The focus should be on the three Ps: profit, planet and people. Organizational leaders should be mindful of the organization's performance and its effect on the environment and social groups (Anca-Letitia, 2013). Küpers (2011) mentioned that corporations must operate in a socially responsible manner, and their leaders should pay special attention to the "social and environmental issues and behave in an ethical manner that demonstrates integrity and transparency in all operations" (pp. 137-138). In a socially responsible organization, it is important for managers to incorporate stakeholder theory with sustainability management when developing their organizational strategies, as it develops the societal and ecological environment as well as the natural environment (Horisch et al., 2014), which are important factors for managers to consider when implementing sustainable practices in their organizations.

Stakeholder Theory and CSR

Stakeholder theory and CSR have appeared in many scholarly studies when there is a discussion between businesses and societies. Brown and Forster (2012) noted that stakeholder theory and CSR are not the same thing; rather, the focus of CSR is the obligations a firm has toward the environment, while the focus of stakeholder theory is the effect of a firm's actions on the stakeholders. Brown and Forster and Cordeiro and Tewari (2015) added that there are financial benefits for investing in CSR activities, including economic gains, building a reputation, reducing costs, and building competitiveness. Stewart and Gapp (2014) mentioned the four key dimensions of CSR or sustainable management practices.

The first dimension is social, in which organizational leaders build a relationship with the community; the second is environmental, in which organizational leaders assess the impact and interaction of their organization with the environment; the third is economic, in which stakeholders consider the financial environment and the viability of all the people who interact with the organization; and the fourth is voluntariness, in which organizational leaders demonstrate actions that go beyond compliance. It is crucial for managers to consider the well-being of the community, their organization's impact on the environment, stakeholders, and the willingness to comply with sustainable management.

Leaders of hospitality businesses develop socially and environmentally responsible behavior over time. Camilleri (2014) noted that the leaders of many hospitality businesses are hesitant to adopt sustainable practices because of the lack of immediate financial returns. However, with the beneficial gains of incorporating CSR

activities (Brown & Forster, 2012; Cantrell et al., 2015; Hashmi et al., 2015), hoteliers can help to minimize social issues and mitigate their negative impact on the environment (Anddison & Needorn, 2015; Grigoras & Albu, 2015). In contrast, Mackenzie and Peters (2014) indicated that managers' perception of CSR will influence employees' contribution to the environment and the community.

Mackenzie and Peters (2014) showed that if managers provide incentives and activities, employees will have a better awareness of CSR. He and Lai (2014) indicated that customers are more loyal to companies that practice legal and ethical social responsibilities. Customers prefer high-quality products than low-cost products and services (Can, Turker, Ozturk, & Alaeddinoglu, 2014). CSR is a good strategic marketing tool for managers of companies that implement sustainable practices in their organizations' activities. If CSR has a link to sustainability and brand images, this will increase organizational performance and maximize profitability.

Link Between Sustainability and CSR

There is an increasing need for managers within the hospitality and tourism industry to provide a report on their organization's CSR and on how sustainability affects the organization's performance. Medrado and Jackson (2016) indicated that hoteliers and other managers of the hospitality industry provide a CSR report so they can see how to improve their sustainable practices within their organization. Sustainability reporting has to do with managers providing transparent information to their internal and external stakeholders. CSR reporting tracks how a firm's social, economic, and environmental impact can affect the future performance of the firm (Chan, Watson, & Woodliff, 2014;

Zhu, Sun, & Leung, 2014). Stakeholders appreciate leaders disclosing information within CSR and sustainability management reports. Managers must ensure their business strategies include CSR and sustainability management to increase their performance.

CSR Increases Firm Performance

Managers must implement CSR into their organizational policies and strategies. Jo and Na (2012) indicated that CSR helps managers to monitor their financial constraints. CSR also helps to develop transparency between stakeholders and the corporation (Ferus-Comelo, 2014; Rosalind Jenkins, & Karanikola, 2014). CSR helps to reduce any risks that can cause failure, provides a venue for easy access to financial markets, and increases shareholders' wealth. Prasad (2015) indicated that CSR helps to build a corporation's brand image because it considers not only the economic and environmental effect of an organization's operation but also the safety of stakeholders. CSR is the ethical way of doing business. Managers in corporations notice the benefits such as a reduction in operation costs, an increase in brand identity (Prasad, 2015), and maintaining the safety of stakeholders.

Stakeholder theory and CSR are an ideal conceptual framework for this study. Both concepts include a focus on the effect of managerial performance on the environment, economy, and community. The concepts also demonstrate the ethical way for managers to do business. The literature review will illustrate the application of stakeholder theory, CSR, and sustainability to this study.

Economic and Environmental Effects of the Tourism Industry

Tourism is a major economic contributor in many countries, especially the islands in the Caribbean. Pratt (2015) noted that tourism is the largest economic contributor in 16 of the 30 Caribbean countries. Cook, Hsu, and Marqua (2014) ascertained that many island businesses depend on tourism, as it has a comparative advantage to that of other economic contributors in other industries and people can have a better standard of living by gaining employment in this industry.

People can misconceive the term *tourism* because the industry is large and because of the various types of products and services offered by the businesses within the different sectors. Cook et al. (2014) defined tourism as the movement of tourists from their place of residence to other destinations and the activities that are undertaken by the destination businesses to meet the needs and desires of the traveling public. Goeldner and Ritchie (2012) indicated that the United Nation World Tourism Organization defined tourism as the activities taken by people who travel away from their homes for less than a year for leisure, business, or other reasons. Tourism consists of facilities used to care for the traveling public, such as transportation, lodging, restaurants, casinos, theme parks, and so forth. Tourism brings together tourism suppliers and service providers to satisfy the needs of the traveling public and to provide positive economic growth for communities.

Economic Impact

Tourism is the economic driver in many countries (McCartney, 2015). It is one of the major sources of employment in Jamaica and has an adverse impact on the

environment. Pratt (2015) studied seven small island developing states and how tourism has contributed to the economies in these states. These islands were Jamaica, Aruba, Fiji, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, and American Samoa. Pratt explained that there are four challenges to economic growth within these islands: location, size in terms of landscape and population, environmental disaster, and socioeconomic impact (Pratt, 2015).

Tourism can provide positive economic effects in any country or region. Cook et al. (2014) indicated that tourism can have a positive effect on a country's economy when there is a stable source of income from the type of visitors or tourism suppliers to an area or region. Tourism also provides a wide variety of jobs that can attract a diverse group of employees from all over the world, as well as opportunities to develop infrastructures for the local residents to use and to develop businesses (Cook et al., 2014).

Brătucu, Chițu, and Demeter (2015) noted that tourism does promote economic growth and provides an opportunity for job creation as well as economic and social cohesion. Although there are some great economic benefits of tourism, there are also adverse impacts, especially for islands or countries that depend solely on tourism. Cook et al. mentioned that for countries that depend only on tourism as an economic driver, a crisis such as weather or low numbers in visitors to the area can have an adverse impact.

An increase in tourism businesses can lead to environmental damage to an area or region (Cook et al., 2014). There needs to be some form of sustainable tourism practices within regions or areas to minimize the impact on the economy, environment, and society. Hoteliers, government representatives, stakeholders, and local communities must work interdependently to have a sustainable economy.

Environmental Impact

Another major impact of tourism is the environmental impact. Research exists on environmental responsibility (Mensah, 2014; Mensah & Blankson, 2014; Radwan et al., 2012). and its importance for tourism suppliers, government agencies, hoteliers, and other industries to work interdependently to minimize their impact on the environment (Mensah, 2014; Mensah & Blankson, 2014; Radwan et al., 2012). Most Jamaica's hotels are on the coastal lines of the island where there is limited space for the public to enjoy the natural beauty of the white sandy beaches.

Citizens have demanded the government intervene with new hotel developments. Despite being the largest employer on the island, not all hotels are sustainable to the environment. Environmental management has been in existence since the 1980s. Mensah and Blankson (2014) indicated that an environmental management policy should include sustainable practices by managers, such as responsible waste disposal, participating in green purchasing with vendors who consider their impact on the environment, and abiding with environmental laws and regulations. Radwan et al. (2012) indicated that hoteliers of small hotel properties generate a large amount of solid waste and disposal and therefore should consider environmental sustainability when dealing with environmental issues.

Radwan et al. (2012) noted that because hoteliers of small hotels lack environmental sustainability, the public sector could take seven principles to assist hoteliers with environmental sustainability:

Hoteliers demonstrating a commitment to sustaining the environment, agreeing to waste audit and working with a certified waste carrier, integrating a small waste program, involving staff and customers' participation. (Radwan et al., 2012, pp. 543)

Managers, employees, and guests should have some awareness of solid waste management or of how to practice environmental sustainability to minimize the effects of solid waste generation and disposal on the environment (Kasim, 2015). Heung and Pun (2013) indicated that customers are more demanding of green properties, and therefore many hotels have earned a certification in green practices.

These hoteliers are more conscious of their impact on the environment based on the amount of energy, water, and waste in their operations (Koh, Morris, Ebrahimi, & Obayi, 2016). Kim et al. (2015) added that a relationship exists between the attitudes of hotel general managers and their perceptions and attitude toward environmental commitment. Small hotel managers will perform and maintain environmental sustainability with the support and interdependent collaboration of the public sector and management alike.

Sustainable Development

The world largest employers and industries is the hospitality and tourism industry. Sloan et al. (2013) indicated that this industry contributes to 5% of the gross domestic product worldwide and employs approximately 8.7% of the total global workforce, which includes approximately 234 million people. The industry includes restaurants, hotels, motels, cruises, and theme parks.

The lodging sector is the largest accommodation sector in the industry and the sector with the most adverse impact on the environment. All companies within the industry must integrate sustainable development into their organizations (Bâc, 2012; Conaghan et al., 2015; Mihalič et al., 2012). Sloan et al. (2013) noted,

An average hotel releases between 160 and 200 kilograms of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per square meter of room floor area per year, and water consumption per guest per night is between 170 and 330 liters in the average five-star hotel. On average, hotels produce 1 kg of waste per guest per night. (p. 15)

These are just some of the reasons that hoteliers and managers in other areas within the lodging sector need to minimize their adverse impact on the environment in which they operate.

Definition of Sustainable Development

For more than 2 decades, the term *sustainable development* has surfaced in conferences all over the world. Norway's Prime Minister, Brundtland introduced the term in 1987. In 1987, the Brundtland Report was published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (Drexhage & Murphy, 2010). *Brundtland Report* main's objective was to encourage managers in corporations to consider sustainability to meet both economy and ecology needs.

Sustainable development focuses on using current resources to satisfy the needs and desires of people within the present while maintaining these same resources to provide a better living for the future. The definition of sustainable development is vague and causes misconceptions by hoteliers and other business managers (Baker, 1997).

Many managers only consider environmental sustainability such as water and energy conservation, waste and solid reduction rather than maintaining the ecological conditions of stakeholders and communities (Baker, 1997; Sloan et al., 2013). The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development addressed how leaders in the business world saw sustainable development. Changing from a focus on environmental issues to including social and economic development was necessary because many hoteliers and other managers of business sectors had misused the meaning of being sustainable (Drexhage & Murphy, 2010). A sustainable hotel should be one whose leaders consider CSR, environmental sustainability, and economic stability, along with all other organizational goals (Galpin, Whittington, & Bell, 2015).

Sustainable Development in Hotels

Hotels are one of the major polluters of the environment in which they operate. Researchers have identified the need for hoteliers to reduce their impact on the environment, communities, and economy (Bâc, 2012; Drexhage & Murphy, 2010; Mihalič et al., 2012). Hoteliers have taken a stand to increase their involvement in green practices by minimizing their carbon footprint and waste as well as introducing environmental policies and practices in their organizations (Sloan et al., 2013). Hoteliers have seen the benefits of integrating sustainable business strategies to improve corporate reputations and efficiency, as well as employee relations (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2016).

Hoteliers of small hotels face many challenges when incorporating sustainable development. Hoteliers of small hotels refuse to incorporate sustainable practices in their

organizations because they lack the financial ability to integrate such a system and because they feel that their impact on the environment is minimal to that of large hotels (Battaglia, 2017; Mensah, 2014) Hoteliers of large hotels and chain properties are in the position to incorporate sustainable development, as they have the financial and technological resources to invest in new environmental policies (Sloan et al., 2013). Hoteliers have more responsibilities than just achieving organizational goals. They must ensure they consider the well-being of their stakeholders, implement environmental management, and abide by the code of ethics and social responsibility.

The *Under Agenda 21* by the World Trade Organization indicated that businesses must include five principles in their organizations' policies to contribute to sustainable practices. These principles take into consideration three main factors these are the environment, economy, and social development (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 1992). The five sustainable practices principles that businesses must demonstrate are transparency of their practices with their stakeholder, implementing social and technological innovation in their organization practices, taking precaution and being responsible for their operational activities, and demonstrating responsible corporate citizenship (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 1992).

Managers must be able to take the necessary precautions to identify any risks that may cause harm to the environment. They must be responsible in their activities and decisions, as well as in the ways these affect people and the environment. They must provide transparency by making information known to their stakeholders on their organizational strategies and practices. They must implement social and technological

advancements to develop the social well-being of the planet and people in the communities. Last, they must consider responsible citizenship by contributing not only to their local communities but also to global communities and societies (Kim, Park et al., 2015; Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 1992). By following these principles, managers will be able to have a better relationship with their stakeholders and to mitigate their adverse impact on the environment.

Hoteliers from large properties both in the United States and overseas are making an impact by implementing sustainable practices in their hotels (Hashmi et al., 2015). Sloan et al. (2013) indicated that Marriott and Shangri-La hotels demonstrated best practices by abiding by good business ethics and sustainable practices. Notable contributions from these properties include providing education and training to local citizens and ensuring wage and salary equality. The measure of success is not the amount of return on investment or profit of an organization but the overall organizational performance and its contribution to ecological and social performance (Sloan et al., 2013), which shows that hoteliers have both internal and external responsibilities and must maintain good corporate citizenship.

Water consumption. It is vital that hoteliers understand the need to minimize the use of water in their organizations. Prayag, Dookhony-Ramphul, and Maryeven (2010) noted that hoteliers should not use up all the resources just to compete for higher profit, but should ensure their practices are appropriate and efficient. Researchers have shown the five areas of environmental practices in the hotel industry, which are controlling waste management, water conservation, energy conservation, implementing green

practices, and monitoring environmental performance (Caboni & Giudici, 2012; Prayag et al., 2010). With the advent of technology, managers have many technological resources available to help to minimize their water use and to save on operational costs (Ming To, Kit Hung, & Leung Chung, 2014).

Energy consumption. In addition to monitoring water use, managers must ensure they monitor energy use. Sloan et al. (2013) indicated that hoteliers in the accommodation sector of the lodging industry are known to consume a lot of energy to operate their overall operations as well as to provide their guests with multifaceted products and services. To be sustainable, hoteliers must consider using renewable energy sources in their hotels (Auliandri & Angraeny, 2017). They must minimize their carbon footprint as well as their greenhouse gas emissions. They must also implement technologies that will assist with integrating renewable energy to enhance human health and quality of life (Petrevska, Cingoski, & Serafimova, 2016).

Solid and waste management. Hoteliers of small hotels have a negative influence on the environment due to solid waste generation. Radwan et al. (2012) reported that many hoteliers of small hotels are known to contribute to an increasing amount of generation and disposal of solid and waste materials. It is vital for managers to implement a recycling system in their organization so they can integrate the reuse, reduce, and recycle approach (McIntosh, 2014). They should also consider using environmentally friendly products such as cleaning supplies and shower gels and using produce from local farmers to minimize the need for long-distance transportation (Heung & Pun, 2013; Sloan et al., 2013). Caboni and Giudici (2012) indicated that investing in

energy, water, and waste management technologies can help to minimize operational costs, minimize environmental impacts, and increase the overall well-being and standards of living for the people in communities.

Positive Impact of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is necessary. Hoteliers who are environmentally conscious will lead their hotels in sustainable practices (Kim, Park, & Wen, 2015; Prayag et al., 2010). Cook et al. (2014) mentioned that implementing sustainability successfully requires a working relationship between the government and the private sector to improve the well-being of stakeholders, and for hoteliers to minimize their impact on the environment. The government can use taxes received from tourists to fund programs to mitigate the adverse impact on the environment, economy, and communities. Kim et al. (2015) mentioned that hoteliers who are environmentally conscious should consider integrating training programs for their employees so they can understand the importance of sustainable practices. They should also educate their guests with the knowledge and skills on how to take part in environmental practices (Cárdenas et al., 2015).

Types of Sustainable Development and Practices

Sustainable development and sustainable tourism have been used interchangeably in the service industry. The goal of both is to meet present needs while preserving resources for future generations. Conaghan et al. (2015) indicated that sustainable tourism considers environmental, cultural heritage, and social and economic issues. Many hoteliers have been involved in obtaining eco-labels and green practice certifications. These certifications and labels show that a hotel is environmentally conscious by

demonstrating energy-saving measures, green purchasing, water conservation, and solid waste management practices. They include alternate energy sources as well as sustainable materials and products.

Other forms of sustainable development and practices are for hoteliers to consider the social dimensions of their impact on societies. These would include how to better the life of the people within communities; ensure workplace security; contribute to public health, social justice, and human rights; and ensure care is taken for sourcing food and beverage and providing fair pricing for people within the societies (Kim, Park et al., 2015; Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 1992). Hoteliers should also consider promoting local arts and crafts to improve the standard of living and health in communities (Prayag et al., 2010). It will take the contribution of stakeholders, local governments, and managers of other corporations, in addition to hoteliers, to minimize the adverse impact on the environment or to make the triple bottom line sustainable.

In 2015, the United Nations published the 17 sustainable development objectives that will be the guiding principles for preserving and transforming the world by 2030. These principles will contribute to ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for the future (United Nations, 2015). All business sectors, local governments, and civil society working collaboratively in a sustainable manner can lead to the fulfillment of these guiding principles and a promising future for present and future generations.

Managers' and Employees' Attitudes Toward Sustainability

Sustainability can fit within management strategies if everyone works interdependently to implement sustainable practices. Kim et al. (2015) indicated that a relationship exists between a general manager's commitment to a sustainable environment and the way in which the hotel affects the environment. General managers are decision makers in the hotel industry. They are responsible for ensuring their staff members are making every effort to meet the needs of their guests. Managers are also held responsible for their hotel operations adverse impact on the environment, so they should have a commitment to sustaining the environment (Patiar & Wang, 2016; Sun-Young, & Levy, 2014). Kim et al. also explained that "environmentally conscious hotel managers are likely to affect their organizations according to their own perceptions and personal values" (p. 1500). General managers educated in environmental sustainability are likely to implement sustainable practices as a part of their organizational strategies to minimize solid waste generation and all other adverse impacts their hotels have on the environment, thus improving the reputation of the hotel as well as its commitment to environmental management (Popşa, 2017).

Employees have a major role in the performance of companies in the hospitality industry. Many hoteliers of chain properties implement ways to conserve energy and water consumption as well as ensure their individual hotels receive the assistance needed to implement environmental practices. However, there has been an increase in the turnover rate of employees in these hotels. Employees are resistant to change and want to maintain the normal way of doing their responsibilities. Chan, Hon, Chan, and Okumus,

(2014) contended that employees with strong ecological behavior are more in favor of implementing green practices if they have environmental knowledge, environmental concern, and environmental awareness.

These three factors increase employees' ecological behavior and hence increase their chance of being environmentally conscious. The result from Chan et al.'s (2014) study showed that some form of ecological mechanism is necessary to integrate in the managers' environmental management system to develop employees' knowledge, awareness, and concern for the environment. Managers' attitude or behavior toward an environment can motivate or imply how their employees affect the environment.

If a manager has strong ecological behaviors toward the environment, employees are also likely to demonstrate that kind of behavior and be more willing to maintain that kind of standard throughout a hotel (Abdelmotaal & Abdel-Kader, 2016). Kim et al. (2015) indicated that many business leaders are realizing that integrating socially responsible practices into their business strategies. Managers used to focus on CSR with regard to the financial performance of their firm instead of their impact on their stakeholders' well-being (Abdelmotaal & Abdel-Kader, 2016). CSR can increase a firm's reputation if it has a positive influence on the society. Employees' perception of CSR in the hospitality industry can add to the sustainable performance of an organization. Employees of chain hotels will have a higher perception of CSR and are more willing to participate in the CSR performance of the hotels (Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2015).

Hoteliers who implement environmental practices and green practices implement green purchasing; train staff to reuse, reduce, and recycle their resources; and minimize

their impact on the environment. CSR can influence employees' retention and minimize turnover rates, which helps hoteliers maintain costs and increase their comparative advantage in the market for the long term (Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2015).

Green Practices in Hotels

Many hoteliers have incorporated green practices into their hotels' organizational strategies. Baker, Davis, and Weaver (2014) indicated that hoteliers are seeing changes in customers' tastes and preferences; they must understand environmentally conscious customers. Customers feel more motivated to stay at hotel properties that have a well-developed green program and initiatives in their organizational strategy. Kang, Stein, Heo, and Lee (2012) mentioned that some guests are willing to pay for environmental services such as solar panels, low-flow showerheads, and recycling bins. These customers look for eco-friendly resorts that demonstrate environmentally friendly practices. Hoteliers are enhancing their products and services to be more efficient and effective in green practices (Mbasera, du Plessis, Saayman, & Kruger, 2016; Timcák et al., 2016). Kleinrichert, Ergul, Johnson, and Uydaci (2012) indicated that technology has changed the way hoteliers of small hotels communicate to their customers regarding their participation in green practices. Hoteliers use social media to advertise their green certifications.

Green Certifications on Hotel Performance

Hoteliers are using many green certifications and programs in the hotel industry. There is an increasing demand for hoteliers to implement green practices in their hotels (Baker et al., 2014; Kleinrichert et al., 2012). In the lodging sector of the hospitality

industry, there are a few green certifications and programs that are created for hotels. These are Green seal, Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification, and Green Lodging programs all of which are used to assist hoteliers with the implementation of sustainable practices (Walsman, Verma, & Muthulingam, 2014). Walsman et al. (2014) indicated that these programs analyze hoteliers' performance on several levels, including their location and transportation used, sustainability performance, water and energy conservation, the amount of material and resources used, the impact on the atmosphere, and the quality innovation of environmental practices.

In addition to the above-mentioned green certification programs, Kang et al. (2012) noted that another trending certification advertised by many hoteliers is Leadership in Energy Environmental Design (LEED). LEED certification emphasizes how sustainable a building is after construction. Hoteliers that have a LEED certification are able to save on costs and maximize revenues, recognize their building for having good quality structures, and gain assistance from experts in sustainable building practices (Kang et al., 2012). Green certification programs help to provide customers with an awareness of sustainable practices. They increase the reputations of businesses, build customer loyalty, increase revenue, and improve the performance of an organization.

Green Environmental Practices in Hotels

Many hoteliers in chain properties are more concerned about their impact on the environment than are managers of small and independent hotels. Nicholls and Kang (2012) indicated that managers of large hotel chains pay more attention to environmental matters. Large chain resorts usually have the financial stability and resources to

implement sustainable environmental practices. Some of the practices seen in hotels include reusing towels and linens, using recodable keycards, using energy-saving lighting in public areas, purchasing produce from local farmers, educating guests and staff about sustainable environmental practices, and earning green certifications (Nicholls & Kang, 2012).

Ogbeide (2012) explained that customers are looking for hoteliers to do more than just offer the reuse of towels and linens. Customers want to see more socioenvironmental practices such as a green initiative program in place that considers water conservation, solid waste reduction, and so forth (Hays & Ozretic-Dosen, 2014). Ogbeide (2012) noted that hoteliers must make green practices part of the organizational culture to encourage environmental friendly customers to stay in green hotels and take part in green practices. Many customers will participate in green practices if there are some benefits to their contribution. Managers must ensure they develop an incentive program that will encourage customers' participation.

Community and Stakeholders Involvement

The communities in which hoteliers operate their operations are highly affected by negative effects. Cárdenas, Byrd, and Duffy (2015) indicated that it is important for hoteliers to consider balancing the economic, environmental, and sociocultural aspects of sustainable development with community participation. Community participation includes diverse groups of individuals who understand the issues they face regarding the impact of tourism. Cárdenas et al. (2015) also mentioned that it is important to conduct a Community Tourism Self-Assessment to assess the awareness, knowledge, and

understanding of the residents in the community. Stakeholder involvement is also necessary in sustainable development because stakeholders can share their insights on how hospitality companies in the tourism sector can minimize their impact on the community's natural and cultural resources.

For communities and the different stakeholder groups to participate in sustainable development, there must be public awareness of tourism and of the negative and positive impacts on the environment. Cárdenas et al. (2015) explained that educating people within the communities and stakeholders about tourism can help them to have a better understanding of how they can protect their scarce resources. Having knowledge of tourism and its impact can help with collaborating and sharing information among residents and stakeholders, which will ultimately minimize negative impacts while increasing positive impacts for both companies and people within the communities (Cárdenas, Byrd, & Duffy, 2015).

The tourism industry has both positive and negative effects on any environment. Many communities depend on tourism activities to increase economic growth and financial stability. Vaz, Cabral, Caetano, Nijkamp, and Painho (2012) noted that communities that have many tourism activities or uncontrollable growth of businesses face threats to their archaeological heritage sites. Threats to cultural and ecological heritage can lead to environmental erosion and landscape devastation. Sustainable development is crucial for growing communities to minimize effects on archaeological and cultural sites and to preserve these sites for future generation (Van Deursen, & Raaphorst, 2014; Milman, 2015).

Hoteliers should consider sustainable development for developing rural tourism destinations. Jurdana and Frleta (2012) added that there should be some form of sustainable long-term strategies to preserve rural communities. Jurdana and Frleta also mentioned that some of the negative influences in developing rural communities are a high increase in visitors, commercialization of local culture, and environmental degradation. Some benefits for integrating sustainable development in rural communities are preserving ecological resources, respecting the sociocultural aspects of the communities, preserving their culture, developing social development, and providing long-term economic activities for local citizens (Jurdana & Frleta, 2012; Popescu, Badita, & Mazilu, 2014; Stancu, 2014). Hoteliers should consider not only sustainability when thinking of the environmental, economic, and sociocultural aspects, but also community participation and development.

Gap in the Literature

Sustainable development and sustainable practices are two of the newest and fastest growing trends in the hospitality and tourism industry. Many scholars have not studied the lived experience of hoteliers and their aim to integrate sustainable management practices in small hotels. This study was ideal for attempting to address this gap. Hoteliers of small hotels do not think that they have an adverse impact on the environment and so they refuse to implement sustainable practices in their operation activities (Mensah, 2014). Radwan et al. (2012) also addressed that hoteliers of small hotels have an increasing contribution to the generation and disposal of solid and waste.

Hoteliers must consider not only implementing responsible practices to benefit the environment, economics, and society but also stakeholder involvement, preserving local heritage, and community participation (Jurdana & Frleta, 2012; Popescu et al., 2014; Stancu, 2014). Hoteliers of small hotels lack the resources needed to implement sustainable development (Caboni & Giudici, 2012; Mensah, 2014) and that the extent to which hoteliers practice sustainable development has to do with their personal commitment to environmental sustainability and their desire to implement sustainable development in their organizational strategies (Kim, Park, et al., 2015; Kim & Choi, 2013). I addressed this gap by investigating the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization, which is a worldwide issue for many hoteliers and remains under researched (McIntosh, 2014) with regard to sustainable development and practices in the hospitality industry.

Summary and Conclusion

Sustainable development and sustainable practices are increasing trends in the hospitality and tourism industry. Many hoteliers receive encouragement to implement sustainable development into their organizational strategies to minimize their hotels' impact on the environment, community, stakeholders, and natural resources (Bâc, 2012; Mihalič et al., 2012). The focus of the majority of studies concerning sustainable development was on the environmental impact of hoteliers of large chain resorts rather than hoteliers of small hotels (Kim & Choi, 2013). The two lenses selected to guide this study were stakeholder theory and CSR. The majority of researchers used stakeholder theory and CSR as the underpinning lenses of their studies (Carlon & Downs, 2014;

Parmar et al., 2010; Tashman & Raelin, 2013) because the goal of stakeholder theory is to bring awareness to the need to involve stakeholders in management decisions, which includes providing transparency and ensuring all stakeholders' well-being receives consideration.

Researchers also discussed CSR in these studies, as it reminded hoteliers that their responsibilities should focus on the well-being of the organization and on the well-being of the community, society, and environment (Brown & Forster, 2012; Cordeiro & Tewari, 2015). Other areas discussed in my literature review were the relationship between green practices and certifications that hoteliers are using to enhance the sustainable development in their organizations (Nicholls & Kang, 2012; Ogbeide 2012) and community participation. Existing studies were on medium and large hotels in the lodging sector, which left the effect of sustainable development on small hotels under researched. The objective of this phenomenological study was to fill the gap in the literature concerning sustainable development and its effect on small hotel optimization.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the design and rationale for the study to understand the effect of sustainable development on small hotel optimization. I included the role of the researcher and the principles and methods needed for conducting a phenomenology study. I included information about the participants, who were small hotel managers. I also included a detailed explanation of the phenomenological method and data collection processes that were used in study. Finally, the chapter included a detailed discussion on the validity, transferability, credibility, and trustworthiness of the study to ensure I met the necessary requirements of a high-quality study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. Sustainable development includes an aim to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A sustainable hospitality operation is one in which hoteliers ensure that their resources have minimal impact on the economy, environment, and society while maintaining these same resources for future generation needs (Kuper, 2011). Hayes et al. (2012) indicated that hotels are classified by size; small hotels have 75 or fewer hotel rooms. Research on the demand for sustainable development in small Jamaican hotels has been inadequate (Pratt, 2015).

To address this gap in the literature, I used the qualitative phenomenological design, which encompasses unstructured interviews and observations. The targeted population was 20 small hotel managers. However, for this study eight participants were interviewed. All participants were from five of the most visited areas in Jamaica: Negril, Montego Bay, St. Elizabeth, Port Antonio, and Kingston. The results from this study may lead to a better understanding of the best ways to integrate sustainable practices into the management operations of the hotel industry to preserve the local heritage, promote social development, and support economic and ecological sustainability. The effect sustainable practices have on hotels policies and structures may lead to an increase in optimization.

In this chapter, the major topics includes the research design and rationale. I also provide a description of my role as the researcher and a succinct discussion of the research methodology, including the participant selection process and the instrument. In addition, I provide the procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection, and data analysis. I also addressed the steps I took to ensure transferability of the data collected and demonstrate trustworthiness in the data analysis process. I discussed the ethical procedures for conducting the study.

Research Design and Rationale

The research method for this study was qualitative. Simon and Goes (2013) contended that a qualitative study is one in which researchers collect data in their natural setting. Researchers seek participants who have direct and personal experience of a phenomenon in their environment. Researchers try to understand how participants make sense of the phenomenon and how they manage certain situations. Qualitative research is different from quantitative or mixed-methods research; that is, the purpose of this research was to gain quality experience rather than determined cause and effect relationships.

Marais (2012) mentioned that a qualitative study is an approach that involves seeking the perspectives of participants who have a direct experience with the phenomenon in its natural setting. A phenomenological study was appropriate than a quantitative or mixed-methods study because I used the purposeful sampling technique to identify participants who have a direct and personal experience with the phenomenon. Quantitative or mixed-methods study was not applicable because the purpose of this

study was not to quantify the problem or to test theories or hypotheses (Marais, 2012).

The research questions for this study were as follows:

Research Question 1: How do small hotel managers describe their effort in preserving the local heritage in the communities they operate?

Research Question 2: What are small hotel managers' perceptions on the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations?

Research Question 3: How do small hotel managers describe their effort to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions?

A phenomenological study was appropriate for exploring these research questions. The purpose of a phenomenological inquiry is to seek understanding and perspectives from appropriate individuals who have experienced the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, I investigated the perspectives of hoteliers on how they preserve the local heritage in which they operate, the challenges that prevented hoteliers from implementing sustainable practices, and how hoteliers can support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in the local region. Gray (2014) indicated that a phenomenological study is an approach designed to understand a social reality by studying people's experience of a particular phenomenon.

Gray (2014) also suggested that an advantage of phenomenological research is to help researchers to discover the newer meaning of a phenomenon by producing a rich description and interpretation of participants' experiences. Hays and Wood (2011)

mentioned that an essential characteristic of phenomenological research is that researchers can design research questions that will help the participants to provide an in-depth and meaningful experience of the phenomenon. Van Manen (2014) indicated that a phenomenological study should always include hermeneutic or interpretive qualities. Van Manen added that phenomenological researchers live the experience of the phenomenon during the data collection process, which means that researchers can understand the many possible perspectives on a phenomenon. A phenomenological study was appropriate for the phenomenon under study because the collection of a rich textual description of the phenomenon was likely.

Many other qualitative research approaches could be suitable for this study. Moustakas (1994) highlighted the five qualitative research approaches: ethnography, case study, grounded theory, phenomenology, and narrative. An ethnography research approach was not ideal for this study because this approach includes a focus on studying culture rather than the lived experiences of individual participants who have lived the phenomenon. Gray (2014) indicated that there are similarities between an ethnography and a phenomenology, as both studies include researchers as the instrument in the study. Therefore, a researcher may gain an in-depth description and interpretation of the phenomenon during data collection.

Gray (2014) also mentioned that an ethnography has a greater focus on a particular site or community that has the same cultural experience rather than individual experiences. Another difference between the studies is that for an ethnography, a researcher may use a triangulation process to demonstrate the reliability of the study,

whereas, in a phenomenology, a researcher may gain reliability by obtaining confirmation from the participants interviewed. For this study, an ethnography was not appropriate because I was not studying the culture of a particular group, but rather the shared experience of participants who have lived a phenomenon.

Researchers use the case study approach when they want to give a description and analysis of a case or multiple cases. Hancock and Algozzine (2011) indicated that this study is entirely different from all the other types of qualitative approaches because a case study is an intensive analysis and description of collected data. The unit that will be studied could be a single unit or system, which could consist of an individual, an event, or groups. The goal of a researcher in a case study is to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon that the participants are a part of and to understand its complexities and preserve its multiple realities (Stake, 1995). This qualitative approach was not appropriate for this study because I designed my research questions to seek an understanding of how participants cope with the phenomenon and what they understand of the phenomenon.

Another type of qualitative research approach is a narrative study. A narrative approach is suitable when researchers want to explore the life of an individual and to develop a narrative about a person's story (Hays & Wood, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2013). For this study, a narrative approach was not applicable because to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon, and I needed more participants to share their experiences. A phenomenological study must consist of at least 15 participants to gain

data saturation (Gray, 2014); a narrative approach did not meet the requirements for the data collection process.

Researchers use a grounded theory when they desire to develop a theory or theories from the data collected during their study. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2014) explained that this approach is appropriate when researchers want to develop theories to understand a situation, phenomenon, or process. Researchers would analyze the relationship between the theories and the phenomenon. There is a similarity between a grounded theory approach and a phenomenology approach, as the researcher is considered the main instrument in the data collection process (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Moustakas (1994) indicated that researchers of grounded theory studies can generate theories and data from the interview process rather than by observing participants in their natural settings.

Grounded theory was not appropriate for this study because I did not develop theories, but instead gained a rich understanding of the participants who lived or shared the same experience of a phenomenon. By using the phenomenology approach, I was given a comprehensive description of the phenomenon. A detailed description of the phenomenon was necessary to develop the themes used when analyzing the data collected.

By doing a phenomenology design, I considered the time and resource constraints that I faced during the study. My participants were eight small hotel managers. Hotel managers usually have more extended work schedule hours than managers in other industries and did not have the time to do a face-to-face, sit-down, uninterrupted

interview for 30-45 minutes. I provided participants with options such as Skype, telephone, or e-mail so that they could choose at a time convenient to them to take part in the study. It was costly for accommodation, airfare, car rental, and other expenses to go to the different locations within the five resort areas. A Skype, telephone, and e-mail interview were the most appropriate and cost-effective data collection methods for this study.

Role of a Researcher

A researcher plays a vital role in any qualitative study. Bradfield (2013) mentioned that the relationship between researchers and participants is informative, as it involves sharing rich and in-depth information during the interview process. My role as a researcher was to interview participants and used a digital voice recorder to collect data. I also used NVivo 11 to assist with organizing and analyzing the data collected. This phenomenological study included unstructured interviews with participants over the telephone, Skype, and e-mail. My aim as the researcher was to observe participants in their natural setting. However, due time constraints and cost, interviews were not done face-to-face.

The tools used to record participants' behaviors, actions, and tone of voice while responding to the interview questions were a digital voice recorder, a Livescribe Echo smartpen and the Voice Memo Pad with recording features on a Samsung Galaxy S7 cell phone. The journal helped to document the participants' behaviors during the research process and their reactions when responding to the interview questions. The digital voice recorder, Livescribe Echo smartpen, and Voice Memo Pad helped to validate the

communication between the interviewer and participants and to identify credibility. The participants had the opportunity to choose not to participate in the study or to avoid responding to questions at any time.

As the researcher, I did not have any prior relationships with the participants. However, my experience in the hotel industry has helped me to understand how hoteliers operate in the industry. I worked for 6 years in the hotel industry, and I currently work as a professor in the field of hospitality and tourism management for 5 years. My role as the researcher was to remain objective in the interview process and focused on the participants. I had experience in resort development and hoteliers' adverse impact on the environment. I was also knowledgeable about the sustainable practices needed in small, medium, and large hotels.

These experiences came from continuous research in textbooks that I used in lectures at my current job and by attending workshops, conferences, and exhibition trade shows. Researchers can bring many biases to a study because of their past and present experiences. As the researcher, my goal was to ensure that I separated my experience from that of the participants. So that I did not bring any bias to the study, I bracketed or applied epoché to my past and current experiences of the phenomenon. Simon and Goes (2013) added that it is vital for researchers to bracket or frame their feelings, biases, attitudes, and understanding of the phenomenon before conducting interviews. I used an interview protocol as a guide when interviewing the participants. I used a journal to jot down all my feelings so that I could be objective and receptive to the participants' responses.

Methodology

A phenomenological study was appropriate than a quantitative or mixed-methods study because I used the purposeful sampling technique to identify participants who have direct and personal experience with the phenomenon. Researchers use a phenomenology design when they want to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon through lived experiences and descriptions of their participants (Marias, 2012). Participants in a phenomenology study can prove that there is no single reality on a given phenomenon because they can share their own reality. Gray (2014) also suggested that an advantage of phenomenological research is to help researchers to discover the newer meaning of a phenomenon by producing a rich description and interpretation of participants' experiences.

Simon and Goes (2013) ascertained that researchers depend heavily on participants who can share their experiences in their natural environment. Researchers have the opportunity to use a variety of data collection methods such as observations, interviews, and video or tape recordings. Furthermore, participants and researchers have the opportunity to fully interact during an interview. Therefore, it is necessary for researchers to suspend any assumptions they might have regarding the study. They do this by choosing one of the three concepts mentioned by Husserl epoche, reduction, and bracketing.

Van Manen (2014) indicated that a phenomenological study should always include hermeneutic or interpretive qualities. Van Manen added that phenomenological researchers live the experience of the phenomenon during the data collection process,

which means that researchers can understand the many possible perspectives on a phenomenon. For this study, data were collected using unstructured interviews. By utilizing the phenomenology approach, I was given a comprehensive description of the phenomenon. A detailed description of the phenomenon was necessary to develop the themes used when analyzing the data collected.

Participation Selection Logic

This study required recruiting managers or hoteliers of small hotels who had at least 2 years of experience in the hotel industry and had 75 or fewer rooms in their hotels. I recruited participants by using public records, the Jamaica Tourism Board, LinkedIn, and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association websites. Participants received a list of interview questions (Appendix A), an invitation letter that included the participant-selection criteria (Appendix B), and a consent form (Appendix C) to participate in the study. Participants were contacted after an IRB approval was given.

Sampling Strategy

Recruiting participants involved using the purposeful sampling technique. Maximum variation sampling is applicable when participants from various site locations are diverse (Patton, 2002). The goal of using the maximum variation sampling strategy was to ensure that I recruited the best and most appropriate participants who can provide a good description of their understanding of the phenomenon. The initial targeted sample for the study was 20 participants. The sampling size used was eight participants. The participants were from five of the most visited areas in Jamaica: Negril, Montego Bay, St.

Elizabeth, Port Antonio, and Kingston. These resort areas were suitable because they have the majority of small hotels and an increasing number of visitors each year.

The sample for this study was relatively homogeneous, and I was able to gather rich and extensive details from the participants on the phenomenon under study. Researchers of qualitative studies try to make their findings transferable rather than generalized. By conducting unstructured interviews with the participants, I was able to transform their lived experiences into textual expressions. A small sample led to an in-depth, coherent, articulate, and thoughtful description of the phenomenon under study.

Saturation

In any qualitative study, it is important to reach data saturation. I reached data saturation after my sixth interview. Fusch and Ness (2015) ascertained that data saturation occurs in a study when the data collected can replicate the study without any further coding or when a researcher can obtain no new information. Fusch and Ness indicated that in a qualitative study, a sample size could not be quantified. Failing to identify data saturation can cause a study to lack validity. I used these principles and concepts mentioned by Fusch and Ness as guidelines when I acknowledged data saturation. The principles used to identify data saturation are demonstrated when a researcher cannot identify new themes, coding, and is unable to replicate the study (Patton, 2015; Van Manen, 2014). By bracketing my experiences of the phenomenon, I had a better chance of hearing the responses of the participants so that I could acknowledge when I could no longer derive any new themes or new information from the

data collected. These were the steps taken to identify data saturation among my eight participants.

Instrumentation

I developed the instrument for this study by drafting interview questions that led participants to answer the three overarching questions of the study. An interview protocol served as a guide for this instrument. I was the instrument during the data collection process when interviewing the participants. Spence (2016) and Thoresen and Öhlén (2015) mentioned that researchers must be able to encourage reflexive engagement with their participants.

Probst and Berenson (2014) added that researchers of phenomenological studies must be able to transform the lived experiences of participants and express them in a textual format that can provide readers with a detail description of how the different participants experienced the phenomenon. Other types of instruments included a digital voice recorder, a Livescribe Echo smartpen, and a Voice Memo Pad on a Samsung S7 cellphone were used to record the interview conversations between the participants and me.

Expert Panel Review

To refine the instrument developed, I conducted an expert panel review with two participants who were a male professor and director of a private college and has more than 15 years in the hospitality and tourism industry. The second participant was a male general manager of a medium size hotel who has over 40 years of running and operates hotels. The purpose of this review was to check for content validity and to make sure that

I was not being biased, or using any ambiguity in my wording and also that I was not repeating any questions. The expert panel gave me the opportunity to revise the interview questions and check to see if there are any ambiguity and bias and to reduce any repetition of the questions (Simon & Goes, 2013).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

For this phenomenological study, an unstructured interview was the appropriate instrument for collecting in-depth and rich information from the participants. The interview process took place over the telephone, via Skype, and e-mail. The method used to collect data was an interview protocol developed by me. The interview protocol included the interview date and time, location, interviewer, interviewee, and research questions. The study included several interview techniques such as telephone, Skype, and e-mails.

The participants selected whether they wanted their interviews via telephone, e-mail, or Skype. The interview sessions were between 30 and 45 minutes even though the most extended interview was 1 hour and 31 minutes. The study involved using a journal to keep track of the data collected, as well as a digital voice recorder, Livescribe Echo smartpen, and a Voice Memo Pad, a feature on a Samsung Galaxy S7, to support the accuracy of the information received. There were five telephone interviews which were recorded using three audio recorders (a digital voice recorder, Livescribe Echo smartpen, and a Voice Memo Pad). The interviews took place in a private room in my home and lasted between 30minutes to 1hour and 31minutes.

There was one Skype interview which took place in my home and lasted for approximately 46 minutes. The interview was recorded using three audio recorders (a digital voice recorder, Livescribe Echo smartpen, and a Voice Memo Pad). A journal was also used to capture data during the telephone and Skype interviews. After the interviews I debriefed participants, by making sure that they were comfortable with their responses and confirmed permission for follow-up telephone calls or emails to review their transcribed interviews.

Participant recruitment took place using public records, the JTB and the JHTA websites as well as LinkedIn. Participants received the interview questions (Appendix A), an invitation letter that includes the participant-selection criteria (Appendix B), and a consent form (Appendix C) to participate in the study. Participants were contacted after an IRB approval was given.

The data collection process began after receiving permission from the Walden University IRB to contact participants. In qualitative research, researchers must protect participants' identity. For this study, I made sure participants' identities remained confidential. I did not disclose participants' information and developed codes to identify each participant in the interview process. For example, participants were referred to as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so on.

Participants received an e-mail invitation to participate in an interview. They also received a consent form to sign and return. After they completed and returned the form, the next step involved finalizing the interview time and date and then conducting the interview. After the interview sessions were completed, I transcribed the recorded

sessions personally to maintain and protect participants' confidentiality and identity. I used Temi, a speech to text transcription software, and also a Livescribe Echo smartpen to record voice and written notes.

To ensure the accuracy of the transcribed data, I made sure to verbally summarized participants responses in the interview where necessary. Because the participant pool was relatively homogeneous, data saturation was acknowledged. I followed-up with participants for additional information were required because there were eight participants. I planned to make certain parts of the final study or a summary of the conclusion of the study available to participants based on their request.

Data Analysis Plan

Interviewing technique is the most appropriate way to collect data for this study. Janesick (2011) indicated that interviewing process allows the researcher and the participants to share information on the topic under review. In contrast, Patton (2002) described interviewing as a process in which interviewers try to find out the things that they cannot see during an observation. It involves an attempt to understand peoples' perspectives by initiating a conversation in which participants can share how they feel.

Another essential step in qualitative research is data management. A qualitative researcher collects a great deal of information, and managing this information is crucial to the researcher's success. One of the data management techniques I included in my study was memoing, which refers to documenting reflective notes from the data collected (Janesick, 2011). I also described, classified, interpreted, represented, and visualized the

data (Patton, 2002). Organizing the data collected is vital and can help researchers to identify different categories and themes derived from participants' responses.

To assist with coding and organizing the data collected, I used NVivo 11 software. Saldana (2016) mentioned that NVivo is one of the many qualitative data analysis tools used when analyzing the data collected. NVivo helps with the organization of themes that researchers can use to identify the data collected in the form of nodes. The nodes help researchers to organize their data. NVivo also supports the use of color-coding stripes to differentiate the different nodes.

I used the descriptive coding strategy because I was able to choose descriptive notes from the interviewees' responses to put in the different nodes. The various nodes represented all the data collected because each interviewee demonstrated similarities in their responses. I was able to develop 14 main themes from the interview questions so that I could arrange the descriptions from each of my participants on a specific question. After developing the main themes, I reread the transcript in search of subcategories and commonalities among participants' responses.

In this process, I was able to run word frequency count to see the most frequent coded themes based on the interview questions. The study involved multiple coding due to the nature of the responses from each of the participants. The responses from the participants' interviews had a similar meaning in more than one of the subcategories. I ended up with 101 subcategories or child nodes from answers from the interview questions. NVivo is a useful tool. Although it can be complicated, researchers who use NVivo can code their data efficiently and organize the data collected. NVivo helps to

summarize and refer to each node created, which makes it easier for researchers to identify specific data.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is crucial in qualitative research. Rodham, Fox, and Doran (2013) mentioned that a qualitative researcher must produce quality studies. A quality research is one in which a researcher demonstrates trustworthiness in the data analysis process. A qualitative researcher must be objective to the context of the data collected and provide transparency, commitment, and vigor. Mason (2012) indicated that a qualitative researcher must be able to conduct a data collection process that is thorough, careful, honest, and accurate. Anney (2014) noted that trustworthiness includes four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In the following sections, the criteria for determining trustworthiness were discussed.

Credibility

A qualitative researcher can confirm credibility by using different ways to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. Researchers may do this by identifying data saturation, allowing member checks, and maintain contact with participants. Credibility indicates how well a researcher can make the data collected believable and accurate (Elo et al., 2014). In this study, I made sure that participants participate in member checks during the interview process to establish the credibility of the data collected. Member checking may involve participants checking the transcribed information to ensure the results are accurate (Simon & Goes, 2013). I did not use this strategy because of time constraints and participants' availability. I also considered data saturation as a form of credibility.

Simon and Goes (2013) indicated that saturation occurs when no new themes emerge from the data analyzed. After saturation occurs, I stopped the recruitment process and continued analyzing the data collected. Another strategy that I used was reflexivity. Reflexivity involves qualitative researchers bracketing or framing their own biases, attitude, experience, and so forth of the phenomenon studied (Moustakas, 1994; Spence, 2016; Thoresen & Öhlén, 2015). It is vital for qualitative researchers to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness in their study.

Transferability

Transferability is another criterion used in qualitative research to demonstrate trustworthiness in the data collection process. Elo et al. (2014) noted that transferability refers to analyzed data that researchers can transfer to another group or setting. I made sure that there was transferability by providing a well-detailed description of the research context and the assumptions that arose from the data findings. In qualitative studies, it is difficult for data to be transferable to other groups, as the participants share different perspectives on the phenomenon studied. The analysis must include detailed descriptions so other individuals who were not a part of the study can read the findings and associate those with their own experience (Cope, 2014). Transferability of the data occurred by providing a well-detailed description of the participants' quotes was done to be distributed to other groups or settings.

Dependability

Dependability takes into consideration the audit trails a researcher makes available of the data collected. Cope (2014) indicated that a researcher's study is

dependable if another researcher can replicate the findings and use them in a similar setting. Researchers must maintain the notes, documents, or other records collected during the interview process. I used NVivo 11 to help keep track of my audit trail, as it has all the capabilities of using nodes to create themes to support participants' responses. I used the triangulation strategy to add to the dependability. Cope indicated that triangulation involves using multiple methods in the data collection process. To ensure dependability, researchers can pull information from reflexive journals, the literature review, and other means of data collection. I used a journal to aid in note taking, a digital voice recorder, a Livescribe Echo smartpen, and the Voice Memo Pad with recording features on a Samsung Galaxy S7 cellphone to capture participants' responses during the interview sessions.

Confirmability

Confirmability is similar to dependability because both include the ability to maintain audit trails, documents, and notes from reflexivity journals that researchers can use for rechecking the data throughout the study. Cope (2014) also indicated that a qualitative researcher could enhance confirmability by ensuring that the data collected is just the responses of the participants and not of the researchers. I used NVivo 11 for this process because I was able to interpret the participants' responses into different themes and quickly arranged the data to identify any potential bias or distortion in the data analysis. By using the notes taken in the journal, digital audio recordings, documents, and audit trails helped to enhance confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

Researchers must consider the ethical procedures of conducting a research study. Simon and Goes (2013) indicated that a researcher must consider the confidentiality of the participants. Researchers must be able to protect the information received from participants and ensure they remain in a secured area so that no one else can retrieve it. Simon and Goes added that most institutions and organizations have an IRB that is responsible for receiving proposals and reviewing ethical implications of a study.

I first submitted my proposal to Walden University's IRB. After the proposal received approval, I conducted my study. The ethical considerations that I included in this study were ensuring that my participants were aware of who will see the information they provide from the interview process, what I will do with the information, and how I will protect their privacy throughout the study. Participants were reminded that their involvement in the study was voluntary and they could choose to withdraw from the interview process at any time.

I protected the electronic data collected on a password-protected computer for at least 5 years as per Walden University guidelines. For printed copies of transcribed notes, I scanned these documents and uploaded them electronically to Google Drive. Google Drive allows users to store files on a cloud-based system. I was the only person to have the password and access to this folder and account on Google Drive. After the 5-year period, documents will be destroyed, by deleting the files and folders from the Google Drive cloud system.

I built a respectful relationship with the participants to earn their trust throughout the entire study. Participants received a consent form and returned the form before the interview process began. As the researcher for the study, I took these ethical procedures seriously to protect my participants and myself.

Summary

In this chapter, I explained how I conducted the study and provided a thoroughly developed literature review for my decisions. The main topics discussed in this chapter were the research design and rationale which speaks about the reason why a phenomenological study was appropriate, the role of the researcher as the main instrument in the data collection process, the research methodology, instrumentation, pilot study, data collection and data analysis, issues of trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations. The main purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. The qualitative phenomenological approach was appropriate because I wanted to understand how participants make sense of the phenomenon in their natural environment. Researchers can gain in-depth and rich information from phenomenological research.

This study included eight small hotel managers. These participants had (a) at least 2 years of experience in the hotel industry as a general manager or hotelier, and (b) 75 or fewer rooms in their hotels. An expert panel review was done to check for content validity and to make sure that I was not being biased, or using any ambiguity in my wording and also that I was not repeating any questions.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. This chapter includes the analysis findings (in the form of themes) of the data collected from eight men and women from five of the most visited areas in Jamaica. The research methodology consisted of three research questions which were used as a guide to developing 14 interview questions that enabled participants to provide an in-depth understanding of their knowledge and experiences on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. The 14 interview questions were used to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: How do small hotel managers describe their effort in preserving the local heritage in the communities they operate?

Research Question 2: What are small hotel managers' perceptions on the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations?

Research Question 3: How do small hotel managers describe their effort to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions?

An essential aspect of checking the content validity of the research questions was to conduct an expert panel review with two participants who were professionals in the hospitality and tourism industry. My interview protocol and questions were also submitted in the proposal for my committee members to review (Appendix A). Two

experts in the field were sufficed. I listened and transcribed the interviews using a software called Temi and utilized NVivo 11 software to code, organized and analyzed the data from the transcripts.

This chapter includes brief results of the expert panel review, a description of the interview settings, participants' demographics, data collection and data analysis procedures, and trustworthiness of the data. The themes that emerged from the eight interviews are presented. This chapter concludes with a summary highlighting the themes generated from the research questions and a brief introduction to Chapter 5.

Expert Panel Review

For my expert panel review, I reached out to four experts by e-mail who had numerous years of experience in the field. Experts were two general managers of medium size hotels and two full-time professors who have many years of industry and teaching experience. All of whom I worked with on a professional level currently and in the past. Only two experts provided their suggestions and recommendations by e-mail due to time constraints. The purpose of this review was to check for content validity and to make sure that I was not being biased, or using any ambiguity in my wording and also that I was not repeating any questions.

The two experts who responded to my e-mail were a colleague who was a male professor and director at a private college who has more than 15 years of experience in the hospitality and tourism industry and also a male general manager of a medium size hotel who has over 40 years of experience running and operating hotels. The professor has given feedback on the structure of the questions and had made a few edits with the

wording and positioning of the questions. For example, he suggested that I combined Questions 5 and 6 as one question and also to move Question 10 closer to Question 3. He also indicated that I included ethic background questions in the demographic questions section.

The general manager thought that the questions were well thought out, but found them to be too much for managers to respond to with a busy schedule. He asked that I eliminate or condense some of the questions because even though the questions would be helpful, managers may not want to set aside the 30-45 minutes to respond to them. I made sure to include the suggestions from the two experts, and combined and eliminated questions where necessary.

Research Setting

Eight small hoteliers were selected for my study. Data collection occurred through telephone, Skype and email interviews. Five of the participants had chosen to do their interviews by telephone. One participant used Skype, and two participants sent their responses by email. Before the interviews, participants signed and returned their consent forms. Upon receiving the signed forms, I signed my signature and sent them to each participant by email. Participants were also given the interview questions and protocol in advance. During the interviews, I reminded participants of the terms and background of the study and that the interview session will be recorded and their participation is voluntary. The telephone and Skype interviews were recorded using three audio devices (a digital voice recorder, Livescribe Echo smartpen, and a Voice Memo Pad).

Before the interviews, I tested the recording devices to make sure that the audio was clear and there were no issues. Due to the different geographical locations of my participants, telephone, email, and Skype interviews were convenient to both participants and myself. The participants were located in 5 resort areas in Jamaica making it impossible to have face-to-face interviews over the period of two months. There were no personal or organization conditions such as changes in personnel, budget cuts, and other trauma that could have influenced the interpretation of the research results.

Demographics

This study involved understanding the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. I used purposeful sampling strategy to identify the participants in this study. The participants in this study were from five resort areas in Jamaica and ranged from owners and managers to general managers. Six participants were owners and managers, and two were general managers. This small group of participants was diverse in their race, age, years of experience, and education levels.

Due to the participants' diverse backgrounds, I was able to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. As shown in Table 2, six participants were female, and two participants were male. Their age ranges from 37 to 74, with the average age being 60.

Table 2

Participant Demographics for Gender, Age, Race, Education Level, Years of Experience, Title, Number of Rooms, and Resort Area

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ed.	Title	Years of Experience	No. of Rooms	Resort Areas
PT 1	Male	74	B	S	GM	45	41-50	NEG
PT 2	Female	70	C	M	O/M	8	1-10	Port A.
PT 3	Male	48	M	Coll.	GM	20	51-60	M. Bay
PT 4	Female	37	U	Coll.	O/M	3.5	1-10	KGS
PT 5	Female	61	B	B	O/M	8	1-10	KGS
PT 6	Female	62	U	Ph.D.	O/M	10	1-10	St. ELIZ
PT 7	Female	67	C	PG	O/M	17	1-10	NEG
PT 8	Female	63	U	BA	O/M	24	1-10	Port A.

Note. PT = participant. B = black. C = caucasian. M = mixed. U = unassigned. Ed. = education. No. = number. S = Secondary. M = master's. Coll. = college. B = bachelor's. PG = post graduate. BA = bachelors of art. GM = general manager. O/M = owner/manager. NEG = Negril. Port A. = Port Antonio. M. Bay = Montego Bay. KGS = Kingston. St. ELIZ = St. Elizabeth.

Data Collection

The data collection process began with first getting IRB approval. The IRB Approval Number 08-23-17-0425726 was included in my consent form before recruiting participants. The initially targeted sample for the study was 20 participants. Recruiting participants involved using the purposeful sampling technique. Maximum variation sampling is applicable when participants from various site locations are diverse (Patton, 2002). The goal of using the maximum variation sampling strategy was to ensure that I

recruited the best and most appropriate participants who can provide a good description of their understanding of the phenomenon.

The first step involved reviewing public information, the JTB and JHTA websites for small hotels in the six resort areas. After finding the hotels information, I first placed a phone call to the properties that did not have their e-mails listed, to get the contact information for the general managers or owners. For the ones with their e-mails information listed, I e-mailed them the recruitment letter, consent form, and interview protocol.

I waited for a week and a half before sending a following up e-mail to the contacts that did not respond to my initial e-mail. During the waiting time, I also went on Facebook and did a search on the names of the hotels in the regions and then I reviewed their websites to make sure that they met the 75 or fewer rooms criteria. The entire recruitment process took approximately 2 months. During this time, I sent nearly 200 e-mails including follow up responses and phone calls to more than 150 small hotels. There were not many responses from potential participants.

The second step, I signed up with LinkedIn as a recruiter so that I could get the capability of running an advanced search for potential general managers and owners of small hotels. I sent 26 private messages to potential participants and got three e-mail responses saying that they were not available to take part in the study. Over the 2 months, I received e-mails from eight participants who showed interest and seven participants who said that they could not be a part of the study. The third step in the process was to set up a date and time for the eight participants.

Interview Process

The eight participants chose a time and date for their interviews, which was convenient for their schedule. Five interviews were done in September over a 2-week period. The remaining took part in October. I conducted five interviews by telephone, one interview using Skype, and two were responses by e-mail. The most extended interview lasted for 1 hour and 31 minutes and the shortest lasted for 21 minutes and 47 seconds. The other interviews were within the 30-45 minutes time frame. Each participant was given the interview protocol with the list of interview questions before the interview as shown in Appendix A in my initial contact.

The interview process was semiformal, and the questions were asked in an unstructured manner. I started off the interview process with a revision of the interview protocol and then moved onto the set of demographic questions which gave participants the opportunity of sharing their age, gender (optional), level of education, years of industry experiences, and areas and positions worked in the industry. After the demographic questions, I began with a set of open-ended questions that were designed for participants to share their experience of the phenomenon. During each interview session, participants were given the opportunity to take the discussion in a direction that was meaningful to them or which they felt comfortable. I was able to clarify or rephrased any questions about their arguments that needed further clarification.

The telephone and Skype interviews were audio recorded using a digital voice recorder, a Livescribe Echo smartpen, and the Voice Memo pad with recording features on a Samsung Galaxy S7 cellphone to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. The

telephone and Skype interviews were done in a private room in my home. All digital recordings were uploaded to a password protected computer and later onto Google Drive cloud system along with other documents and journals which is also password protected. All information will be saved for 5 years as per Walden University guidelines.

The interview transcripts were transcribed using Temi, a speech to text transcription system. It took approximately 2 hours to transcribe all the interview recordings. After each interview was transcribed, I made sure to go through each of them twice to make edits and to ensure that all participants' responses have been documented. The transcription software did not catch all the information accurately; so, using my journal and listening to more than one of the three recording devices helped me to capture what participants said during the interviews. All transcripts were uploaded into NVivo 11 software for analysis.

Data Analysis

This phenomenological approach helped me to gain an understanding of the phenomenon through the lived experiences shared by eight participants. Eight transcripts were imported into NVivo 11 software. The software was used to organize and sort the raw data into different thematic codes and subcategories. It was also used to conduct data exploration using the "Query command" function. For example, I was able to run different queries such as a frequency word cloud, which showed the most frequent words used among participants in their interviews responses. This feature was able to run a comparison analysis of different cases to analyze the responses between two participants

on a specific theme or research question. I was also able to run various reports such as a list of all the parent nodes and child nodes.

I read each transcript line by line and used the fourteen research questions shown below. I started coding relevant information from the data for each research question, by first developing 14 main themes as parent nodes so it would be easier for me to sort and organize participants' responses. Then, I decided to create subcategories or child nodes. The study involved multiple coding due to the nature of the responses from each interview having a similar meaning in more than one of the subcategories. I ended up with 101 subcategories or child nodes from responses to the following 14 interview questions:

1. Describe your understanding of sustainable practices in hotels.
2. What are some sustainable practices that you have implemented in your current position?
3. Explain some of the challenges that would prevent your company from implementing sustainable practices?
4. What prevented hoteliers all these years from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations?
5. How does your company support the local community in which it operates?
6. How do you ensure that your employees are carrying out sustainable practices?
7. What can hotel leaders of small hotels do to promote social development?

8. What training needs would your company require to implement sustainable practices?
9. What are some benefits your company would receive for developing sustainable practices?
10. What can hotel managers of small hotels do to preserve the local heritage in which they operate?
11. What can hotel leaders of small hotels do to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in the local region?
12. How does the government assist in implementing sustainable practices in small hotels?
13. Based on your responses to the previous questions, explain what changes you would recommend to improve sustainable practices in small hotels?
14. Describe how would you go about implementing those changes?

As shown in Table 3, the parent nodes were developed from the interview questions as main themes. The number of sources is referring to the amount of participants' data that was coded, and the number of coding references is the number of times participants referred to the main themes. A complete list of themes and subcategories, as well as a summary table of the descriptions of the main themes, will be presented in the result section of this chapter.

Table 3

Parent Nodes Names (Main Themes, Number of Sources Coded and Number of Coding References

Parent Nodes Names (Main Themes)	Number of Sources Coded	Number of Coding References
Q1: Understanding of Sustainable Practices	8	48
Q2: Current Sustainable Practices	3	13
Q3: Challenges	7	19
Q4: Prevention from integrating sustainability practices	7	20
Q5: Support the Local Community	8	74
Q6: Employees carrying out Sustainable practices	7	18
Q7: Social Development	8	32
Q8: Training to implement Sustainable Practices	7	20
Q9: Benefits from implementing sustainable practices	7	17

(table continues)

Parent Nodes Names (Main Themes)	Number of Sources Coded	Number of Coding References
Q10: Preserve local heritage	8	27
Q11: Economic and ecological sustainability	8	22
Q12: Government Assistance	7	17
Q 13: Recommendations to improve sustainability practices	8	38
Q14: Plans to implement changes or improvements	7	16

Note. Table 2.3 lists the main themes that were developed from the interview questions 1-14. Q = interview question.

Themes

The research process ended with a saturation of 14 main themes which were developed from the 14 interview questions. A comparison of participants' responses led to one or more subcategories. The subcategories discussed in this section were chosen base on the most frequent codes.

Theme 1: Understanding of Sustainable Practices

Sustainable practice is a common trend used in the hospitality and tourism industry. Many managers have conducted different practices in their establishments. The practices can range from being environmentally friendly to be green certified. Some managers only consider one aspect of sustainable practices due to their knowledge and experience of the benefits. Participants were asked to share their understanding of sustainable practices in hotels and the most frequent subcategories coded from their responses were community development, staff development, and the low environmental impact was the most frequent coded. For example, Participant 1, who is a general manager with 45 years of experience and has been self-employed for most of the time stated, "But I think for me the two most important one is the harvesting of rainwater and the solar hot water." Participant 2, who is an owner and manager with 8 years of experience developing and running her operation stated,

We also purchase from the local fishermen who actually bring them to the gate and we buy them while they're still alive. So there will be low footprint, they are caught just few hundreds yards away from where they are eaten.

Based on their responses, it showed that managers have different concepts on environmental practices and they implement these practices to benefit their establishments. Participants also mentioned that community development and staff development were important factors to consider in sustainable practices. Participant 3, who has 20 years of experience managing food and beverage departments and hotels indicated, “Some of it is working and evolving yourself with the local community as well.” Participant 8, who is an owner and manager and has 24 years of experience stated,

Sustainable practices in hotels contribute to holidays that do not cost the Earth. Emphasis should be laid on managing operations in such a way that they minimize and avoid environmental degradation in the host community and contribute to that community and the wider community.

It was evident from their responses that hotel managers cannot be successful without considering the well-being of the host communities in which they operate. Participant 7, who is an owner and manager for an eco-property and has 17 years of experience operating small hotels indicated, “Increasing the skills of staff. I am taking on younger members of the community so I can give them an extra kind of learning and training before they go on to college or community business college.” Participant 5, has been an owner and manager for her Bed and Breakfast for 8 years, stated, “Well first of all when you employ your staff you can train them to be more exposed and to, just to lift their consciousness so that they become more customer friendly.”

According to the participants’ responses, staff development must be considered in sustainable practices as the development of staff has a positive impact not only on the

operation, employees, but also the communities. Staff can be developed both personally and professionally.

Theme 2: Current Sustainable Practices

Sustainable practices are different across the board in hotels. The various practices rely heavily on the managers' perceptions of their practices being sustainable. Sustainable practices can be identified as doing little to no harm to the environment, as well as taking part in reusing, reducing, and recycling the resources used on a daily basis. The data collected showed that all participants agreed that environmental practices were the most they had done or considered to implement in their operations. For example, Participant 6, who is an owner and manager of a guest house and has 10 years of experience in the construction and operational aspects of her operation stated, "Use of cloth napkins instead of paper serviettes, collection of plastic bottles for recycling, use of solar system, collection of rain water" Participant 4 is an owner and manager of a bed and breakfast and has 3.5 years managing her property indicated, "The main one that we've done so far we install, I recently doubled my solar capacity so I have a two kilowatt system now and that basically because our rates go up every month no matter what."

Environmental practices were essential for managers to consider in their current sustainable practices because it had a significant impact on their utility expenses and overall efficiency of their operations.

Theme 3: Challenges

Small hotels that are sustainable have a significant advantage over other operations because of the different benefits managers receive from the current practices

that they integrate into their operations. However, there are many challenges that a manager can face when implementing sustainable practices into his operation. It is vital for managers to evaluate their practices and see which ones work best for them and ones that can help them to stay financially stable. Many participants noted that high cost and lack of education in hospitality training were significant challenges they faced. For example, Participant 4, stated, “The number one thing would be cost.” Participant 3, indicated, “I think the biggest expenses were some of the training courses cost a lot to do, some of the certifications that we do is a big expense, but I think as a company we are seeing this huge benefit of investing in training for staff.”

Participant 6, stated, “I do not know, but can hazard a guess that cost may be a factor in using solar and setting up rain water collection.” Participant 8 indicated, “It is too expensive to hire external trainers who in any case also only come on a one-off session.”

Based on the four participants’ responses, the high operating cost was a significant factor in managers’ decision when considering to implement sustainable practices. The lack of educational experience for the staff was another challenge as staff may not understand the importance of why the hoteliers were doing the things they needed to do to be sustainable. Implementing training and educational courses can be quite expensive.

Theme 4: Prevention From Integrating Sustainability Practices

Cost and lack of education were two of the significant challenges for managers when implementing sustainable practices. The reason for many managers not integrating

sustainability practices early in their organizations was because of the cost associated with being a viable, sustainable entity. For example, Participant 3 stated, “Cost associated.” Participant 4 indicated, “The number one thing it just the cost.” The responses from the participants highlighted the fact that cost was one of the significant factors for hoteliers not to integrate sustainable practices. Likewise, without the proper education and assessment of current equipment, managers will not be convinced to incorporate sustainable practices.

Theme 5: Support the Local Community

The local community in which a hotel operates is essential to the operation’s success, and so it cannot be left out of managers organizational planning and strategies. It is vital for managers to consider corporate social responsibility in their operations.

Maintaining a close relationship with the community can be a contribution to sustainable practices in the operation. Many participants responded to supporting the community in many ways. For example, Participant 1 stated, “Purchasing of goods and service we always keep it local. In terms like furniture, right, local furniture. Food we maximize by using Jamaican product.” Participant 5 stated, “I try to support the local businesses” Participant 7 stated, “We sell Jamaican, we buy Jamaican. Encourage guests to use our local drivers for tours and pickups.” Participant 8 stated, “Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased by the business.”

The responses from the participants highlighted the importance for managers to maintain community relationship by supporting local businesses. It was evident that the more hoteliers spend in their communities, it will improve the well-being of the citizens and keep the companies viable. Many participants have stressed the importance of

supporting local businesses versus importing goods and services as these practices do not contribute to the well-being of the community.

Theme 6: Employees Carrying out Sustainable Practices

Integrating sustainable practices in hotels or any organization can be quite costly as discussed by participants. Managers must ensure that their employees are carrying out the sustainable practices that they implement in their organization. A lack of education had been one of the most frequent codes mentioned by participants, and the lack of training made it hard for sustainable practices to be carried out correctly in everyday operation. For example, Participant 8 stated, “Training, training, training, monitoring and supervision.”

Participant 3 stated,

We have different programs in the hotel so one of the initial programs is a hospitality training program where we train people from the local community not necessary have any qualifications or experience in the hotels. We put them through a six week course in different disciplines. Then we put them on a six week post which is on the job training and classroom training as well. So training process is constant. Training is constant it is a part of the culture.

Participant 6 stated, “Lead by example. For example, they know to put plastic bottles in the collection bins (although some do get tossed in the trash).” Participant 2 stated,

Explain. I think you can tell people to do things but sometimes it's better to explain why you doing them and what's the reason is behind it. We try to get the staff to understand why we're doing things rather than just telling them they must do that I think they relate to it more if we say you know what your electricity is like, imagine

what ours is like. You know imagine what Jamaica's is like. You need to cut it down. And the things that we are doing here you can apply at home, you know.

The participants' responses highlighted the importance of constant training to ensure that employees are carrying out the necessary sustainable practices and that managers can keep cost down.

Theme 7: Social Development

Social Development is another essential factor that hoteliers should take into consideration. The development of the people that are impacted by the operation's performance is an excellent way to contribute to sustainable practices. Many participants have highlighted the importance for hotel leaders to show awareness and build trust as ways to promote social development. For example, Participant 2 stated, "Educating the staff." Participant 3 stated,

It is a process of educating our peers. As an industry we have a long way to go in getting people to understand the benefit of tourism and how important tourism is the largest GDP earner in most Caribbean islands, if not all.

Participant 4 stated, "Communication is always going to be key."

Building trust had been prevalent in the responses of the participants. For example, Participant 2 stated,

You got to don't just think of the people that come as workers, see how the hotel connects with their lives as well. Whatever happens at the hotel can help them and whatever happens in their lives they can help you. We encourage staff to tell us what is going on in the community.

Participant 4 stated, “Trust the person to be able to make judgement calls about certain things.” Likewise, Participant 6 stated, “Interact with staff on an individual and group basis.”

Participants noted that bringing awareness to employees by communicating and educating them on the things you do and why you do it was wonderful ways to build trust with your peers and employees. Promoting social development can be done in many ways, and it is essential for all managers to consider this when working with their employees and people in the communities.

Theme 8: Training to Implement Sustainable Practices

Implementing sustainable practices can be costly and required many knowledge and experiences to apply them correctly and to ensure that employees and guests understand the reason behind the different practices. This led me to ask participants to describe the training needs they would need to implement sustainable practices. Some participants thought that because of the size and number of employees as well as the equipment used in their organizations, they couldn't think of any training needs.

For example, Participant 4 stated,

I don't think I would really need to do anything. The only thing that if I do change my air condition units I know some of them have these features now where you can remotely turn them off and on and that you don't need to be physically at the house. Cause they are connected to your WIFI. So if I am not here in Jamaica and my housekeeper knows that somebody left on the AC she would be able to understand the technology which is to go on her phone and turn it off.

The most frequent coded response from participants was the lack of training resources available to implement sustainable practices in their operations. For example, Participant 7 stated, “Any kind of training that I can give my staff outside is an expense to me.” Participant 8 stated, “Lack of detailed manuals, S.O.P.’s, and job descriptions, check lists and proper EMS and CRS systems.” Participant 2 stated,

I am trying to put in some training programs. So I elect wisdom of everything we come across, I want to put it into a course and actually get all the staff in to teach it. The people who deliver it might not exactly, and it could be a waste of time. I think the government could probably produce something for hospitality workers to explain in simple terms what sustainability is and why they should engage it.

As shown from the previous examples, training was important and costly. There needs to be some form of resources in place so that it can be used as an educational tool to help in educating managers and employees.

Theme 9: Benefits From Implementing Sustainable Practices

Previous examples have shown the importance of sustainable practices in small hotels and the challenges hoteliers faced when integrating specific practices in their hotels. All eight participants explained that they have seen significant benefits just by carrying out the practices they mentioned in only a few months. The two advantages that were frequently coded were the financial gains for participating in sustainable practices and the increased in marketing opportunities. For example, Participant 1 stated, “Sustainable practices will reduce our overall cost.” Participant 2 stated,

Yes, if we could find a way to do the solar, it would obviously would cut down our electricity cost. Financially is the main one. I think the financial benefit is the main one though, isn't it, a part from all the benefits you know about sustainability.

Participant 3 stated, "Return on investment." Participant 4 stated, "It really all just boils down to, the main thing is the money, money saving." Participant 8 stated, "Reduce costs. Cost savings through the reduction of waste and more efficient use of natural resources (electricity, water, gas and fuels)."

Managers benefitted financially from the cost saving on their operating expenses in their establishments. The increased in marketing opportunities had been a significant benefit for small hoteliers. For example, Participant 3 stated, "It become an attraction. People are more interested. We have a lot of returning guests, so I think it is important that we are involved, I think from a marketing standpoint." Participant 6 stated, "By highlighting the practices, could be a selling point." Participant 8 stated, "Attract new customers and markets (or at least retain access to customers and markets with EMS requirements). Better public perception of the organization, leading to improved sales."

The previous example showed that guests who were more sustainable conscious were more attracted to stay with hoteliers that took care of the environment or made some form of contribution to sustainable practices.

Theme 10: Preserve Local Heritage

Preserving the local heritage is another important responsibility for hoteliers in the areas in which they operate. Participants described the different ways in which they preserved the local heritage. The two most frequently coded responses were providing

education on the history, culture, and heritage, and also encouraging guests to interact with the local communities. For example, Participant 1 stated,

Begin to introduce these programs into the schools. It will be some interest to preserve these cultural norms of ours. To educate the people of these buildings and their importance and the role they play in the whole development of our country with the education of our children in our community.

Participant 6 stated, “Educate themselves about the local heritage.” Participant 8 stated, “There should also be government programs in place that encourage and support local heritage. Providing guests with information about the country, history, traditions, community.”

In the previous examples, participants highlighted the lack of educational materials available to the public about the local history, culture, and heritage. By making these resources available, the local heritage can be preserved. In addition, a couple of other participants mentioned encouraging guests to interact with the local communities as a way of preserving the local heritage. Participant 2 stated,

If guests do have a feeling that they might have an interest in something, you got to just jump on that and really give them every opportunity. We do live music here, we also let guests do recording here with Jamaica musician, which brings them in. We do shows with Jamaican musicians. If people are interested in anything to do with Jamaican culture we find a way to introduce them to that.

Participant 3 stated, “I think for the guests, it is education as well, bringing in the local talent into the hotel for the guests to experience it.”

Managers had a responsibility to encourage guest to take part in the local heritage, and by bringing in the local heritage, culture, and history whether in local talent form then the heritage can be preserved and known to others.

Theme 11: Economic and Ecological Sustainability

A company can be a viable entity if managers support and maintain the ecological sustainability in the local region. The participants' most frequent coded responses on how hotel leaders could support and sustain the ecological sustainability in the local area were respecting the environment and purchasing local goods and services. For example, Participant 1 stated, "If we want to sustain our economical benefits you start first with the environment. Make decisions based on what will sustain the healthy environment." Participant 6 stated, "Institute reuse, reduce, recycle wherever possible." Participant 8 stated, "Ensuring sustainable operations on their own properties."

The responses described the importance for hoteliers to monitor their organizations' impact on the environment. By ensuring that their operations are sustainable, they could make better management decision that will minimize the adverse effects on the environment. It was also equally important for hoteliers to purchase goods and services locally than to import things from overseas. For example, Participant 7 stated, "Buy local. Use the local shop, use the local market, use the local restaurants all that kind of stuff, which I have done a lot of." Participant 3 stated, "We work with local taxi drivers, the fishermen as well." To support and maintain an economic and ecological sustainability in the local region, hotel leaders must keep these factors into consideration.

Theme 12: Government Assistance

Many participants had provided mixed views on the government assistance in implementing sustainable practices in small hotels. The most frequent coded responses were negative and demonstrated the lack of effort the government makes towards assisting small hoteliers. For example, Participant 2 stated, “To be honest the government doesn’t do much towards small hotels in Jamaica. I think this is quite a complaint from a lot of hoteliers especially in Port Antonio.” Participant 4 stated, “The government also isn’t giving you any incentive to do this either.”

Participant 5 stated,

I don't have a clue. For me they don't help you any way. They want people to be licensed, they want you to be licensed and a lot of properties feel like they just want you to be licensed and you can come out of the woodwork so they can tax you. But I pay taxes and I am not licensed because they don't even help to get license. They don't make it easy they make it very difficult they don't have any rewards for you to be licensed.

As shown in the previous examples, managers were not motivated to make a more significant contribution to sustainable practices because the government did not provide any assistance nor gave any incentives and rewards to integrate these practices.

On the other hand, some participants mentioned that there was minimal assistance but more could be done to encourage sustainable practices. For example, Participant 3 stated,

There are some incentives to bring in more efficient equipment in the island. There are some programs that if you can't afford to do yourself the government add different programs. Some agencies that will come in and train and here in Jamaica they do this team Jamaica, it is a fantastic training program and it is really the history and culture of Jamaica.

Participant 8 stated, "Make concessionary loans available. Recognize properties that implement practices."

The latter examples highlighted that there was some assistance in integrating sustainable practices in small hotels. However, there seemed to be lack of public information provided by the government to do so. Small hoteliers that do not see the support and assistance will not be willing to implement more sustainable practices than the current ones they performed in their organization.

Theme 13: Recommendations to Improve Sustainability Practices

The majority of the participants mentioned recommendations in responding to some of the questions. Their wealth of experiences and the desire to see more improvements in sustainability practices showed in their responses. The most frequent coded response to improving sustainability practices was increasing government actions.

For example, Participant 1 stated,

The government should set out a number of not so coding or difficult practices, set out a couple of things that they expect small hotels to do and that should be tied to your permit that will be given for you to practice. I said not just come up with some outrageous things which seem like it is punishing or its extra cost. Don't start out

with the difficult expensive ones just some easier you know something that you, you can, arrive at without much difficulty and don't make it ridiculously difficulty, make it easy but be firm. Give people a sizeable tax break. Propose solar heating, solar electricity in the hotels. And that they do by making, offering tax break for the people to do that. Don't collect duty and when you bring in equipment for solar electricity because the country gains in the end, you gain in the end.

Participant 2 stated,

On the other hand, I think the government could probably produce something for hospitality workers to explain in simple terms what sustainability is and why they should engage it. In other words what they going to get out of it. What they're going to get out of it in the short term and in the long term. It would have to be simple language, cause a lot of people in the hospitality industry don't have a very high level of education, so short sentences, simple language, big print and maybe picture.

Participant 3 stated,

We should incentivize hotels soon into sustainable practices whether through incentives, or tax breaks. Incentivize people to able to make the investments in, encourage clean energy or more efficient energy or educating the local community.

Participant 5 stated,

I would say that what the government could do is be more helpful. Offer some things like basic courses in security, they should give you some basic questions that you should ask. Should also give you some basic information that you should

capture for accounting purposes. I would also say that start up training should cover some marketing, some accounting, security, how to protect yourself and how to you know, ensure that the client is safe. I think they could create something online that we can just go to and read you know.

Participants overwhelmingly stressed the importance for the government to step in and do more to assist small hoteliers in implementing sustainable practices. All of which will benefit not just small hotels but also the traveling public and the communities.

Theme 14: Plans to Implement Changes or Improvements

Participants shared different plans on how to implement the changes they suggested; however, only one subcategory had similarities in two participants' responses, and this was offering public information. Participant 3 stated,

Oh yeah, absolutely. I mean there is a program with the world bank and a few years ago in St. Lucia, we were educating the people that lives up in the hills not to throw their trash in the river because it ends up on the reefs and they couldn't understand this is the way to do, what they gonna do. It took a long time to add sustainable practices to their homes. But when you show the damage that happen to the reefs not just for tourism but for the local fishermen as well. So for sustainable practices, you have to educate them so they can understand why you do certain practices.

Participant 1 stated,

(a) Public education, (b) So you get the whole country behind you.

Because you spend time highlighting the benefits and after you spend the time educating the public from school to the workplace, then you really need to go to parliament and pass the necessary laws.

Another example, which I coded as a separate subcategory “work with group consultant” which I found to be unique and would help small hoteliers being more viable and sustainable in the future. Participant 8 stated,

Group of associated consultants. Cooperate in a coordinated and concerted manner to cover all the areas ranging from training, to cover all levels from line staff, supervisory and management. Providing the concrete tools to help address the operational issues regarding establishing standards and establishing an EMS that will help to make them more competitive. Rather than external consultants who have often either not been familiar with the local conditions and or try to apply a concept that might have worked in other countries without taking local culture and socialization into account.

These responses highlighted the plans that participants felt would help them to improve their current and future sustainable practices and to also help with developing employees, managers, and the community.

The 14 themes discussed, demonstrated similarities across participants’ practices and perceptions of sustainable practices in hotels. The in-depth descriptions provided by participants of the phenomenon are sufficed evidence to contribute to the gaps in the study.

Trustworthiness

Credibility

A quality study is one in which a researcher demonstrates trustworthiness in the data analysis process. Credibility can be achieved in various ways to ensure accuracy in the data collected. Credibility indicates how well a researcher can make the collected data believable and accurate (Elo et al., 2014). In this study, I conducted member checking during the interview process by verbally summarized and rephrased participants' responses when I needed clarification and made sure that what was being recorded was precisely what participants meant. For example, Participant 1 was asked "How do you ensure that your employees are carrying out sustainable practices?" Participant 1 responded, "Well, it comes down to supervision and you try to impress upon them the importance and the benefits and little by little I think the younger ones are far more easier to buy into it than the older ones." I then asked a follow up question, "Ok, so would you say that the older employees they actually don't like adapting to changes?" to clarify that I understood Participant 1 response. Participant 1 responded, "Well maybe they are not convinced of the wisdom in it."

Another example where I used this approach was with Participant 3. I asked Participant 3. "So what are some challenges that would prevent your company from implementing sustainable practices?" Participant 3 responded,

I don't think now. I think initially, there was, education is the most important. Educate people to make them understand why we do things the purchasing that we have used for the last 20 to 30 years and get them into new things. So, I think

that your real challenge is the implementation but once people buy into it, and they have seen the results of it then they can see the benefits but not just in the hotel practice but also at their homes as well. So I think it's, its, nowadays people are more educated when it comes to good sustainable practices in the hotel. They understand it better. We train a lot as well, so we educate not just our old staff but our new staff as well. So, I don't foresee big changes at all. It could be time consuming to implement.

I then asked a follow-up question "Ok, so education would be one of the major thing, but in your operation you actually train a lot to get staff onboard?" and Participant 3 responded, "Yes. And what we do, we do regular audits of, regular audits so that we can benchmark what we are doing and how it is working and if what we train is what is put into use."

I used the triangulation strategy to add to the dependability. Cope (2014) indicated that triangulation involves using multiple methods in the data collection process. To ensure dependability, I used a journal to aid in note taking, a digital voice recorder, a Livescribe Echo smartpen, and the Voice Memo pad with recording features on a Samsung S7 cellphone to capture participants' responses during the interview sessions. I also used data saturation as a form of credibility. Simon and Goes (2013) indicated that saturation occurs when no new themes emerge from the data analyzed.

I reached data saturation after my sixth participant e-mailed her responses to the interview questions. After reading the transcripts for my interviews, I realized that similar themes emerged the only difference in information was the current sustainable practices

used in their operations. Bracketing or framing my own biases was necessary, and so I used the reflexivity approach. Reflexivity involves qualitative researchers bracketing or framing their own biases, attitude, experience, and so forth of the phenomenon studied (Moustakas, 1994; Spence, 2016; Thoresen & Öhlén, 2015).

Transferability

Elo et al. (2014) noted that transferability refers to analyzed data that researchers can transfer to another group or setting. I made sure this study has some degree of transferability by providing a well-detailed description of the research context and the assumptions that may arise from the data findings. I also included quotes from participants to justify my discussions on the different themes that emerged. In qualitative studies, it is difficult for data to be transferable to other groups, as the participants share different perspectives on the phenomenon studied. The analysis must include detailed descriptions so other individuals who were not a part of the study can read the findings and associate those with their own experience (Cope, 2014). The transferability of the data acquired by providing a well-detailed description of the participants' quotes was presented that could be distributed to other groups or settings.

Dependability

Dependability takes into consideration the audit trails a researcher makes available of the data collected. I used NVivo 11 to help keep track of my audit trail and to create nodes and different subcategories of the transcribed data. I was able to use NVivo 11 to run various reports such as word cloud which tells how frequent a word was used in the participants' responses as well as reports on all the parent nodes and subcategories.

Confirmability

Confirmability is similar to dependability because both include the ability to maintain audit trails, documents, and notes from reflexivity journals that researchers can use for rechecking the data throughout the study Cope (2014). I used NVivo 11 for this process because I coded, analyzed, and organized participants' responses in different themes and subcategories and quickly arranged the data to identify any potential bias or distortion in the data analysis. By using the notes taken in the journal, digital voice recordings, documents, and audit trails helped to enhance confirmability.

Study Results

I conducted eight interviews which included two men and six women. All eight transcripts were transcribed using NVivo 11 to develop different themes and subcategories from the interview questions. There were 14 parent nodes or main themes developed using the 14 interview questions in the interview protocol. With these 14 themes and the responses of participants, I was able to establish 101 sub categories. Table 4 depicts the name of the nodes and subcategories, number of sources, and number of references.

Table 4

Nodes and Subcategories

Nodes and Subcategories	Sources	References
Q1. Understanding of Sustainable Practices	8	48
Community Development	5	7
Low Environmental Impact	5	8
Green Washing	1	2
Water Harvesting and Solar	6	10
Staff Development	5	9
High Maintenance	1	3
Q2. Current Sustainable Practices	3	13
Foreign Exchange	1	2
Supporting local Businesses	2	3
Environmental practices	7	34
Water Harvesting and Solar	1	1
Staff Development	1	1
Food Waste	3	3
Q3. Challenges	7	19
Cost	7	13
High cost of assessing funding	1	1
Construction Cost	1	1
High Insurance Cost	1	1
High Operating Costs	3	3
Taxation	1	1
Education	3	4
Lack of well-trained staff	1	3
Communicating the importance	2	3
Economic Challenges	3	4
Time Consuming	1	1
Implementation	1	1
Hospitality Training	2	4
Importing of goods	2	2
Recycling	1	1
Q4. Prevention from integrated sustainability practices	7	20
Cultural Practices	2	3
High Taxes	2	2
Lack of Training	1	3
Lack of Education	2	3
High Cost	3	5
Startup Process	1	1
No Incentives or Rewards	1	1
Right Resources	1	2

(table continues)

Nodes and Subcategories	Sources	References
No Capacity	1	1
Q5. Support the Local Community	8	74
Support Public Entities	1	2
Purchasing Local Goods and Services	6	16
Community Well-being	2	5
Adopt or Build School	1	2
Build Marine Sanctuaries	1	1
Participate in Community Events	3	3
Educate Local Community	2	2
Employ Locals	4	4
Community Organization	1	1
Q6. Employees carrying out Sustainable practices	7	18
Supervision	2	2
Training and Training Programs	5	10
Lead By Example	1	1
Q7. Social Development	8	32
Small Hotel Association	1	4
Building Trust	4	10
Awareness	6	12
Training	3	4
Q8. Training to implement Sustainable Practices	7	20
Teach Business Courses in Schools	1	4
Lack of Training Resources	3	8
Continuous Training	1	6
No Training Needed	2	2
Lack of Marketing Experience	1	1
Marketing Challenges	1	3
Q9. Benefits from implementing sustainable practices	7	17
Financial Benefit	5	11
External Benefits	2	5
Increase Marketing Opportunities	3	8
Operational and Internal Benefits	1	5
Improve Well-Being	4	5
Q10. Preserve local heritage	8	27
Community as a Marriage	1	5
Partnering with Local Communities	4	5
Provide Education on History, Culture and Heritage	4	8
Encourage Guest to Interact with Local Communities	5	8
Speak Native Language	1	2
Buy Jamaican Products and Services	3	6
Q11. Economic and ecological sustainability	8	22
Purchase Local Goods and Services	5	5
Respecting the Environment	4	8

(table continues)

Nodes and Subcategories	Sources	References
Implementing Staff Ideas	1	1
Partnering with the Local Community	2	3
Educating Staff	1	1
Providing Education Programs	1	1
Employ Local Talents	2	3
Fair Compensation	1	1
Q12. Government Assistance	7	17
Politics Influence	4	4
Government Negative contributions	5	26
Government Positive Contribution	3	6
International Funding Agencies	1	1
Q13. Recommendations to improve sustainability practices	8	38
Preventive Maintenance	1	2
Government Actions	6	17
Consideration of Sustainability	1	7
Communicate with Guests and Staff	1	1
Provide Online Courses	2	2
Tourist Board Responsibility	1	1
Teach Sustainability in Schools	1	1
Develop Training Curriculum	2	3
Community Drives	1	1
Q14. Plans to implement changes or improvements	7	16
Small Hotel Permit	1	1
Separation of Garbage	1	1
Assessing Equipment	1	3
Going Solar	1	1
Bulk Purchasing	1	1
Group Marketing	1	1
Work with Consultants	1	4
Offering Public Education	2	6
Lobby the Government	1	1
Basic Training on History and Geography	1	1
Government Agencies Support	1	1

Note. Titles appear in the order of the interview questions in the interview protocol. Q = interview question.

Research Questions

The three research questions that were explored to understand the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization were:

Research Question 1: How do small hotel managers describe their effort in preserving the local heritage in the communities they operate?

Research Question 2: What are small hotel managers' perceptions on the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations?

Research Question 3: How do small hotel managers describe their effort to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions?

Participants were asked 14 questions and included in these questions were the three research questions. Table 5 depicts a list of the most prevalent codes mentioned by participants for each research question.

Table 5

Most Frequent Codes for Research Questions

RQ₁: How do small hotel managers describe their effort in preserving the local heritage in the communities they operate?

1. Provide education on history, culture, and heritage
2. Partnering with local communities
3. Encourage guests to interact with local communities
4. Buy Jamaican products and service

RQ₂: What are small hotel managers' perceptions on the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations?

1. High cost
2. Lack of education
3. Lack of training
4. Cultural practices

RQ₃: How do small hotel managers describe their effort to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions?

1. Respecting the environment
2. Purchasing local goods and services
3. Partnering with the local communities
4. Employ local talents

Note: RQ = research question. $N = 8$.

Research Question 1: Managers Efforts in Preserving the Local Heritage

Preserving the local heritage is an essential responsibility for hoteliers in the areas in which they operate. Approximately, 62% of the participants discussed that encouraging guests to interact with local communities was one of the best ways to preserve the local heritage. For example, Participant 2 stated,

If guests do have a feeling that they might have an interest in something, you got to just jump on that and really give them every opportunity. We do live music here, we also let guests do recording here with Jamaica musician, which brings them in. We do shows with Jamaican musicians. If people are interested in anything to do with Jamaican culture we find a way to introduce them to that.

Another 50% of the participants mentioned that they preserved the local heritage by partnering with local communities such as employing local artists and artisans as well as bringing in the folkloric groups to entertain their guests on property. Participant 3 stated, “I think for the guests, it is education as well, bringing in the local talent into the hotel for the guests to experience it.” In addition, 37% of the participants responded that buying Jamaican products and services helped to sustain and preserve the local culture as the guests will experience things around the property made in Jamaica. Participant 7 stated, “We use all Jamaican products, from Jamaican companies, from Jamaican suppliers and from Jamaican people.”

While 50% said that providing education on the history, culture, and heritage was another way that hoteliers can do to assist with preserving the local heritage. Participant 1 stated,

Begin to introduce these programs into the schools. It will be some interest to preserve these cultural norms of ours. To educate the people of these buildings and their importance and the role they play in the whole development of our country with the education of our children in our community.

All participants believed in the importance of preserving the local heritage in the areas in which they operate. They all demonstrated passion and enthusiasm to implement the different ways that will help to sustain the heritage and local culture because it benefits not only the guests but also their employees as well.

Research Questions 2: Challenges That Prevented Sustainable Practices

Participants perceived the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable practices were beyond their control. Approximately, 37% of participants believed that the reason for many managers not incorporating sustainability practices early in their organization was because of the high cost associated with being a viable, sustainable entity. Participant 3 stated, “Cost associated.” Participant 4 indicated, “The number one thing it just the cost.” Participant 3 stated, “Cost associated.” The associated cost expenses are the cost of equipment and most operational cost to implement various practices.

Though the high cost was seen as the main challenge, 25% of the participants responded that the lack of education in the implementation of these practices was another

factor to consider before implementing sustainable practices. Participant 8 stated, “Lack of knowledge and resistance to change. Staff is not literate enough to perform meter readings.” This response highlighted that without the proper education and assessment of current equipment, managers will not be convinced enough to integrate sustainable practices. There was one participant (12%) who mentioned that the lack of training in sustainable practices was one challenge that causes the lack of implementation of sustainable practices. Participant 2 stated, “I think quite a big barrier is training people receive in hospitality.”

Another relating factor that was seen as a barrier was cultural practices. Approximately, 25% of participants believed that the reason manager turn their heads the other way regarding sustainable practices was because they refused to change their cultural practices. Participant 1 stated,

Well, one of them is cultural practices. You have to convince people that it is important and that goes from government to staff and as I said before the whole trying to convince the government to forego the tax on a lot of these things that you need to import to help with things you will like to do.

Research Question 3: Managers Efforts in Economic and Ecological Sustainability

A company can be a viable entity if managers support and maintain the ecological sustainability in the local region. There was 62% of the participants who thought that the best way to support and maintain the economic and ecological sustainability in the local region was to purchase local goods and services. Participant 7 stated, “Buy local. Use the local shop, use the local market, use the local restaurants all that kind of stuff, which I have

done a lot of.” In addition, 50% of the participants thought that by respecting the environment was another great way to contribute to the economic and ecological sustainability. Participant 1 stated, “If we want to sustain our economical benefits you start first with the environment. Make decisions based on what will sustain the healthy environment.”

To conclude, 25% of participants discussed that by partnering with the local communities was another great way to support the local region. Participant 3 stated, “I think definitely bringing the local community into the hotel really blending in with the local communities so that they can be taught tourism and understand and as well.” Another 25% thought that by employing local talent was another significant contribution. Participant 8 stated, “Employing locally. Most of the small hotels are also owner operated by local citizens and they are the biggest employer segment in the local communities.” All the participants believed wholeheartedly that these factors would contribute significantly to supporting and maintaining an economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I presented a summary of the study results. I also included a discussion of the purpose and research questions, expert panel review, participants' demographic information, data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness. The chapter included a discussion of the main themes and subcategories and the results and findings associated with the data collection. There were eight participants for the study who provided an in-depth description of their lived experience on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. They were asked 14 interview questions which were developed to answer the three research questions.

The participants were able to share their experiences, current practices, challenges and benefits of implementing sustainable practices. The first research question was as follows: How do small hotel managers describe their effort in preserving the local heritage in the communities they operate? The most frequent coded themes from participants' responses included providing education on history, culture, and heritage, partnering with local communities, encourage guests to interact with local communities, and buy Jamaican products and services. The finding showed that approximately 62% of the participants believed that to preserve the local heritage in which they operate they must encourage guests to interact with the local communities.

The second research question was as follows: What are small hotel managers' perceptions on the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations? The prevalent themes from participants' responses included high cost, lack of education, lack of training, and cultural

practices. The findings showed that approximately 37% of the participants believed that high cost was the number contributing challenge.

The third research question was as follows: How do small hotel managers describe their effort to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions? The prevalent themes that emerged from participants' responses were respecting the environment, purchasing local goods and services, partnering with the local communities, and employing local talents. The result findings showed that 62% of the participants believed that the best way to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local region was to purchase local goods and services. The findings indicated that small hoteliers faced numerous challenges in integrating sustainable practices and that there were areas that need improvement for these entities to be viable. Chapter 5 includes a more in-depth analysis of the key findings, recommendations, and a conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization. I interviewed eight participants from five of the most visited areas in Jamaica. These participants were able to share a rich, in-depth understanding of the phenomenon by responding to 14 research questions.

For this study, I used qualitative research methodology and a maximum variation sampling strategy for choosing the participants. By using the phenomenological approach, I explored the lived experiences of small hotel managers and gained a comprehensive description of the phenomenon. A comprehensive description of the phenomenon was necessary to develop the themes used in my data analysis (Moustakas, 1994).

The key findings of the study addressed themes that emerged from participants' responses to the 14 interview questions. Research Question 1 asked: How do small hotel managers describe their effort in preserving the local heritage in the communities they operate? The themes included providing education on history, culture, and heritage, partnering with local communities, encourage guests to interact with local communities, and buy Jamaican products and services. Research Question 2 asked: What are small hotel managers' perceptions on the challenges that prevented hoteliers from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations? The prevalent themes from participants' responses included high cost, lack of education, lack of training, and cultural practices. Research Question 3 asks: How do small hotel managers describe their

effort to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions? The prevalent themes that emerged from participants' responses are respecting the environment, purchasing local goods and services, partnering with the local communities, and employing local talents. These themes and findings will be interpreted and discussed later in the chapter.

Interpretation of the Findings

The study findings confirm with the information of related research identified in the literature review. In Chapter 2 literature review, I discussed sustainable development in hotels and how essential it is for hoteliers to integrate these practices so that they could run a viable operation. Sloan et al. (2013) indicated that hoteliers are taking the stand to implement more sustainable practices into their operations to minimize their carbon footprint and overall impact on the environment. The findings showed that 87% of the participants were currently integrating sustainable practices to reduce their impact on the environment. The finding was astonishing as the majority of the literature reviewed highlighted that small hoteliers refused to integrate sustainable practices in their hoteliers because of the lack of financial resources (Battaglia, 2017; Mensah, 2014).

Participant 6 stated, "Use of cloth napkins instead of paper serviettes, collection of plastic bottles for recycling, use of solar system, collection of rain water." Similarly, Participant 4, indicated, "The main one that we've done so far we install, I recently doubled my solar capacity so I have a two kilowatt system now and that basically because our rates go up every month no matter what." This showed that hoteliers are starting to see the importance of engaging in environmental practices and monitoring

their everyday impact on the environment. The discussion for the findings is divided into the following sections:

- An interpretation of small hoteliers' concept of sustainable practices
- Challenges that prevent the implementation of sustainable practices
- Current sustainable practices seen in small hotels
- Benefits of integrating sustainable practices
- Preservation of local heritage
- Support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability
- Conceptual framework including stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility
- Recommendation to improve sustainable practices

Small Hoteliers' Concept of Sustainable Practices

The majority of the participants had a good foundation of the meaning of sustainable practices and how it is seen on a broader concept in the hotel industry. Approximately 75% of the participants mentioned that by having a low environmental impact was a right way to be sustainable. This finding disconfirms with Nicholls and Kang (2012) who indicated that managers of large hotel chains pay more attention to environmental matters.

Small hoteliers do pay attention to environmental practices but would make more contribution if more resources were provided to assist them in the implementation. Participant 1 stated, "But I think for me the two most important one is the harvesting of rainwater and the solar hot water." This finding confirmed with Caboni and Giudici

(2012) and Prayag et al. (2010) who both argued that hotel managers are considering five main environmental practices which they mentioned water conservation as one of the primary practices. Prayag et al. also indicated that hoteliers should not just use up all their resources to compete for profit but make the practices appropriate and efficient.

Another critical concept mentioned by participants was sustainable practices should also take into consideration the community and staff development. From the participants' responses, 62% confirmed that hoteliers should consider these factors when thinking of being sustainable. Participant 3 stated, "Some of it is working and evolving yourself with the local community as well." Participant 2 stated, "Helping staff develop, to achieve their full potential and educating staff." These results confirmed with Kim et al. (2015) who explained that a relationship exists between general managers and the environment. Kim et al. further described that if a general manager demonstrates firm ecological behavior, then his employees will be able to follow. Managers have a responsibility for educating their employees and developing their staff in many ways so that they can contribute to sustainable practices.

Cárdenas et al. (2015) asserted that educating people within the communities and stakeholders about tourism can help them to have a better understanding of how they can protect their scarce resources. The results of small hoteliers concepts of sustainable practices confirmed with the information found in the literature.

Challenges That Prevent the Implementation of Sustainable Practices

The associated subcategories that emerged regarding the challenges small hoteliers faced when implementing sustainable practices were high cost, lack of

education, lack of training, and cultural practices. The number one challenge that participants mentioned in their responses were high cost. Approximately, 87% of the participants said that the reason for them not to implement more sustainable practices in their operations was because of the high equipment cost and operational cost. This finding confirmed with Mensah (2014) on some level. Mensah stated that small hoteliers refused to incorporate sustainable practices in their organizations because they lack the financial ability to integrate such a system and because they feel that their impact on the environment is minimal to that of large hotels. However, the financial ability is not the only reason as to why small hoteliers refuse to implement these practices. The findings showed that they were other contributing factors.

Participants mentioned that there were other contributing factors in which 25% responded that the lack of education was a reason for them not to implement sustainable practices, 12% mentioned the lack of training and another 25% mention that cultural practices contributed to managers' decisions. This meant that small hoteliers could and are willing to do more to be sustainable put will need the cost to go down as well as the other factors to be improved. The reasons why there was such a big gap between small hoteliers contribution to the environment versus large hoteliers was because of the financial resources available that large hoteliers have. Sloan et al. (2013) mentioned that hoteliers of large hotels and chain properties are in the position to incorporate sustainable development, as they have the financial and technological resources to invest in new environmental policies. If small hoteliers were able to gain financial funding, more sustainable practices will be seen in their operations.

Current Sustainable Practices

Some of the current sustainable practices mentioned by participants were mostly environmental practices. A few themes that emerged from participants' responses were avoiding food waste (37%), foreign exchange (12%), supporting local businesses (25%), but the most associated theme was environmental practices (87%). Environmental practices were somewhat more affordable to implement in small hotels as managers take advantage of solar energy and water harvesting because of the shortage of water. These findings extend to the knowledge that sustainable practice has a vague definition and causes many misconceptions by hoteliers and other businesses (Baker, 1997). In addition, Baker (1997) and Sloan et al. (2013) both asserted that many managers only consider environmental sustainability such as water and energy conservation, waste and solid reduction rather than maintaining the ecological conditions of stakeholders and communities. These practices are known to be done globally. This meant that the more aware managers are of the different sustainable practices and benefits, they will be better able to integrate them into their establishments.

Benefits of Integrating Sustainable Practices

Despite the high cost of implementing sustainable practices, participants have mentioned a few benefits they have seen for being sustainable. The themes emerged from this category were financial benefits (62%), external benefits such as increased in marketing (37%) and improve well-being for employees, community, and organization (50%). This finding from the study confirmed the research done by Sloan et al. (2013) who indicated that the measure of success is not the amount of return on investment or

profit of an organization but the overall organizational performance and its contribution to ecological and social performance. Little by little small, hoteliers were seeing the increasing benefits for participating in sustainable practices, and the more financial benefits and improvement of the well-being for all people, the more motivated managers will be to participate.

Preserving of Local Heritage

The most emerged themes for preserving the local heritage were encouraging guests to interact with local communities (62%), partnering with local communities (50%), buying Jamaican Products and Services (37%), and providing education on history, cultural, and heritage (50%). The majority of participants believed that the best way to preserve the local heritage was to encourage their guests to interact with the local communities. This finding confirmed with Jurdana and Frleta (2012) who indicated that there should be some form of sustainable long-term strategies to preserve rural communities. This is because communities that have many tourism activities or uncontrollable growth of businesses face threats to their archaeological heritage sites (Vaz, Cabral, Caetano, Nijkamp, & Painho, 2012).

Similarly, consideration should be given to educating guests and employees of the importance of preserving the local heritage. Cárdenas et al. (2015) also mentioned that it is essential to conduct a Community Tourism Self-Assessment to assess the awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the residents in the community. By doing these practices, hoteliers will be better able to preserve the local heritage. The findings of the study confirmed the literature in this subject area.

Support and Maintain Economic and Ecological Sustainability

The themes that were associated with this category were purchasing local goods and services (62%), respecting the environment (50%), employing local (25%), and partnering with the local community (25%). Cárdenas, Byrd, and Duffy (2015) indicated that it is important for hoteliers to consider balancing the economic, environmental, and sociocultural aspects of sustainable development with community participation. Small hoteliers were making a positive impact towards supporting and maintaining the economic and ecological sustainability by supporting the local communities and ensuring that they stay engaged with communities' improvements.

Hoteliers must consider not only implementing responsible practices to benefit the environment, economics, and society, but also stakeholder involvement, preserving local heritage, and community participation (Jurdana & Frleta, 2012; Popescu et al., 2014; Stancu, 2014). The findings from the study confirmed with the literature that hoteliers must commit to not only the environment but also towards economic and ecology contribution.

Conceptual Framework Including Stakeholder Theory and Corporate Social Responsibility

The conceptual framework for the study included stakeholder theory and CSR. Stakeholder theory helps to bring awareness of the need to involve stakeholders in management decisions (Tashman & Raelin 2013). CSR relates to the obligations corporations have toward not just their organizations and the economy, but also to have a responsibility to the well-being of the community, society, and environment (Carlson &

Downs, 2014). The findings of this study were in the context of the conceptual framework in which 50% of the participants mentioned that they partnered with the local community by employing the locals (25%), and respecting the environment (50%).

Organizational leaders should be mindful of the organization's performance and its effect on the environment and social groups and their focus should also be on the three Ps: profit, planet, and people (Anca-Letitia, 2013). Küpers (2011) mentioned that corporations must operate in a socially responsible manner, and their leaders should pay particular attention to the "social and environmental issues and behave in an ethical manner that demonstrates integrity and transparency in all operations" (pp. 137-138). It is vital for hoteliers to incorporate stakeholder theory and CSR into their organizational strategies and actions (Carlon & Downs, 2014; Horisch et al., 2014) to increase their sustainable contribution in their communities.

Recommendation to Improve Sustainable Practices

The participants made recommendations on how sustainable practices can be improved. Their recommendations were divided into 9 subcategories. The themes were communicating with guests and staffs (12%), government actions (75%), preventive maintenance (12%), consideration of sustainability (12%), provide online course (25%), Tourist Board responsibility (12%), teach sustainability in schools (12%), develop training curriculum (25%), and community drives (12%). The most common recommendation was government actions (75%). Many participants had shared the negative experiences they faced with the lack of government contribution or assistance in sustainable practices.

This recommendation was one of the most mentioned to improved sustainable practices in small hotels. There was a lack of research to confirm government contribution was a fundamental factor in small hotels success. This could be a future topic for this discussion. The findings confirmed with the literature that sustainable practices are important and are needed for hotels to be viable entities. It also confirmed that sustainability has many facets and managers must understand that they cannot be committed to one part of sustainability but to all three pillars including the environment, economy, and social development or equity (Drexhage & Murphy, 2010; Sloan et al., 2013).

Figure 1 summarizes the best sustainable practices, challenges, and benefits that small hoteliers highlighted in the study. Some of the best sustainable practices small hoteliers participated in were economic and ecological improvement, social equity and development as well as friendly environmental practices. Small hoteliers contributed to economic and ecological improvements by making economic and ecological contributions in the form of hiring and purchasing locally. They contributed to social equity and development by preserving the local heritage. Furthermore, they contributed to friendly environmental practices by lowering their carbon footprint, conserving energy and increased their solid waste reduction.

Small hoteliers faced the following challenges when integrating best sustainable practices: the high cost of implementing sustainable development, lack of education, cultural practices, and lack of training. The benefits that were received by small hoteliers

were the increase of external benefits, operational and internal benefits, improve well-being, and financial gains.

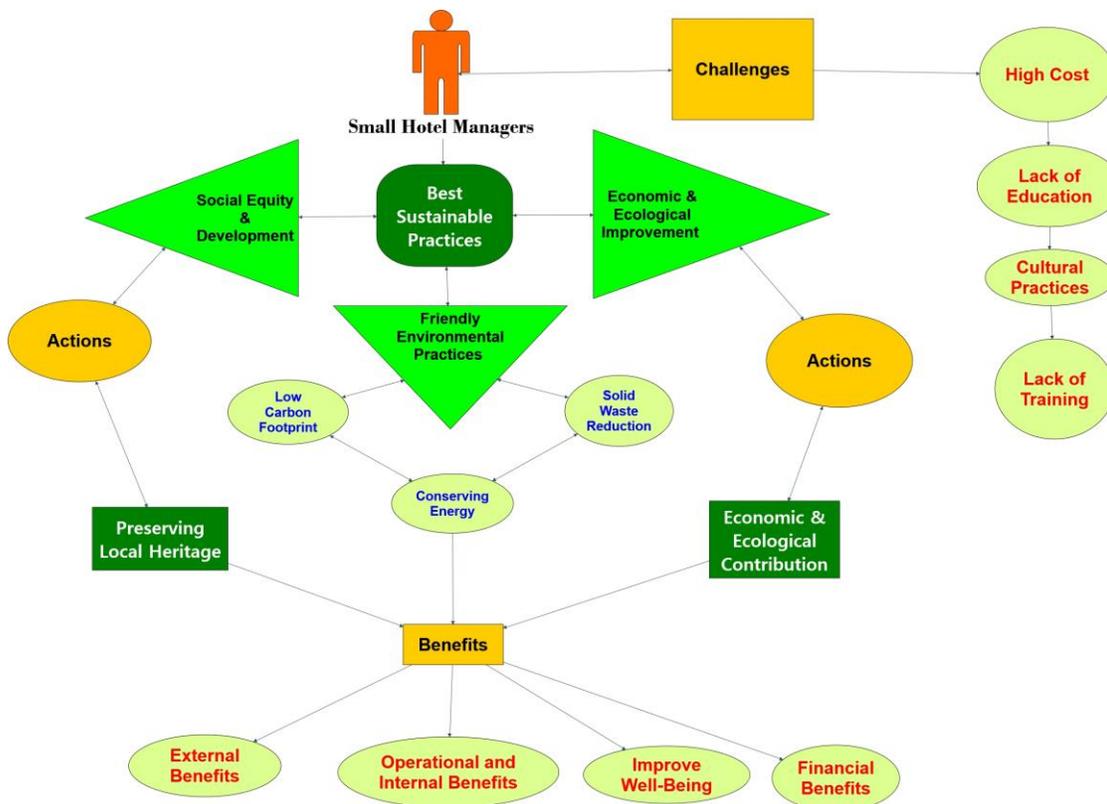


Figure 1. Summarizes the Best Sustainable Practices, Challenges, and Benefits.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to trustworthiness that arose from the execution of my study were in the areas of credibility, trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility can be achieved in various ways to ensure accuracy in the data collected. Credibility indicates how well a researcher can make the data collected believable and accurate (Elo et al., 2014). A limitation of the study not identified in Chapter 1, was how I conducted member check to verify the accuracy of participants’

responses. In this study, I conducted member checking during the interview process by verbally summarized and rephrased participants' responses when I needed clarification and made sure that what was recorded was precisely what participants meant. For example, Participant 1 was asked "How do you ensure that your employees are carrying out sustainable practices?" Participant 1 responded, "Well, it comes down to supervision and you try to impress upon them the importance and the benefits and little by little I think the younger ones are far more easier to buy into it than the older ones." I then asked a follow up question, "Ok, so would you say that the older employees they actually don't like adapting to changes?" to clarify that I understood Participant 1 response. Participant 1 responded, "Well maybe they are not convinced of the wisdom in it."

In Chapter 1, I stated that I would conduct member checking by sending participants a copy of the interview transcripts to review the transcribed data. However, because of time constraints with participants' schedules, I decided to do this during the interviews so I would not have to take away time from the busy managers' schedules for them to check the information. I used snowball sampling approach where two of my participants had given me names of potential participants (Patton, 2015). However, one participant did not meet the criteria of the study, and two participants showed interests, but were never available to take part in the study. In Chapter 1, I stated that I would conduct purposeful sampling strategy for finding participants.

Recommendations

The findings from Research Question 1 on the topic preserving local heritage showed that the majority of participants believed in the preservation of the local heritage

and had described different ways of their efforts. The research results were consistent with the findings that there should be some form of sustainable long-term strategies to preserve rural communities (Jurdana & Frleta, 2012; Popescu et al., 2014; Stancu, 2014). However, 37% of the participants mentioned that they buy Jamaican goods and services. The remaining 63% seems to take part in the importing of products and services from overseas which does not preserve the local heritage. If this decision is a choice for small hoteliers, they should plan to use more Jamaica products and services so that their guests can become accustomed to how things are made in Jamaica. For example, purchasing local arts and crafts to decorate their operations or even bring guests to the local arts and crafts market so that they can leave the island knowing that they indulged in the local heritage and culture.

The findings for Research Question 2 on the topic of challenges that prevented sustainable practices showed that the primary factor was high cost. This result is consistent with the literature with Mensah (2014) who stated that small hoteliers refused to incorporate sustainable practices in their organizations because they lack the financial ability to integrate such a system and because they feel that their impact on the environment is minimal to that of large hotels (Battaglia, 2017; Mensah, 2014). However, managers could start small with their sustainable practices implementation, for example, changing out all the light bulbs room by room or even old equipment one by one as mentioned by the majority of the participants. Implementing these practices could be costly but in the long-run managers could see an increase in their return on investment.

The findings for Research Question 3 on the topic managers' effort in economic and ecological sustainability showed that the majority of the participants noted their increase effort in supporting and maintaining the economic and ecological sustainability in the local region was by purchasing local goods and services. The findings confirmed with the literature that it is crucial for hoteliers to consider balancing the economic, environmental, and sociocultural aspects of sustainable development with community participation (Cárdenas, Byrd, & Duffy, 2015). However, the results showed that 25% of participants contributed to employing locals and partnering with the local communities. To improve these percentage managers could do more partnering with the local communities such as taking part in local charity events or donating furniture and sheets to local shelters. They could also employ more locals especially arts and crafts vendors to display their products, and musicians to play on their properties.

Several audiences may benefit from the results of this study. The first being small hoteliers who have not implemented sustainable practices into their operations. The findings from this study may assist in educating hoteliers on the challenges that they may face when considering the integration of sustainable practices. This may provide them with the opportunity to do more research to see which practices may be best for them. Another benefit for small hoteliers are the current practices mentioned by the participants and how they have implemented them and the benefits received from doing so. This could encourage hoteliers to start small then gradually change their operation into a more sustainable entity. I also believe that these hoteliers could gain a better understanding of term sustainability and the different ways that they can be sustainable.

The second audience I believe could benefit greatly from this study is government policymakers, who in some way contribute to the existence of small businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry. They could learn the negative feedback mentioned by participants and try to change their policies to align with not just one group of business needs but all businesses. They could learn how to allocate funds that could assist in providing the resources small hoteliers need to implement sustainable practices. Resources such as educational programs in what sustainability is and the types of practices including the benefits. Participants noted that lack of educational resources was an issue contributing to why small hoteliers refused to implement these practices in their operation.

The third group that could use this information is small hotel associations in the different regions. The information provided gave an in-depth understanding of the ways to go about implementing sustainability, the various contributions that they could make to the communities, environments, and economies. They could go about this by inviting local consultants who have experience in all areas of sustainable practices and implementation to speak at their meetings or even to have different workshops where current hoteliers can share their practices.

The fourth group that could use this information is colleges and universities that are offering degrees and certificates in the hospitality and tourism industry. The findings could identify the needs of the community, and so they could use these results to develop or modify their current curriculum to meet existing businesses' needs. They could do this by assessing the education levels of people within the local communities on specific

topics such as sustainable practices and base on their responses they could assess the needs and offer programs in those areas. Participants noted that the schools and colleges should be involved with the local communities' education and that they must ensure that the information is current and include the trends in the industry.

The last group I believe could benefit significantly from this study is the Jamaica Tourism Board, who offers various training programs for hoteliers. Facilitators could look at the findings and redesigned their workshops to improve employees' and managers' knowledge on sustainable practices, its importance, and implementation. The participants also made recommendations to improve sustainable practices in small hotels. Listed below are some recommendations based on the themes found in the study:

- Increase preventive maintenance to prevent emergency repairs
- Increase government actions by providing assistance to small hotels to gain funding, loans, startup program training or manuals
- Consideration of sustainability by doing simple actions like conserving electricity (changing out light bulbs to LED bulbs)
- Communicate with guests and staff the reasons why certain practices are done
- Provide online courses so that it is easily accessible for hoteliers who can't find the time to sit in a classroom
- The tourist board is also responsible for educating the public through their training programs
- Teach sustainability in schools by including business courses

- Develop training curriculum that hoteliers can use in their establishments
- Participate in community drives such as beach cleanup and local charity events.

Future research for this study could involve an attempt to determine how government support and assistance toward small hotels increase their optimization. The majority of the participants' responses included negative comments on the lack of attention they received from the government. Researchers could examine how the government could provide funding or assist small hoteliers in receiving funding so that they could take part in sustainable practices. They could also examine the requirements needed by small hoteliers to be able to earn grants funding. Researchers could also examine how other countries such as the United States use tax breaks, incentives or other rewards to motivate small hoteliers in taking part in sustainable practices.

Another area of future research could involve how managers' perceptions of sustainable practices in small hotels impact their overall organizational performance. Researchers could examine how managers' behaviors impact employees' performance and adaptability to change. They could examine if the size and type of accommodation play an essential role in the kind of sustainable practices used in their operation.

The last area for future study could be researchers employing a quantitative approach to this study to increase the scope of the data collection as well as surveying a larger population. I believe if my research questions were conducted using a survey, my participants' response rate would have been higher. Researchers could also examine the types of accommodation such as cottages, guest houses, Airbnbs, bed and breakfasts, to

see how the size, type of operations, the type travelers they cater to, and their locations contribute to hoteliers' implementation of sustainable practices. It would also be good to assess the practices used in both small, medium and large hotels so the practices can benefit a more generalized population. The results of this study might be disseminated via literature, at upcoming conferences in the hospitality and tourism industry and conferences and symposium on sustainable practices and development.

Implications

The potential positive social change will be the comprehensive framework that can be developed from results and findings discussed in the study. Hoteliers from all size of operations may be able to design their training programs around the findings presented in the study on sustainable practices. They may be able to use the results to implement different sustainable practices, identify ways on how to save on cost, and apply different ideas on how to support and maintain the economic and ecological sustainability in their local regions. By understanding the importance of sustainable practices and its benefits, hoteliers could increase their operation's optimization.

This study could also contribute positively to the well-being of communities in which hoteliers operate. The findings presented in the study showed how hoteliers could make a positive impact on the communities by partnering with local business and preserving the local heritage in the region. This study could contribute to the development of curriculums in schools, colleges, and universities. The current curriculum could be modified using the findings to meet business and community needs.

Another area of contribution is policymakers in the government sectors.

Policymakers could benefit significantly by modifying their current policies designed for hotel operations. They could also use the information to make changes to the permits needed to run a sustainable operation. This study could contribute positive social change for individuals, families, or any business organizations on the knowledge of sustainable practices, its benefits and importance and how these could be used to preserve the local heritage and continue to aim for economic and ecological sustainability in local regions. This study contributes to the literature on sustainable practices in the hospitality and tourism industry for the academic community as well as the readers of this study.

A gap exists in the literature in how small hoteliers can use sustainable practices to increase optimization in their organizations. However, this study could contribute to bringing an awareness of the knowledge needed to integrate sustainable practices into strategic planning and development and everyday lives.

Conclusion

Sustainable development is one of the newest and fastest growing trends in the hospitality and tourism industry. Many hoteliers are urged to integrate sustainable practices into their operations. The specific problem was the majority of hotel leaders in Jamaica focus solely on foreign exchange earnings and job creation rather than on sustainable development in their operations (Mensah, 2014). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 8 small hotel managers on the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization.

The results from the research questions showed that for preserving the local heritage in the local region 62% of managers encourage their guests to interact with the local communities; 50% partnered with the local community; 37% participate in buying Jamaican products; and 50% believed that providing education on the history, culture, and heritage are best practices in preserving the local heritage. The results from the second question showed that the main barriers for hoteliers to not implement sustainable practices in their operations are due to the high cost (37%), lack of education (25%), lack of training (12%), and cultural practices (25%). Despite these percentages, hoteliers tried their best to implement small practices that contribute to having a sustainable operation. The last results for the third research question on supporting and maintaining economic and ecological sustainability showed purchasing local goods and service (62%), respecting the environment (50%), employing locals (25%), and partnering with the local community (25%).

The key recommendations from the study included an increase support and assistance from the government to encourage small hoteliers to take part in sustainable practices. An increase in knowledge and awareness of the importance of sustainable practices and benefits. Expand the effort for continued preservation of the local heritage. A continued support and maintenance of economic and ecological sustainability in the local regions.

The key social change impact that this study may contribute includes an in-depth description of the results and findings from the participants' responses. The findings contained elements that could be used to develop a comprehensive framework that may

be used by hoteliers for designing training and educational programs, government policymakers for modifying policies to meet the needs of all businesses, and for colleges and universities to alter their curriculums to meet the needs of the public. This study may contribute to the literature on sustainable practices in the hospitality and tourism industry for the academic community as well as the readers of this study. By instilling public awareness of sustainable practices and its benefits, the world could be a better place as its resources will be sustained for future generations.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Details:

Interviewer Name _____

Participant Name _____

Interview Date/ Time _____

Interview Location _____

Preliminary Interview Protocol Actions:

1. Verify that a signed and dated informed consent letter is collected prior to the interview.
2. Offer the participant a signed and dated copy of the informed consent letter.
3. Introduce the study, provide a short background of the researcher's connection to the study, and offer a signed and dated copy of the confidentiality agreement.
4. Inform the participant that the interview is being audio-recorded and will be transcribed by the researcher or a professional transcriptionist service.
5. Inform the participant that a copy of the results of the study will be made available to them if requested.

Demographic Interview Questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your race? (Optional)
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. How long have you been in the hotel industry?

6. What areas of the hotel industry have you worked and how long did you hold those positions?

Interview Questions:

1. Describe your understanding of sustainable practices in hotels?
2. What are some sustainable practices that you have implemented in your current position?
3. Explain some of the challenges that would prevent your company from implementing sustainable practices?
4. What prevented hoteliers all these years from integrating sustainable management practices into their hospitality operations?
5. How does your company support the local community in which it operates?
6. How do you ensure that your employees are carrying out sustainable practices?
7. What can hotel leaders of small hotels do to promote social development?
8. What training needs would your company require to implement sustainable practices?
9. What are some benefits your company would receive for developing sustainable practices?
10. What can hotel managers of small hotels do to preserve the local heritage in which they operate?
11. What can hotel leaders of small hotels do to support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in the local region?

12. How does the government assist in implementing sustainable practices in small hotels?
13. Based on your responses to the previous questions, explain what changes you would recommend to improve sustainable practices in small hotels?
14. Describe how would you go about implementing those changes?

Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Letter

Subject Title: Participants needed for study on the effect of sustainable practices on small hotel optimization.

Subject Description: I am seeking to recruit 20 research participants for a study on small hotel managers' perceptions and how hoteliers could preserve the local heritage in which they operate, how they could support and maintain economic and ecological sustainability in the local region, and what prevented hoteliers for integrating sustainability practices.

The reason and benefit of the study: The results from this may contribute to hoteliers of all sizes and types of hotels on the knowledge of making sustainable decisions, contributing to hotel optimization in the communities and environments served. By participating in this study, your perspectives of the phenomenon will bring awareness on the effect of sustainable practices in small hotel optimization. Based on your experience in the hospitality industry, I would like to take 30- 45 minutes your time to discuss your thoughts on the effect of sustainable practices in small hotel optimization.

The criteria for interviewee follows:

- a) have at least 2 years of experience in the hotel industry as a general manager or hotelier,
- b) have 75 or fewer rooms in their hotel,

If you feel you met the required criteria, I would like the opportunity to speak with you regarding your voluntary participation in this study. The objective of the study is to explore the lived experiences of small hotel managers. Since there is a limited research

conducted that explores the effect of sustainability on small hotel optimization, an in-depth description of your understanding on the phenomenon will contribute to useful information that may be useful in other hotels of all sizes, government agencies, universities, and other business organizations.

To participate in this study, please contact me at with your name, email and telephone number:

keneika.rowe@waldenu.edu

I look forward to learning more from your experience with the effect of sustainable practices on small hotel optimization.

Appendix C: Consent Form

Title of Study: Exploring the Effect of Sustainable Practices on Small Hotel**Optimization**

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to explore small hotel managers' perception on the effect of sustainable development on small hotel optimization.

Small hotel managers who have experienced the phenomenon of the effect sustainable practices on small hotel optimization will need to meet the following criteria will be invited to participate in the study:

- a) have at least 2 years of experience in the hotel industry as a general manager or hotelier,
- b) have 75 or fewer rooms in their hotel,

This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study will be conducted by a researcher named Keneika Rowe, who is a doctoral candidate at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand the effect sustainable practices have on small hotel optimization based on perceptions of 20 participants who have experienced the phenomenon. The participants will be asked to describe in-depth their experiences and perceptions of the effect sustainable practices on small hotel optimization. The result and

finding from this study may provide a better understanding of the best ways to integrate sustainable practices into management operations of the hotel industry to preserve the local heritage, promote social development, and support economic sustainability.

Guidelines:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher requiring no more than 30-45 minutes of your time by telephone or via Skype. The population size of this study is 20 respondents.
- Agree to have the interview audiotaped for later transcription and analysis by the researcher. The researcher will use a digital voice recorder to capture the conversation.
- Review a copy of the transcribed interview session provided to you by the researcher and to provide the researcher with feedback on the accuracy of the findings and conclusions. The debriefing of the study should take less than 30 minutes.

Interview Questions:

Below is a list of sample questions that will be asked in the interview:

Demographic Interview Questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your race? (Optional)
4. What is your highest level of education?

5. How long have you been in the hotel industry?
6. What areas of the hotel industry have you worked and how long did you hold those positions?

Interview Questions:

1. Describe your understanding of sustainable practices in hotels?
2. What are some sustainable practices that you have implemented in your current position?
3. Explain some of the challenges that would prevent your company from implementing sustainable practices?
4. How does your company support the local community in which it operates?
5. How do you ensure that your employees are carrying out sustainable practices?
6. What can hotel leaders of small hotels do to promote social development?
7. What training needs would your company require to implement sustainable practices?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. This means that you can choose to stop the interview session at any time or choose to withdraw at a later date.

Risk and Benefits of Being in the Study:

This type of phenomenological study can involve minor stress or discomfort, however, for this study you will not encounter these risks or being in any way of feeling uncomfortable.

Your involvement in this study will make a positive contribution in educating hoteliers on the best ways to integrate sustainable practices into the management operations of the hotel industry to preserve the local heritage, promote social development, and support economic sustainability.

Payment:

There is no payment or compensation for your participation in this study.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The results from the study will be kept in a protected location for 5 years after which it will be destroyed.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher of this study is Keneika Rowe. You may ask any questions you have by contacting the researcher via phone xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email at keneika.rowe@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can contact the Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at email address irb@mail.waldenu.edu. Walden University's approval number for this study is 08-23-17-0425726 and it expires on August 22, 2018.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep if a face-to-face interview is done.

If you choose to do the interview by email please print or save this consent form for your records.

Obtaining Your Consent:

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by signing below or replying to this email, I consent to participate in the study and I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix D: Table 6

Table 6

Parent Node Name, Summary Description, Number of Sources Coded, and Number of Coding References

Parent Node Name	Summary Description	Number of Sources Coded	Number of Coding References
RQ1: Preserve local heritage	This node describes the different ways in which participants assist in preserving the local heritage in which they operate. Some important practices are buying all local products, partnering with the local community, educating the public and encouraging guests to interact with the local communities.	8	27
RQ2: Prevention from integrating sustainability practices	This node provides information on participants' perceptions on the reasons behind hoteliers not integrating in sustainability practices in their hotels. The responses range from lack of education, resources, and training, high cost and taxation, not receiving incentives or rewards from the	7	20

Parent Node Name	Summary Description	Number of Sources Coded	Number of Coding References
	government, and lack of knowledge in the startup process of a business.		
RQ3: Economic and ecological sustainability	This node describes the economic and ecological sustainability practices done by managers to contribute to the well-being of their organizations, environment, employees, and communities.	8	22

Note. Table 2.6 lists the main themes for the three research questions, a description of what each theme contains, list of the number of sources and number of coding references. RQ = research question.