

AN INQUIRY IN TO A SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTION FOR BOUTIQUE HOTELS

A CASE STUDY OF THE BOUTIQUE HOTELS IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Key purpose: Key attention of this research is for Boutique Hotels in Sri Lanka. Apart from that, attention has paid to drive the hotels to long-term survival while facing macro and micro level environmental challenges. Therefore, the aim of this study is to develop a specific business model for long-term survival of Boutique Hotels of Sri Lanka as a strategic intervention to its existing business model.

Methodology: For the data collection purpose, samples of nine Boutique Hotels have been selected from Galle district, Sri Lanka. Nine face-to-face interviews took place with senior managers from each Boutique Hotel followed by nine face-to-face interviews with the guests who were residing in the hotel by the time of the research. The interview guides have been created based on eight performance indicators that have been identified through literature review. To analyse the data Nvivo12 qualitative data analysis software was used. Data was analysed using the output of the software and codes identified from the literature review.

Analysis and Findings: Analysis carried out based on managers' requirements and guests' requirements. Based on that most suitable eight elements identified as the strategic interventions to the existing business models of the boutique hotels. While most of the boutique hotel managers were confirmed that having a specific business model for Boutique Hotels will be able to drive the hotels to a long-term survival in financial and non-financial aspects. Therefore, by using the identified performance indicators the strategic intervention created as the proposed business model for the boutique hotels in Sri Lankan context. The final output of the research adding new knowledge to the limited knowledge about the successful Sri Lankan Boutique Hotel operations. Furthermore, development of the business model for long-term survival will be beneficial for the existing and upcoming Boutique Hotels to drive the hotels to long-term survival in Sri Lanka.

Key words: *Boutique Hotels, Economic Sustainability, Business Models*

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ABBREVIATIONS

SLTHI - Sri Lankan Tourism and Hospitality industry

SLTDA - Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

STPB - Sri Lanka Tourism Promotional Bureau

BSC - Balance Score Card

SM - Strategy Road Map

VP - Value Propositions

AHP - Analytic Hierarchy Process

MCDM - Multi Criteria Decision Making

SHV - Stakeholder View

EMS - Environmental Management System

RBV - Resource Based View of the Firm

SCA - Sustainable Competitive Advantages

SMP - Stakeholder Management Policy

DCT - Dynamic Capabilities Theory

CHAPTER 01 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background for the Research

Sri Lanka tourism was booming with the end of the ethnic war (Teare et al, 2013). Since then every government has placed much effort to develop this industry (Teare et al, 2013). Different titles have been created for the brand development of the industry and now the industry is known as “So Sri Lanka”. Since tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in Sri Lanka Lonelyplanet named Sri Lanka as the number one destination in the world in 2019 (Thushara et al, 2019). However, lack of a strategic development is lacking the development of the industry to capture the opportunities of the potential growth (Jayawardena, 2013).

There has been much interest recently in Sri Lankan Tourism and Hospitality industry (SLTHI) due to the rising tourist arrivals (Jayawardena, 2013). In 2017, the arrivals of tourists were 2,116, 407 and indicating a growth rate of more than 20% annually (Fernando, 2016; Mustafa, 2019). Due to the increased hotel occupancy rate (75%) many local and international firms have entered the industry for investments (Rajapakse, 2016; Thushara et al, 2019; Fernando, 2015). Furthermore, many value added services added to the service portfolio in the recent past (Rajapakse, 2016). Further, this growth rate improved the level service delivery and investors moved from the traditional room supply concept to the customized and internationally recognized hotel concepts. Fernando (2017b) mentioned many new hotel concepts targeting a range of segments entered to the tourism industry to capture this window of opportunity. Such as international hospitality brand names, floating rooms, camping, caravan stays, boutique hotels, villa etc....

As mentioned above, the post war era has created an unprecedented economic growth for Sri Lanka and development of the tourism industry is a one of key player for this GDP (Ranasinghe, 2015b). Miththapala (2018) introduced the tourism industry as the “Engine of Growth” and as a “Thrust industry”. Attention to the Sri Lankan tourism has gone up in international and local investors’ mind with a greater hype (Selvanathan, 2007; Fernando and Jayawardena, 2013; Karunasekara, 2015; Laksiri, 2007; Fernando and Shariff, 2013;

Ariyaratne and Fernando, 2015). According to the latest statistics from Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) the industry growth rate in 2018 recorded as 10.3% (Silva, 2019). Compared to the year 2009 in 2018 the Sri Lankan tourism industry growth rate was 80% (SLTDA, 2019a; Ranasinghe and Deysappriya, 2010; Wickramaratne and Karunasena, 2017; Jayathilake, 2013). Further, this higher growth has created phenomenal benefits for stakeholders in the industry (Tisdell and Bandara, 2004; Gnanapala and Sandaruwani, 2016; Ellis, 2011). Those opportunities have earned US \$ 4,380.6 million in 2018 (SLTDA, 2019a) that is a growth rate of 92%. There was a 41% growth in the number of rooms compared to 2009 in 2018 and estimating to grow to 63% by 2020 (SLTDA, 2019a).

1.1.1 Number of Tourist Arrival

Table 1 demonstrates the growth rate of the tourist arrivals that experienced Sri Lanka tourism from 2009 to 2018. Adding more, with the economic development of the country in 2018 there were 2312 accommodation units compared to the 871 units in 2009. Guests' nights increased up to 25,204,996 in 2018 comparing to 4,075,799 in 2009. Based on these growth rates the government of Sri Lanka is now focusing on a 4.5 million tourist arrival to Sri Lanka in 2020 (Thushara et al, 2019, Daily FT, 2020).

Table 1: Tourism Growth Rate

Year	Total Tourist Arrivals	Accommodation establishments	Total foreign guest nights
2009	447,890	871	4,075,799
2010	654,476	783	4,126,544
2012	1,005,605	1199	5,038,066
2016	2,050,832	1940	10, 595,118
2018	2,333,796	2312	25,204,996

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA, 2010; SLTDA, 2012; SLTDA, 2017; SLTDA, 2019a).

1.1.2 Economic Contribution

Ranasinghe and Deshapriya (2011) identifies, Tourism plays an important role for the development of the macro and micro economic development of the host nation. Rasul and Mananshar (2009) observations indicated the South Asian potentiality for the economic contribution getting larger and unrealized.

Since back from independence in 1947, Sri Lanka got a higher potentiality to attract foreign tourists to the island (Fernando et al, 2013). Over the years, many establishments developed incorporating cultural heritage and the natural establishments. Sri Lanka is blessed with differentiated natural establishments that includes a range of spectacular flora and fauna with high percentage of endemism (Miththapala, 2015a). This is further enhanced with the 2500 years old cultural heritage. Those key variables made Sri Lanka a unique tourism destination.

Following Table 2 will be identifying the tourism industry contribution to the GDP of Sri Lanka. This has been further confirmed by the Central bank of Sri Lanka annual report (2018). Especially the share of the GDP is getting increased with a growth and forecasting to reach to 13.5% by 2027. As Table 2 depicts in 2018 the share of GDP was 5.7% compared to the 2.3% in 2009.

Table 2: Share of the GDP

Year	GDP Share %
2009	2.3
2010	2.4
2012	3
2016	4.9
2018	5.7

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA, 2010; SLTDA, 2012; SLTDA, 2017; SLTDA, 2019a).

Following illustration (Figure 1) obtained from the World Travel & Tourism Council Sri Lanka report that shows the growth of the tourism industry. As it shows, the growth pattern may create many business opportunities in the industry that investors can focus on.

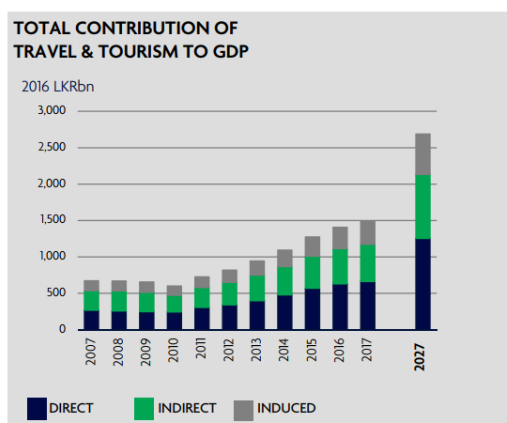


Figure 1: Growth of the tourism industry
Source: World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017

In 2018 Sri Lanka has earned the highest revenue in the history as an industry and is now focusing on better performance by 2027 (SLTDA, 2019a). Following table 3 demonstrates the foreign income which was generated by Sri Lanka Tourism from 2009 to 2018. In 2009 industry earned US \$ MN 315.5 and reached up to US \$ MN 4,380.6 in 2018.

Table 3: Earnings from the Tourism

Year	Earning in US \$ MN	Earning in Rs. MN
2009	315.5	37,094
2010	349.3	40,133
2012	838.9	132,427
2016	2,980.6	512,293
2018	4,380.6	712,027.3

Source: Author’s work adopted from SLTDA, 2010; SLTDA, 2012; SLTDA, 2017; SLTDA, 2019a).

1.1.3 Creation of Job Opportunities

Direct and indirect employment opportunities created by the tourism industry was more than 10% out of total employment of the country. According to the SLTDA the direct and indirect employments are considered as all the tourism related value-added services, key

services, government agencies and support services. Following table 4 indicates the growth of the employment opportunities that were created by the industry during the last few years (SLTDA, 2019a). Further, the government is focusing on a 2.7% annual growth of employment to reach 1,201,000 jobs in 2027 (SLTDA, 2019a). By the end of 2018, Sri Lanka tourism was able to create 388,487 jobs by directly and indirectly (Refer Table 4).

Table 4: Total Employment

Year	Number of jobs
2009	52,071
2010	132,055
2012	162,869
2016	335,659
2018	388,487

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA, 2010; SLTDA, 2012; SLTDA, 2017; SLTDA, 2019a).

1.1.4 Involvement of the Regulatory Bodies

The governing bodies of Sri Lanka tourism are SLTDA and Sri Lanka Tourism Promotional Bureau (STPB). Other than that, Hotel school is the only training arm of Sri Lanka tourism that gives the training and human resource development for the entire industry.

1.1.5 Major Challenges

Major challenge that Sri Lanka tourism faced now is the lack of sustainability and lacking with a proper strategic development and ended in a lip service in most sub categories (Miththapala, 2015b; Buultjens et al, 2015; Kalegama, 2014). Lack of sustainability has created due to lack of planning, mass tourism, large scale infrastructure development, influx of visitors, uncontrollable growth and environmental pollution (Ranasinghe, 2015b; Umasuthan and Park, 2018; Thushara et al, 2019; Gunapala and Aslam, 2000).

World tourism growth rate is 4-5% and Asian growth rate was 6%. However, Sri Lanka was unable to grab this trend due to many strategic failures. As mentioned by Dias (2018) Sri

Lanka is softly killing the tourism industry. Further, the industry is losing its competitiveness against other competing south Asian destinations due to lack of standard practices, lack of focus and lack of professional labour practices (Jayasuriya and Guoping, 2017).

Most of the responsible authorities are unaware about the strategic planning, illegal developments and happenings in the industry etc... Among those, unauthorized accommodation establishments, unregistered accommodations, unregistered service providers, fraud tourist guides, illegal activities, sexual harassments etc... can identify which led to damage the potentiality in the industry in recent past (Udunuwara and Sanders, 2016; Buultjens et al, 2015; Gunasena, 2017). Those reduced the fame of the locations and feared the holidaymakers. Quoting Aitken Spence Travel¹ Managing Director Nalin Jayasundere Dias (2018) mentioned these unstructured activities of implementation are visible in the country due to the lack of implementation of the law and order by the country. Agreeing with Nathaniel and Silva (2018), many of the unauthorized and illegal activities are now threatening the natural establishments in attracted tourist destinations as well. Many of the environmentalists cautioned about the harmful activities that may ultimate leads to loss of attractiveness of the destinations.

Unlicensed hotels are ruining the upscale high-end destinations by implementing range of malpractices and reducing the prices drastically. This practices now led some of the most high-end tourist destinations to a backpackers tourist destinations that is spending pattern is low. Rate of the accommodation options are pushing down while the cost of operations are skyrocketing. Due to this nature, legitimate accommodation options are finding difficult to operate in a profitable manner. Further, this has led to serve only backpackers as a destination and will be ignoring the high-end tourists who will add benefits to the country. Lack of competitive level human resources are adversely affecting to the Sri Lanka tourism. Opportunities to create skilful labour also limited into few options which needs to address soon (Hettiarachchi et al, 2015; Gamage, 2016). However, quoting Mr. Thilak Weerasinghe – Chairmen LSR Travel², Daily FT (2017) mentioned active tourism is growing at a higher rate by creating many options for the tourists. For an for

¹ Travel Agent

² Adventre Tour Operator

example Kalpitiya and the accommodation options were promoted with the kite surfing activities which were developed in Kalpitiya since 2014 (Sathkumara, 2015).

Price inflation of the properties is also another challenge that is creating toward the accommodation sector (Fernando, 2016).

1.1.6 Accommodation Sectors of Sri Lanka Tourism

To reap the fruitful results from the growing industry, the government is ready to help local and international investors to build more and more hotels island wide by labelling industry as “A story of untapped Potential” (Thushara et al, 2019). Furthermore, government authorities are encouraging investors to invest in more sophisticated hotel accommodation to expose more the pure Sri Lankan hospitality (Kannangara, 2017). As Shantha (2018) identified SLTDA has categorized the accommodation industry into following sub sections (Figure 2).

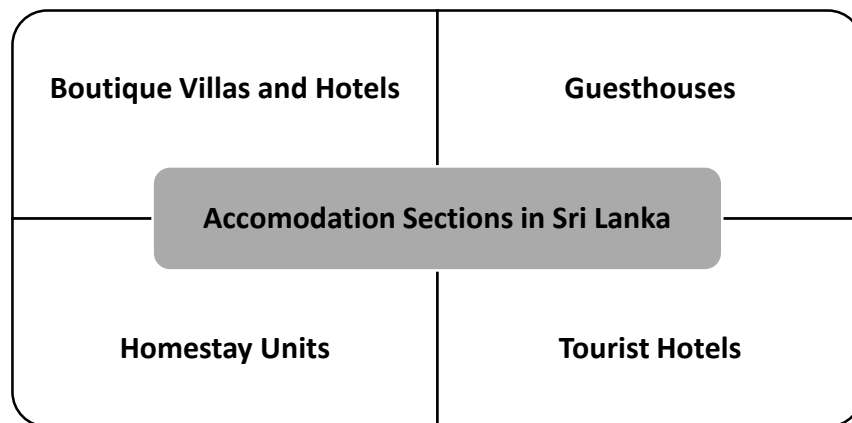


Figure 2: Accommodation Sub Sections
Source: Author’s work adopted from Shantha (2018)

As per the explanation by SLTDA (2019a), the room supply of the above accommodation types can be identified into two main sections such as graded hotels and supplementary category. Following Table 5 indicates the growth of the rooms in each category in recent past because of increasing occupancy rate. Graded hotel room capacity increased up to 24,757 in 2018 compared to 14,461 in 2009. Supplementary category recorded a phenomenal growth which is 13,457 in 2018 compared to 5,946 in 2009.

Table 5: Room Supply of the accommodation types

Year	Graded Hotels	Supplementary Category
2009	14,461	5,946
2010	14,714	5,895
2012	15,510	8,207
2016	22,136	11,535
2018	24,757	13,457

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA, 2010; SLTDA, 2012; SLTDA, 2017; SLTDA, 2019a).

Though during the recent past the room supply of the country was increased, Fernando et al (2016) identified that Sri Lanka needs to make a balance between the categories of the type of hotels with high quality fairly priced rooms. Many international brands such as Marriott International, Sheraton Hotels and Resorts, Avani Hotels etc... entered the industry as international competitors. In the same time, many local investors extended their product portfolio by investing in differentiated accommodation categories too.

Since the research is focusing on the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka, the author would like to draw attention about the boutique hotels from this point onward. When it comes to sub sectors of the accommodation industry, the boutique hotels are playing a vital role in delivering wider experience and satisfaction in customized, personalized, luxurious and intimate service delivery (Wettasinghe, 2018; Balekjian and Sarheim, 2011). In 2019, there were 24 boutique hotels in Sri Lanka under the registered category and more than 400 units in the informal unregistered category (SLTDA, 2019b, Reddot Tours, 2019). Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka have shown a significant growth rate with a higher contribution to the economic and social development (Shantha, 2018). However, lack of insights for the sector developments in local context led to loss in competitive advantages. However, in international academia attention to the Boutique hotel concept is rising. Therefore, through this research is expected to give special attention to how the Boutique hotel can survive in the long term with the future market situations while contributing to the economic development of the country.

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1 Research Problem Statement

Does a specific business model for boutique hotels in Sri Lanka drive those boutique hotels to long-term economic sustainability?

1.2.2 Research Problem Justification

There is a significant need to develop a business model focusing the boutique hotels for the long-term economic sustainability

If Sri Lankan boutique hotels continue to implement the existing business models, they will not only be wasting the financial and non-financial aspects, it will jeopardized their long-term sustainability and competitive status. Also this less competitive status and sustainability lead guests to choose another destination with another accommodation option.

According to the Earnest and Young's Global hospitality insights report (2016) the world hospitality industry is moving towards learning on how to align the service offering to the global trends. When it comes to aligning the service offering to the global trends Earnest and Young's Global hospitality insights report (2016) mentioned hospitality sector stakeholders should know, 1. Requirement of the consumer experience, 2. Service capacity of the hotel and 3. Capacity of the destination. Moreover, Travel, tourism and hospitality industry landscape is changing rapidly. Guest perceived values and satisfaction are intangible, further these influenced by the experience and promised service delivery (Firat et al, 2014).

One major research gap was encouraged to select this research context and one factor supported to move ahead with the research. The core research drive is losing competitiveness of Sri Lankan Boutique hotels in terms of financial and non-financial aspects while untapped potentiality exists in the market place (Ranasinghe, 2015b; Fernando and Jayawardena, 2013). Supporting factor is Sri Lankan government

willingness to make the industry more sustainable while driving toward the UN's sustainable development goals (Thushara et al, 2019).

Many previous studies indicated Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka getting less competitive and might collapse in terms of satisfying the guests in potential Sri Lankan tourism industry in near future (Srinivasan et al, 2012; Rogerson, 2013; Binkely, 1999; Jogaratnam and Tse, 2004; Asia News Monitor, 2010; Eric et al, 2002). As mentioned in the previous sections the Boutique hotel growth rate in Sri Lanka is significantly high. Kaiwa's (2017) article about the Asian tourism mentioned Sri Lanka still has much room to promote sustainable tourism in the country. Adding to that Fernando and Jayawardena (2013) mentioned Boutique hotel yielding better and showing a higher potentiality in Middle East and European markets. However, this rising number of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka are deviating away from the defined standards and simply naming the accommodation units as Boutique hotels that got a huge negative impact in the long run (Shantha, 2018). Adding more, many operational gaps were identified in Sri Lankan Boutique hotel operations due to the lack of sustainability focus in the top level and operational level management (Ukkwatte and Abeysekera, 2015; Gnanapala, 2016; Wickramasinghe, 2016; Gamage et al, 2016; Gunarathne, 2014; Samarathunga, 2016; Fernando et al, 2016; Fernando and Meedeniya, 2009). If these operational gaps are continuing to occur in the same nature, the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka will be less competitive against other destinations and industry will be challenging. Less competitiveness will make the deterioration of the service quality, less profitability, higher employee dissatisfaction, higher customer dissatisfaction etc. This was an identified issue as for the findings of Rogerson (2010), which indicated South African Boutique hotel competitiveness is going down due to these lacking standards.

Distinct literature is available about the South Asian tourism sector development (Mazumder et al, 2013); impact of tourism development to the economic development (Giampiccoli et al, 2015); implementation of strategies to achieve the hotel objectives (Cherapanukorn and Focken, 2014); achieving guest satisfaction in a hotel (Pizam et al, 2016); internal and external factor effectiveness for hotel development (Nasiri Hende Khaleh et al, 2016). However, the attention to the Boutique hotel development and driving toward the sustainable future attained very low in literature and related studies (Lwin, 2013; Özarlan, 2014). Dinçer et al (2016) report about marketing strategies for

Boutique hotels in Istanbul have clearly indicated that proper studies need to be carried out for this potential industry since it is booming unavoidably. Though number of studies have been conducted for the Boutique hotels there is a research gap in determining the most suitable business practices for the future sustainability in the business model perspective to make this industry competitive (Kandampully, 2006 and Barrows and Powers, 2008; Jones et al, 2013; Shantha, 2018; Jones et al, 2013). A gap identified in the literature regarding driving the Boutique hotel for the future sustainability since the operationalization of the Boutique hotel are far different to the large-scale hotel operations. (Jones et al, 2013). Furthermore, all the concepts and strategies which are going to be utilized in the Boutique hotel context has to be uniquely developed for the Boutique hotel industry (Jones et al, 2013).

All above trends and developments could be managed by the hotels by implementing a successful sustainable business model (Mihalič et al, 2012). A research about the Dutch hotels by Melissen et al (2016a) and according to Melissen et al (2016b) and Melissen et al (2016c) indicates that the highest contribution of the Business Models still needs to be redefined by the hotel managers for a sustainable future. Further, an establishment of a business model including all the key concepts such as HR, Marketing, Quality assurance, Guest care, finance, hotel management needed for the sustainability of the industry (Chu, 2014). However, Enz (2011) article about the strategy formulation for hotel operations indicated a generalized version of strategies for hotels need to customize to the sub sections of the industry based on the new research findings. Further Mihalič et al (2012) indicated in their report that hotels need to have a customized version of a business model for sustainability including above-mentioned elements. Chu (2014) conducted content analysis for researches that carried out regarding the hospitality industry from 1994 to 2014. They have identified almost all the researchers are using deductive reasoning methods to apply the phenomena to the accepted models and theories. They have indicated the gap of the studies in relation to the hospitality industry on “How” based questions. More conceptual studies are required for the industry to develop more theories due to that nature (Bowen & Sparks, 1998; Chu, 2014). Further Dinçer et al (2016) identified it is not feasible to devise a one formula as a successive model for the accommodation industry since target segments are different one to another. With the uniqueness of Boutique hotels, deploying a unique business model for the long-term

sustainability is required. Adding more, with the rapid changes in the industry, boutique hotels should give attention to digital concepts, consumer requirements, distribution strategies, strategic partnerships etc...

Therefore, the traditional business models of the hotels need to redefine with the modern elements to sustain in the market place in a competitive level when it comes to special segmented accommodation options such as Boutique hotel. Mihalič et al (2012) has identified this research gap as a problem in sustainability business model in his study that was answered by the findings. Based on this research gap, following is the key purpose of this research.

1.3 Research Purpose

Based on the key research problem that identified in the above section this research focused on redevelopment of the existing business models of the Boutique hotels to a sustainable methodology to implement for long-term survival of the Boutique hotel. Therefore, the key purpose of the research was to design a viable, robust and systematic approach for Boutique hotel sector long-term survival. To design that particular business model this research has taken steps to redevelop existing business models of the Sri Lankan Boutique hotels to a sustainable methodology. All the key elements which needed to integrate with the definition of the boutique hotel integrated to this sustainable methodology (Kandampully, 2006; Ranasinghe, 2015b; Cooray, 2016; Mann and Goel, 2014; Lelwala and Gunarathne, 2009; Samaranyake et al, 2013; Jayawardane, 2013). Based on a key model (Business Model Canvas) the research drove the focus to the Sri Lankan context. Proposed methodology developed based on this key model. Furthermore, it is expected to apply the solutions to the International context as the wider aspects of the key purpose of this research.

The study was an extension of the studies that carried out on focusing the Boutique hotels in the international market (Saleem et al, 1996; Ratnayake and Kasim, 2012; Pieris, 2014; Demil and Lecocq, 2010; Nithiyandam, 2012). Apart from that study will directly focus on the Sri Lankan context since academia so far has not given a priority for this sub industry in Sri Lanka (Giesen et al, 2010; Hartesvelt, 2006; Schneider and Spieth, 2013; Johnson et al, 2008; Ratnayake and Kasim, 2012; Moingeon and Lehmann-Ortega, 2010;

Alt and Zimmermann, 2001; Nithiyandam, 2012; Demil and Lecocq, 2010; Baden-Fuller and Morgan, 2010; Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2010; Fiet and Patel, 2008).

1.3.1 Research Aim

The focus of this research is to achieve following main research aim;

To redevelop the existing business models of boutique hotels for Sri Lankan boutique hotels as a strategic intervention for economic sustainability.

1.3.2 Research Questions

1. How successful are the existing business model elements in Sri Lankan Boutique Hotels?
2. Why do Sri Lankan Boutique Hotels need to identify the most applicable business model elements to achieve economic sustainability?
3. How to develop a business model for the Sri Lankan Boutique Hotels to long survival while achieving the entrepreneurs' and guests' expectations?

1.3.3 Research Objectives

In order to develop the answer for the research aim following research objectives has been identified as the most applicable objectives.

1. To critically review the elements that can drive the Boutique Hotels for economic sustainability through review of literature.
2. To understand the existing status of the business models of the Boutique Hotels in Sri Lanka.
3. To examine the entrepreneurs and guests expectations from Boutique Hotels in Sri Lanka.
4. To develop a business models by integrating elements to drive Boutique Hotels in Sri Lanka for economic sustainability.
5. To discuss the implications of the research findings for the Sri Lankan Boutique Hotels.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Literature gap regarding the sustainability methodology for the Boutique hotel in the accommodation industry has been filled by the findings of this research. Key research problem of lack of a sustainable business model for the Boutique hotel industry has been answered with the successful development of the proposed methodology. Because the proposed model will be including most applicable key elements. These elements were developed after the analysis of the data and with the previous research.

Contribution to academia will be about a sustainable business model for the Boutique hotel operations in the long run. Current literature about the business models for the hotels was extended with this research paper finding in relation to the Boutique hotel sub segment. All the key elements that have previously been identified with the literature were further extended with this study.

Since the study is focusing on the Sri Lankan context, the first beneficial party will be Boutique hotel management and director boards in Sri Lanka. With the application of the proposed business model, boutique managements' will be able to make the Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka more competitive and more sustainable in the long-run. Every element in the proposed methodology customized according to the Boutique hotel service delivery requirements and was clearly explained how to define those elements when it comes to actual delivery. Further, those elements will allow Boutique hotel to achieve the business aims and objectives more efficiently and effectively. Adding more, with those aspects, the management and the director board will be getting a clear picture on driving the Boutique hotels to long term survival (Schneider and Spieth, 2013; Moingeon and Lehmann-Ortega, 2010; Alt and Zimmermann, 2001; Baden-Fuller and Morgan, 2010; Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2010; Demil and Lecocq, 2010; Fiet and Patel, 2008).

1.5 Assumptions

It has assumed that the selected sample will be representing the entire cohort of the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka to get a clear picture of expectations from the Boutique hotel performance. To facilitate this assumption, based on the industry expert advice, the most preferred and most attractive districts have been selected as the sample for this research.

Furthermore, it has assumed that the participant responses will be honest and truthful. To support that level of anonymity and confidentiality explained to the participants during the data collection. Adding more, it has assumed the senior personnel of the case study hotels will be the most suitable participants to represent the entrepreneurs of the case study hotels and guests who reside in the hotel more than one night by the time research is taking place will be the most suitable guest to understand the guest expectations.

Since the study focused on Business model canvas as the key model it was assumed that the elements in the business model canvas could be adopted to develop the proposed model with the findings. For that, related literature has applied along with the data. It has further assumed that by implementing a business model with the sustainable elements will be driving to the long-term sustainability of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. Adding more, data has gathered while assuming the external market conditions are smooth as expected to perform well in any normal business environment with 70% or more guest occupancy.

1.6 Structure of the Report

In this chapter the author has introduced an orientation for the research that has taken place. Clear outline has been given for the research gap and the key purposes of this research. All the relevant background information about the Sri Lanka Tourism sector and Boutique hotel sub sector have given. A justification for the research has been given by contextualizing the expected findings to the research gap. Furthermore, research aims, objectives and research questions have demonstrated which the frame for the research was.

The remaining chapters have organized with the recommended standards to follow in a doctorate level study. Chapter 2 identified and contextualized the applicable international and local literature to the study. Chapter 3 identified the research methodology which research was followed. Apart from that, Chapter 4 demonstrated the findings of the study along with the chapter 5 that is the detailed discussion of the findings. Finally, the conclusion highlighted the level of achievement of the objectives and the future recommendations.

CHAPTER 02 – LITRETURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to identify and review the relevant literature regarding sustainability, boutique hotels in international context and Sri Lankan context and business models. The first section will be an overview about Boutique hotels in international context and Sri Lankan context. There is a gap in availability of literature on the Sri Lankan Boutique hotel sector. However, the availability of literature in international context discussed the issues that are facing by the Boutique hotels now and some of the literature has given the focus to the Asian context that was used to understand the Sri Lankan context. Further, the real operational issues have been identified in terms of the growth and operations of Sri Lankan Boutique hotels.

Thereafter, attention was given to the meaning of sustainability. Adding more, the requirement of the sustainability focused business model and characteristics of such business models have identified and applied to the boutique hotel context.

Third section and fourth section is about the theoretical background focused on business models and business models that are existing in the accommodation sector. Gaps of operational aspects of those business models have followed in the same section. Further, the chapter focused on the key model that was used as a redeveloping model to develop the proposed model. The key model that is Business Model Canvas is also explained in terms of weaknesses when applying to this sub segment.

Final section identified the indicators for the performance toward sustainability in terms of the boutique hotel operations while reviewing the literature toward the end of the section.

2.2 An Overview of Boutique Hotels

In this section, an overview for the Boutique hotels in the international and Sri Lankan context have been given to highlight the current situation of the Boutique hotels. This is a continuation of the discussion about Sri Lanka tourism in section 1.1.

2.2.1 Current Setting of International Boutique Hotels

The term Boutique hotel came to the industry in 1980's with the commencement of personalized hotels in the UK and USA (Mun Lim and Endean, 2009; Albazzaz et al, 2003). The Blakes Hotel in South Kensington, London and the Bedford in Union Square, San Francisco are the first Boutique hotels which appeared under the Boutique hotel concept (Mun Lim and Endean, 2009; Albazzaz et al, 2003; Anhar, 2001). Growth of the Boutique hotel is a global phenomenon that is a trendsetter for changing travellers' tastes and behaviours (Arifin et al, 2018; Meng and Lay, 2012). Travellers' attention has gained by the Boutique hotels due to its differentiated product and service offering as a strategy (Arifin et al, 2018).

Travellers, nowadays expect more than the convenience and accessibility when it comes to the upscale hotels (Konrad and Ekiem, 2011). When planning trips travellers try to attach unique accommodation options to their travel plans (Kulcsár, 2014). Though many travellers prefer to stick on to the basic lodging facilities, there is a niche market for guests who need upscale, luxury and intimate lodging facilities (Cetin and Walls, 2016). According to the research done by McIntosh & Siggs (2005) Boutique hotel concepts being marketed in a manner where the experiences and the feelings are selling. Further, McIntosh & Siggs (2005); Van Hartesvelt, (2009) and Van Hartesvelt, (2006); Chandralal (2010) identified, majority of the Boutique hotels are developing their marketing strategies as a combination of a special features of the location, nature of the feeling and experience the guest can receive, unique facilities and host community to develop a concept story to the particular Boutique hotel development.

According to Kosar (2014) and Aksoy (2012), Boutique hotels can be defined as a luxury upscale service offering to a specified target market with intimate, exotic and personalized service offering. This definition was identified by many scholars (Eg.

McIntosh and Siggs, 2005; Henderson, 2011; Mun Lim and Edean, 2009). Adding more Boutique hotels identified as an emerging theme to the world tourism industry (Teo and Chang, 2008). In operation wise, as mentioned by Wang (2013) Boutique hotels are more profitable than the larger scale hotel operations. That is due to, 1. No costly maintenance, 2. Higher repeat guests, 3. Generating more revenue by styling the service offering to boutique manner, and 4. Easiness of facing the economic fluctuations. However, it is very important to maintain the innovation and adaptation process with the changes in the market place to stay on those benefits (Kurgun et al, 2011). The key characteristics of the boutique hotels can be identified in nine different elements (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005; Aksoy, 2012; Henderson, 2011; Olga, 2009; Horner and Swarbrooke, 2005; Rogerson, 2010). They are, 1. Size, 2. Intimate factor, 3. Design and creativity, 4. Trendiness, 5. Location, 6. Culture, 7. Service, 8. Food and beverages and 9. Specified customer base. Following is a detailed explanation of those elements to get a very clear view about this concept.

1. Size – In size wise, the Boutique hotels are smaller compared to the number of rooms (Rabontu and Niculescu, 2009). Different countries have categorized this term in different room numbers. However, in average Boutique hotels have an average of 10-50 rooms (Rabontu and Niculescu, 2009). Each room developed in a way to deliver a feeling of living space in a personalized manner rather than giving the feeling of hotel occupant to the guest (Rabontu and Niculescu, 2009).

2. Intimate factor – Boutique hotels customized the service offering to personalized level to meet each individual guest (Victorino et al, 2005). Intimate level and personalized service is a key reason that makes the target audience to be with the Boutique hotels, further distinguish the Boutique hotel from other accommodation options (De Klumbis, 2002). Distinctive level characteristics and making the guest feel a unique vibe are the part of the independent attitudes of the Boutique hotel. Apart from that, each Boutique hotel is trying to develop their own flavour to get the attention of the guests that guests may find only in Boutique hotel concepts (Aggett, 2007).

3. Design and creativity – Elegance, interior and architecture of the Boutique hotel are unique to the hotel itself to give a fabulous luxurious atmosphere to the guest (Shantha, 2018). Furthermore, creativity, designer decor and artistic creations adding more value to

the design of the Boutique hotel (Shantha, 2018). Upscale linens to the entire facility, luxurious amenities and high-end facilities are part of the design to make sure the guest is receiving super comfort with the personalized level (Victorino et al, 2005). Finally, when it comes to designing part of the hotel, it will be a one of a kind and guests will not be able to find the same design from another hotel (Shantha, 2018).

4. Trendiness – Boutique hotels are considered as a trendy hotel that may offer the service with the modern lifestyle mixed with the inherited culture (Gokdeniz, 2018). Off the track service offering, out of box thinking and funky and fun based service delivery are key characteristics of Boutique hotels compared to the larger scale hotels (Gokdeniz, 2018). Combination of the modern technology to create a convenience to the guest is a crucial part to the Boutique hotel service offering (Dzia-Uddin et al, 2018; Lituchy and Rail, 2000; Kleinrichert et al, 2012). Further, due to the modern lifestyle changes the emotional bonding can be done through the modern facilities which the Boutique hotel are offering (Mcintosh and Siggs, 2005; Berry and Carbone, 2007).

5. Location – Modern travelers still put the location as the number one in the priority list during the travel planning (Khosravi et al, 2014). When it comes to determining the location of the Boutique hotel either it will be urban areas to cater business travellers, or it is a lively location to cater the leisure travellers (Aggett, 2007). Most interestingly, the majority of the Boutique hotels are nestled in neighbourhoods of hidden locations in main tourist attractions. Further, the highest attention is gained from the guests if the hotel is tucked away in a corner of a hidden part of a destination (Gokdeniz, 2018). Good location is always determined not only with convenience, but also with trendiness, authenticity, nature and heritage (Khosravi et al, 2012). Furthermore, though the Boutique hotels are located in residential areas the hotel is located in a way to move away from the crowd and noise (Gokdeniz, 2018).

6. Culture – The authentic cultural impression of the Boutique hotel with a combination of local sense to the service delivery is a part of the Boutique hotel (Jones et al, 2009). Further, a strong commitment for the local community is a part of the operations of the Boutique hotels (Kadir et al, 2019). Boutique hotels are trying to combine locality of the hosting community by incorporating the locally sourced materials to the service delivery

(Malcheva, 2019b). Apart from that, themed Boutique hotels develop the guest experience based on the promised value (Wang, 2013).

7. Service – Ultra personalized and intimate five-star service delivery is the anchored characteristic of the Boutique hotel in the guest mindset (Van Hartesvelt, 2006). Uplifted superior level intimate service delivery makes the differentiation among the Boutique hotel itself and among the other hotel categories (De Klumbis, 2002). This individualized service offering is delivering with the high-end facilities and value-added services. All these are bespoke high-end facilities in the industry (Gokdeniz, 2018).

8. Food and beverages – High quality and authentic cuisine with a luxurious atmosphere make the dining experience of the guests' more intimate and luxurious in Boutique hotels (Gokdeniz, 2018). Stylish bar, modern facilities, personalized detectable menu and cocktails are making the differentiation to the general service offering (Gokdeniz, 2018).

9. Specified customer base – This unique service delivery is targeting a niche market who are seeking luxury upscale personalized service delivery. However, not specifically to a particular group, it can be business or vacation (Mun Lim and Endean, 2009). However, according to Kurgun et al (2011) Boutique hotels are mainly aiming for the 20-55 years old group who are in high social and high spending groups.

2.2.2 Current Scenario Boutique Hotels in Sri Lanka

According to the literature, there are valuable growth opportunities available for Sri Lanka to go ahead with the Boutique hotel concept. The growth of this industry explained by (Gokdeniz, 2018) in terms of culture, location, hospitality, natural establishments etc... As mentioned by the author in the introduction chapter the contribution to the national economy through the tourism related service is increasing (Selvanathan, 2007; Fernando and Jayawardane, 2013). Welgamage (2015) examined the Sri Lankan Tourism Economics that revealed that the tourism contribution to the economy is having a positive relationship and more research is required to make this industry more productive and effective.

Sri Lankan Boutique hotels can be defined as exploring the local feeling with intimate, exotic and luxury service offering (SLTDA, 2019b). Refer Appendix B for the detailed version of the Boutique hotel characteristics for Sri Lanka, which is defined by the SLTDA. Further, Sri Lankan Boutique hotels are offering the service as a combination of the local community with the modern luxury concepts (Sewwandi, 2017). Moreover, every Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka has their own flavour when it comes to the service offering (Shantha, 2018). Apart from that, the majority of the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka offer international standards of the intimate, personalized and luxury service offering (Boutiques Sri Lanka, 2016).

SLTDA has defined the Boutique hotel concept in the same manner as the international definition of the Boutique hotel. Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka showing a significant growth with the competition and rise of tourist arrivals (Silva, 2017a; Wettasinghe, 2018). Along with the industry growth rate the Boutique hotel development also shows a significant growth rate after the post war era. As mentioned by SLTDA (2019b) there are 35 registered Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka in 2020 and 24 Boutique hotels were operating in 2015. However, an interestingly unregistered category having more than 400 boutique hotels in the year 2019 (Reddot Tours, 2019). This growth can further be confirmed by recent investments by local and international investors. Recently Global Player Hilton entered into an agreement with a local company for investment of LKR 15billion and 10% investment goes to the Boutique hotel (Daily FT, 2017). Apart from that, Local market leader Jetwing announced in August 2017 they are narrowing down their operations more in to small scale luxury offerings in coming years by focusing on more untouched markets, further they have mentioned in coming months they are expecting to open Boutique hotels in Unawatuna, Putuwil and Jaffna (Wettasinghe, 2017a). Moreover, award winning Teardrop Hotels Sri Lanka announced their strong focus on Boutique hotels by launching the latest addition in Dikoya “Camellia Hills” Boutique hotel (Wonder of Asia, 2017).

However, there is a phenomenal growth of the other accommodation categories in Sri Lanka Tourism as well. Therefore, SLTDA has divided the accommodation sector along with the other establishments as formal and informal sector (Fernando, 2017b; Dias, 2017; Wettasinghe, 2017b; Hotel Sigiriya, 2018, SLTDA, 2019a). Formal sector is the registered category including Hotels and supplementary establishments (Ellepola, 2017).

All the unregistered hotels fall under the informal sector (Ellepola, 2017). Though the formal sectors are getting regulated yearly, the informal sector is not being regulated by the authorities (Ellepola, 2017). However, the formal sector list is maintained by the SLTDA (Refer Appendix D) and there is no proper list of accommodation units for the informal sector. But many independent travel agents are maintaining their own lists (Refer Appendix E) of those accommodation units since most of the informal sector establishment use these platforms for the room leads (Ellepola, 2017). More than 400 Boutique hotels are in the informal category who have not registered as Boutique hotels to avoid the regulations and these creating huge threats toward the formal category due to manipulation of the practices (Boutiques Sri Lanka, 2016).

As mentioned in SLTDA (2019a) annual report the night stays of the tourists in graded hotels and boutique hotels are 50% from the total arrivals. Which indicates that the rest of the 50% of the arrivals are attracted to the supplementary establishments and informal sector. Following table 6 shows the night stays of the tourists' arrival.

Table 6: Night stays from the total tourist arrivals in 2018

	2018	2017
Hotels and Boutique Hotels (Formal)	25,204,996	23,068,836
Classified hotels, unclassified hotels and Boutique hotel	12,608,044 [50.02%]	11,609,886 [50.32%]
Supplementary accommodation – Registered smaller guest houses and homestay units	6,805,139 [26.99%]	6,204,124 [26.89%]
Unregistered informal establishments	5,791,813 [22.97%]	5, 254, 824 [22.77%]

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2018); SLTDA (2019a)

As above table 6 indicates the percentage of number of nights in classified hotels, unclassified hotels and Boutique hotels in 2018 has gone down compared to 2017. In the same time, this percentage has increased in the supplementary category and unregistered category. This can identify as a negative growth rate for the classified hotels, unclassified hotels and Boutique hotels. Daily FT (2019) mentioned in their news article that this is mainly because of the competitive pressure from the other informal sector establishments. Daily Mirror (2016) and Ellepola (2017) highlighted the importance of a

study to identify the key reasons behind why incoming tourists prefer informal establishments such as homestay units.

But current status about Sri Lankan Boutique hotels indicates that Sri Lankan Boutique hotels are deviating away from its core definition due to a range of factors (Gunasekara, 2017). Furthermore, the defined standards are not meeting up by the term of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka that has automatically directed the entire industry to sustainable issues (Ranasinghe, 2015b; Gunasekara, 2017). Adding to the Gunasekara (2017) indicated the majority of accommodation properties that are known as Boutique hotels have developed by upgrading ancestral home or middle class hotels with minor level or no understanding about the Boutique hotel concept. Number of researches that carried out regarding Boutique hotels are very low and the identification of the in Sri Lankan and South Asian context also minimum in many tourism and hospitality related studies (Giesen et al, 2010; Hartesvelt, 2006; Schneider and Spieth, 2013; Johnson et al, 2008; Ratnayake and Kasim, 2012; Moingeon and Lehmann-Ortega, 2010; Alt and Zimmermann, 2001; Nithiyandam, 2012; Demil and Lecocq, 2010; Baden-Fuller & Morgan, 2010; Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2010; Fiet and Patel, 2008). In over all, industry is now experiencing a higher competition, higher threat of new entrants and larger substitution effect (Miththapala, 2019).

Gunasekara (2017) described the Sri Lankan Hospitality sector facing a range of difficulties in long-term survival. Based on the Gunasekara (2017) book about the Sri Lankan boutique hotels and hospitality industry, they have suggested these sustainable difficulties are applicable to the Boutique hotel industry as well. However, the author would like to identify the sustainable issues which Boutique hotels are facing in Sri Lanka as, 1. Threat of rising homestay units, 2. Deteriorating quality of the hotels, 3. Lack of innovation, 4. Aging rules and regulations, 5. Arrivals of less spending tourists, 6. Less guest satisfaction, 7. Lack of human resources, 8. Price inflation, 9. Less Competitiveness, 10. Confused positioning, 11. Less occupancy (Gunasekara, 2017; Hotel Developers, 2016; Daily news, 2017; Rathnayake, 2014; Miththapala, 2017; Gunawaradane, 2017; Ukwatte, 2017; Laksiri, 2007; Saleem et al, 1996; Rathnayake and Kasim, 2011; Pieris, 2014; Nithiyanaandam, 2012; David and Laura, 1996; Bader, 2005 and Morrison and Conway, 2007; Daily FT, 2014; Karunarathna and Ranasinghe, 2014). Following is a detail explanation of those sustainable issues.

a. Threat of Rising Home stay Units

According to Ranasinghe (2015a) research on homestay units in Sri Lanka, he has discovered the rapid supply of the homestay units changing the established dynamics of the Sri Lankan tourism context. This was further strengthened with rising cost of accommodation in graded hotels compared to South Asian destinations (Fernando, 2017a). With the study of homestay units in Ella Sri Lanka by Karunarathen and Ranasinghe (2015a) confirmed that the homestay units are getting popular in Sri Lanka. Wickramaratne and Karunasena (2014) further identified accommodation preference of the inbound tourists are now deviating away from the established accommodation units to the homestay units. Furthermore, Padlee et al (2013) observed that the homestay units are misusing the homestay unit terminology and driving the rest of the accommodation establishments to sustainable threat. Due to this reason, the misusing homestay units fill Boutique hotels guests' expectations. Therefore, that is driving the Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka to a low performance in financial and non-financial elements (Wickramaratne and Karunasena, 2014).

b. Deteriorating Quality of the Hotels

Jawardane (2013) identified in his research that 72% of the hotel rooms in Sri Lanka either low quality or below the line. Further, Wickramaratne and karunasena (2015) study about the inbound tourists revealed rising opportunities in the market place is unable to grab by the accommodation sector due to the contradiction between the expectation and the actual delivery. In Sandaruwani and Gnanapala (2016) study on sustainable tourism development, they discovered ungraded hotels manipulate the promised service when delivering the accommodation services to the tourists that proved the above-mentioned situation. This situation needs to be addressed by the properly defined standards as soon as possible to sustain the industry as the competitive level (Sandaruwani and Gnanapala, 2016). Adding to this Herath and Munasinghe (2016) proposed hotels in Sri Lanka needs to focus more on the quality standards with defined standards to attract the destination oriented and concept-oriented guests to the hotels. Later, Fernando et al (2016) comes out with a solution on how Sri Lankan hotels can establish quality standards to overcome this challenge.

c. Lack of Innovation

According to the explanations of Fernando et al (2016), Sri Lanka still is not attracting high-end tourists. This has caused the Boutique hotel to slow down the innovation process. Therefore, innovation and new product development of the Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka is not effective enough to create a hype to the market. However, innovation needs to be done in a manner to sustain the existing market and to attract new guests to the hotels that are still a loophole in Sri Lankan tourism (Fernando, 2017c; Fernando et al, 2014; Enz and Siguaw, 2003). Furthermore, Renovation and refurbishment processes have not completed according to a standard in Sri Lanka that has created guest dissatisfaction in the long run (Ekanayake et al, 2018; Silva, 2017c). Therefore, as mentioned by Ekanayake and Gnanapala (2016) with proper policy and an operationalization standard, tourists' behaviour can change according to the requirements of the hotel.

d. Aging Rules and Regulations

Rules and regulations of the industry are aging and need a reformation to face the current market context (Daily TF, 2020a). Unauthorized activities, unethical activities, illegal activities etc... are happening in the marketplace due to the above-mentioned aging rules and regulations (Rathnayake and Wijesundara, 2015). This has led to loss of the potentiality of the Sri Lankan tourism industry and the tourist attraction compared to the other Asian destinations in the region (Fernando, 2017a; Fernando, 2017c). Further, the rise of the informal sector and rise of unregistered Boutique hotels are a result of this (Miththapala, 2013).

e. Arrival of Less Spending Tourists

Samaranayake et al (2013) identified tourist's spending in Sri Lanka are reduced and growth rate also showing a very low-level progress. Semasinghe (2016) defined this situation as rising budget travellers to the country. This is because informal sector and unregistered sector Boutique hotels are marketing themselves by manipulating the key meaning of the Boutique hotels (Chandrasena, 2019; Daily FT, 2018). Due to this situation the majority of the hotels are facing revenue management issues with lack of future

forecasting (Fernando et al, 2016). Though the Boutique hotels have established in the island with high expectations, selling the rooms became a challenge due to the higher room cost. Recent past, it was evident that for survival purposes the majority of Boutique hotels have opened the spaces to the local market as well for a reduced room rate.

f. Less Guest Satisfaction

Herath and Munasinghe (2017) have observed the guest satisfaction in Bandarawela Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka. Results indicated that the guest dissatisfaction occurred towards the service is due to the lack of understanding about the tangible and intangible elements and how those elements can drive to satisfy the guests. Oliver (1980a) and Oliver (1980b) identified and proposed a model for the guest satisfaction based on the expectation and perceived performance. He has further suggested service industries need to focus on this gap to gain higher guest satisfaction. In order to drive the hotels for long-term survival guest satisfaction should exceed (Carev, 2008). However, guest expectations are not met by the majority of the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka (Athula, 2014; Lakmali and Warnakulasooriya, 2014) since it is a mix of registered and unregistered Boutique hotels as an industry (Chandrasena, 2019). Hilal and Mubarak (2016) observed this situation. Study was about brand loyalty and brand equity in Eastern hotels in Sri Lanka. Where they have confirmed the brand loyalty and brand equity is getting negative due to lack of the quality standards by some of the selected hotels.

g. Lack of Human Resources

Semasinghe (2016) carried out a study regarding the tourism development in post war Sri Lanka. He has discovered lack of skill in human resources, lack of attention to the development of the human resources and less experienced human resources affects the hotel operations adversely in Sri Lanka. Gamage (2016) mentioned a clear operationalization method is required from the hotels itself to bridge this gap to cater the government 2020-yearly tourist arrival target. Further, Gamage (2016) mentioned remaining experienced staff are acquired by the international brands and chains who are entering the market and small-scale hotels are facing this challenge more adversely including Boutique hotels (Perera et al, 2016; Silva and Madhushani, 2017).

h. Price Inflation

Sri Lankan hotels are facing another weakness of increasing the price of accommodation and food compared to other Asian destinations (Semasinghe, 2016). This has taken the industry to a less competitive status in the international market. Less value-added service, lack of high quality facilities etc... has worsened this situation (Fernando et al, 2013). Kularatne (2017) suggested demand and supply management need to follow a methodical approach to gain the revenue opportunities in the marketplace. He has suggested a model for optimal resource utilization for sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka. However, still the Boutique hotel application has not come up with any solution so far. Adding more, price competition exists in the marketplace due to overcrowding of Boutique hotels in selected destinations because of registered and unregistered Boutique hotels (Mendis, 2011, Miththapala, 2015b). Guests are getting over charged or manipulated because of this price war and leading the entire industry to less sustainability in the longrun (Adaderana, 2013).

i. Less Competitiveness

Assaf et al (2015) mentioned in their findings locational factors are one of most important critical factors for hotels. Further, they have mentioned host destination factors needed to strategically position the hotel to position in the target market competitively. Among the locational factors, they have mentioned 1. Hospitality of the nation, 2. Infrastructure and 3. Peace and war as the most important destination factors. Though Sri Lanka has gained all these three factors, still the competitive advantage has not yet gained (Perera, 2019). Jayasuriya and Guoping (2017) explained the Sri Lanka situation by confirming the competitiveness of the Sri Lanka further can improve and hotels can gain the opportunities by focusing on the strategic factors that may increase the destination management. When it comes to the Boutique hotels, some of the Boutique hotels have identified as homestay units that established in urban areas with less attention to the location competitiveness that should include the Boutique hotel concept (Miththapala and Tam, 2017). Ultimately driving toward less competitiveness in the longrun due to the manipulation of the guests (Miththapala, 2019).

j. Confused Positioning

Disparities between the government positioning strategy and private owned hotels' positioning strategies leaves the target consumer mindset confused. Liyanage and Jayawardane (2013) evaluated the positioning strategies of the government and suggested a new positioning strategy to be followed which clearly communicated the appeal of Sri Lanka tourism. Hotels needs to follow the same kind of positioning strategy that has higher credibility and appeal which is missing at the moment (Ranasinghe, 2015b). It is recommended to identify all the Boutique hotels in an unregistered category and position all of them with a clear ranking system to increase guests' convenience with the selection (Ellepola, 2017).

k. Less Occupancy

Fernando et al (2016) mentioned in their study on Sri Lanka tourism that the occupancy ratio of the hotels is low. Hotels are struggling with different strategic initiatives to survive in the short and medium run. This occupancy rate has gone down due to the intense internal competition among the existing players. Bulankulama (2017) study reveals hotels trying to beat the competition by adding competitive advantages against the rivals. Adding to this Wij (2011) mention that Sri Lanka needs to expect more internal competition with the government target of higher tourist arrival. However, the application of the competitive advantages to face the competition still needs to improve in Sri Lankan hotels (Bulankulama, 2017). As identified by Cai et al (2000) overall profitability of the hotels are going down with these reasons in the longrun. Lokuhetty et al (2013) answered to this context by proposing a shared vision for the tourism industry. Since the industry focuses on individual operational agendas, the sustainability of the industry and sub industries are now in threat of survival.

l. Lack of Strategic Focus and out dated Initiatives

Mr. Rathnayake the managing director for one of the first and pioneering boutique hotel in Sri Lanka which is Saman Villas mentioned that Sri Lankan Boutique hotels does not have a clear strategic path in value creation and objectives achievement to reap the benefits of the rising industry (Rathnayake, 2014). This has further been confirmed by the

Vox and Com (2012) strategy report saying that the majority of the Boutique hotels escape restrictive classification standards and operate in differentiated standards that may affect the industry in the long run. This is especially identifiable in the unregistered category that led them and the registered category to loss of competitiveness in the longrun (Daily FT, 2014; Daily FT, 2018). Further, Nunes and Breene (2011) mentioned that the modern-day executives should reinvent the business models for the current situation in order to jump to the next capability. This is highly applicable to the Boutique hotels also. Sri Lankan Boutique hotel concept is still remaining insignificant while star class hotels are performing well. Boutique hotel occupancy rate in 2014 was 75.4% and it was 71.5% in 2018 (SLTDA, 2015; SLTDA, 2019a).

However, though the Boutique hotel sector has above-mentioned drawbacks, industry shows a high potentiality in the long-run (Semasinghe, 2016). That is due to the rising Asian tourism destinations and entrance of international hotel brand names to Sri Lanka (Jayasuriya and Guoping, 2017). According to Ivanov and Ivanova (2016), the destination competitiveness is to be increased with the international chain participation in the destination. The opportunities that have opened to the Sri Lankan hotels are the same as the conclusion of the Ivanov and Ivanova (2016) study. Adding more Rajapakshe (2016) proved with data that Sri Lanka having a direct relationship with these international investments and tourist arrival to Sri Lanka. Evidences indicated up to a certain level the Boutique hotel have reached to gain the opportunities that are available in the industry. But, the remaining potentiality needs to be captured by the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka by clearing the gaps which have been identified (Silva, 2017b) to make the Boutique hotels sector sustainable in the long term.

In conclusion, above weaknesses led Boutique hotels to a risk in achievement of financial and non-financial aspects. Over all these are affecting the long-term sustainability as well. These identified points need to be filled by a defined business model in terms of economic sustainability. Next section highlights the meaning of sustainability.

2.3 Sustainability

Sustainability means achieving the needs, wants of the present market situation without compromising the capacity to meet the future needs, and wants (Purvis et al, 2019).

Further, Purvis et al (2019) mentioned sustainability divided to, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and societal sustainability. Combination of these three is an essential for any firm to have long-term survival (Cvelbar and Dwyer, 2013). That is applicable to the hospitality industry as well (Jayawardena et al, 2013; Jones et al, 2016; Rodríguez-Antón et al, 2012; Cochrane, 2007).

Agreeing with the key meaning of sustainability Bader (2005) explained boutique hotel sustainability is concerning not only the environment and social wellbeing, but also the economic sustainability as well. By considering the Bader (2005) argument and key aim of the research, economic sustainability for the long-term survival of boutique hotels in Sri Lanka is the key focus of this research.

2.3.1 Importance of Economic Sustainability for Boutique Hotels

According to Zaiton et al (2016) and Hobson and Essex (2001) economic sustainability is an important issue currently faced by many of the business organizations in the world. Economic sustainability means support for the economic growth of the firm to be profitable in the long term (Zaiton et al, 2016, Hobson and Essex, 2001). This includes good governance, risk management, profitable and ethical business practices and compliance (Zaiton et al, 2016, Hobson and Essex, 2001). As mentioned by Mensah (2006) and Masau and Prideaux (2003) importance of the sustainable business practices were identified by many hotels worldwide. Adding to that Mihalič et al (2012) mentioned for the long-term sustainability hotels needs to consider about the asset optimization, application of cost saving methods, motivating the human resources of the hotel, delighting the guests and achieving the investor expectations that is the financial element of sustainability domain. Laine (2005) identified from their study about the company sustainability issues, that the majority of the companies in the world are struggling due to economic sustainable issues. Further, Lo (2010) discovered sustainable issues occurred due to lack of long term methodologies to face sustainable issues.

Furthermore, Sangwichien and Jaroenwisan (2017); Sharma and Sharma (2016); Kuo et al (2014); Cetin and Walls (2016); Firat et al (2014), Sørensen and Jensen (2015) indicated the level of awareness of the managerial level staff of the hotels to link the hotels to the guests satisfaction and to drive toward the achievement of the financial and non-financial

targets. However, still they are lacking behind the mechanism to drive the process toward the sustainable future. Chesbrough (2010); Johnson et al (2008); Christensen et al (2016); França et al (2017) have done research to find out the reasons regarding the non-acceptance of the traditional business models to the modern business environment. They have revealed a range of factors that can be considered when re-developing the traditional business models to sustainable methodologies. Over the past few decades, hoteliers have changed their focus to more sustainable hotel operations (Masau and Prideaux, 2003). These sustainable methodologies can gain financial and non-financial benefits to the organizations (Zaiton et al, 2016; Mensah, 2006; Griffin et al, 2002).

Mushrooming Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka needed a solution for economic sustainability when it comes to the implementation of the business models (Sewwandi, 2017; Jayadasa, 2016, Herath and Fernando, 2019) but limited studies were took place regarding this sub categories (Lwin, 2013; Ozarlan, 2014). That is due to certain factors compared to the other accommodation options such as, 1. Different operational elements, 2. Different guest requirements and expectations, 3. Different financial elements. Boutique hotels operating to their maximum effort to deliver an authentic experience to the guests to achieve sustainability (Jones et al, 2013). As per the research by Tisca et al (2015); Göğüş and Apak (2017); Mouradian (2015); Cetin and Walls (2016) and Fuentes-Moraleda et al (2019) it was evident that the entrepreneurs who are in to the Boutique hotel operations are looking forward for a sustainable solution to make the operations more economically sustainable.

2.3.2 Challenges toward Economic Sustainability in Boutique Hotels

With the research, findings Cvelbar and Dwyer (2013) indicated that achieving above-mentioned sustainability has become challenging to the hotels due to a range of reasons. These challenges are further becoming toward the boutique hotels (Saleem et al, 1996; Rathnayake and Kasim, 2011; Pieris, 2014; Nithiyanaandam, 2012; David and Laura, 1996; Bader, 2005; Morrison and Conway, 2007; Jayawardena, 2013). Among those reasons Dos et al (2017) identified; 1. Lack of sustainable practices, Buckley (2012) discovered 2. Economical, Legal, Technological and Social changes, Ponnareddy et al (2017) pointed out 3. Changes of buyer behavior and perception, Pan (2017) indicated 4. Rising competition, Font and McCabe (2017) mentioned 5. Market development and sustainable

product development, further Pan (2017) pointed out 6. Changes in the service delivery patterns, Do Nascimento (2017) found 7. Changes of stakeholder perception, Obrador (2017) emphasized Political changes, as the main reasons.

2.3.3 Characteristics of Economic Sustainability in Boutique Hotels

Scott (2008) indicated the meaning of the sustainability of any hotel including Boutique hotels using a set of factors; 1. Price, 2. Location attraction, 3. Design and attractiveness, 4. Value added service, 5. Cleanliness, 6. Relaxation opportunities. Adding to that Cvelbar and Dwyer (2013) mentioned 7. Economic Performance, 8. Environmental concern, 9. Persic et al (2013); indicated Managing competition, 10. According to Jayawardena et al (2013) long term strategic planning, 11. Horng et al (2017) innovation, 12. Bogetić et al (2017) quality management, 13. Belias et al (2017) managing human resources, 14. Ali and Amin (2014) Managing Guest and 15. Phillips et al (2016) online presence of the hotel, are some additional factors which the author has identified which can relate to the meaning of sustainability in Boutique Hotels. Following is a brief explanation about those identified elements.

a. Price

Prud'homme et al (2016) completed a study regarding the price, value and satisfaction. As per their explanations price needs to be maintained in a way that the company delivers its promised value to the client while satisfying the client. Adding to those Sidali et al (2017) confirmed sustainability could gain with best suite price. Therefore, according to Hu et al (2009) this positive relationship between the price, value and satisfaction directly affects the sustainability of the boutique hotels.

b. Location attraction

Traditionally, boutique hotels are located in established destinations and marketing themselves based on the competitive advantages of the destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Liu, 2003; Valeri and Fadlon, 2016; Anuar et al, 2016). However, according to the study done by Butowski (2017) the destination sustainability should link with social, natural, psychological, emotional, cultural and economic factors. If the destination or else

the location of the hotel can link those elements to the boutique hotel service offerings an enhanced sustainability can expect in the long term (Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Aksu et al, 2016, Hall et al, 2015).

c. Design and attractiveness

Innovative hotel designs, embedding cultural aspects, environmentally free hotel concepts, technological adoption etc... Are among the most concerned elements in boutique hotel sustainability when it comes to the construction part of the hotels in the modern era (Baek, 2016; Vij and Vij, 2016; Pavia et al, 2016). Therefore, this design or the development should move beyond than maintaining as a museum, it should go up to daily usage level to have sustainability.

d. Value added service

Enhanced and focused guest services, consistency in service, efficiency in service, maintaining the quality standards and employee commitment are among key elements for sustainability in the current business environment (Legrand et al, 2017; Goodman, 2000). Those elements should integrate to the value added services of the hotels on priority basis (Subramanian et al, 2016). Since the competition of the industry driving through the value added service, modern guests are changing the behavioural patterns on selecting the hotels based on the value added services and integrated elements to the value they pay (Cheng, 2013). Therefore, as mentioned by Sabiote-Ortiz et al (2016) Ding et al (2016) and Amin et al (2013) the value added service should have more attention than now in the business model for the sustainable future in boutique hotels.

e. Relaxation opportunities

Prior understanding of the guests' requirements and perception of relaxation options in the hotel, as in health and wellness programmes are very important to the sustainability of any hotel (Patricia, 2016). Matching the daily lifestyle of the guests' to the service delivery of the hotels will develop a unique position in the target market mind set to move to a higher position compared to the competitors. These options can be, fitness

programmes, differentiated food and beverage menu, yoga, advanced wellness activities etc. (Smith and Stewart, 2014).

f. Economic Performance

The key performance metrics such as, occupancy rate, revenue per room, gross profit per room etc... needs to perform up to the expected level by building an interconnection between all these elements to be sustainable in the market (Yang and Cai, 2016). Further, Kala and Bagri (2014) indicated all the key initiatives needed to align to the performance measurements to reach the targets of the hotel.

g. Environmental concern

Environmental concern is one of the commonly discussed topics in the modern hospitality industry due to its impact on guest loyalty, guest satisfaction, cost opportunities, revenue impact and most importantly due to environmental disadvantages (Shieh et al, 2017; Li et al, 2017). Therefore, sustainability and hotels activities on green practices have a strong and positive relationship. This is another pillar in the key meaning of sustainability, but this pillar needs to link to the economic feasibility of the hotel to develop competitive advantages to the boutique hotel (Holden, 2016).

h. Managing competition

Ling et al (2015) and Solnet et al (2016b) mentioned with the strong demand for the hotel rooms the competition among the boutique hotels have increased. According to Viglia et al (2016) and Enz et al (2016), the completion can be analysed simply by the price and the segment. Hotels need to manage the competition effectively and competition related issues need to answer efficiently (Becerra et al, 2013) to avoid hotels getting less sustainability. With the findings of the Mathews (2000) mentioned, defined matrices are required to manage these pressures. Therefore, if the rivals can manage with the corrective measurements the sustainability of the hotels will not be an issue.

i. Innovation

Innovation has become the heart of the success of any hotel in the present business environment (Göğüş et al, 2013). Horng et al (2016); Hall and Gössling (2013) and Gössling et al (2009) indicated service innovation, procedure innovation, system innovation and innovations in competitive advantages making the hotels highly potential with revenue opportunities in relation to long term sustainability. As mentioned by Horng et al (2016) sustainability through the service innovation should be considered more in an effective and efficient way along with the existing practices for the long term survival of any hotel.

j. Quality management

Similar to the other service organizations, boutique hotels also implement a range of tactics to enhance the quality of the service delivery to gain higher competitive advantage and sustainability against the rivals (Mok et al, 2013; Alharb et al, 2016, Frank, 1995). Adding to that Alharb et al (2016) mentioned quality included sustainability will be gaining superior guest value that could be a competitive advantage in the longrun. Similar to these Benavides-Velasco et al (2016) mentioned no longer the quality is an issue, now that is a strategy to gain sustainability.

k. Managing human resources

Workforce management and employment has become the heart of sustainability in the hospitality sector (Baum et al, 2016). Adding to that Sikora and Ferris (2014) these practices needs to drive the organization to achieve the critical success factors of the hotel. Therefore, as mentioned by Solnet et al (2015) and Nieves and Quintana (2016) the sustainable HR practices need to apply to each level of the hotel. However, prior to application to each level, sustainable practices and systems need to develop while focusing on the company strategic focus (Boella and Goss, 2013).

l. Long term strategic planning

Cvelbar and Dwyer (2013) indicated long term planning is a crucial element to any organization to reach the aims and objectives with long-term sustainability. Apart from that, systems, processes and procedures need to develop and implement according to this long-term plan to reach the hotel sustainability (Nieves and Segarra, 2015; Hilman, and Kaliappen, 2014). Phillips and Moutinho (2014) mentioned the hotel will be able to drive to the hotel's vision with these elements, further as explained by the Sandada et al (2014) action plan is required for this drive.

m. Managing the guest

Satisfaction of the guest and delighting them by delivering a superior guest value is a critical success factor for any hotel to achieve the long-term sustainability (Ali and Amin, 2014). Furthermore, the sustainability of any hotel depends on the positioning of the brand in the target market mindset and level of familiarity and favourability which the guests have against the hotel (Rahimi and Kozak, 2017; Jani and Han, 2014). Adding to these Liat et al (2014) indicated this relationship would create guest loyalty that would make the guests retain in the hotel for a long term. As mentioned by Cvelbar and Dwyer (2013) all the key activities should configure around the guests to delight them for the hotel's long-term survival.

n. Online Presence

Being online and reviewing, the hotel online performance has become a novel concept to the industry in the recent past (Phillips et al, 2016). However, as mentioned by De Pelsmacker et al (2018) identification of guest needs and wants is a very important element in any form of nature to go ahead with digital marketing. Therefore, the online presence to any hotel has become a critical success factor that is leading to sustainability of the hotels (Law and Hsu, 2006). In that case, strong attention should pay to online marketing, online presence in all the platforms, online reviews and comments from the guests and online activities of the competitors (Ye et al, 2009; Phillips et al, 2015; Noone et al, 2011).

2.4 Achieving Economic Sustainability through Business Models

Business model can be a set of practices which guide a company for the operational success (DaSilva and Trkman, 2014; Jones et al, 2016). As a matter of fact, business model, could be the defined standard on how to operate a specified company to long term success, or it can be the essentials for the success whether the company is a new player or an established company (DaSilva and Trkman, 2014; Drakulevski and Nakov, 2014; Kandampully, 2006; Jones et al, 2013). Thus, clearing the business model definition in relation to the applying company is essential (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Teece, 2010; Kandampully, 2006). Adding to that a clear business model should explain how the company works. This business model needs to identify who is the guest, what do they expect, how the company generates money, how to survive in the marketplace, and how to deliver value while generating profit (Kandampully, 2006). Mihalič et al (2012) investigated the correlation between the hotel operation and sustainability and found that if sub sectors can develop a customized sustainable business model for the operations the possibility of getting survive with the market changes are higher than the hotel operations which follow generalized sustainable practices. Berezan et al (2013) and Hitchcock (2009) examined the impact of those sustainable practices to the hotel operations. He identified, with a customized sustainable model, guest satisfaction, employee satisfaction, financial and other non-financial elements performances are increased.

Morris et al (2005) mentioned a suitable business model need to identify which can implement the latest technological development, macro and micro environmental changes, consumer behavior changes and competitor behavior. Evans et al (2017); Teece (2018); Rauter et al (2017) mentioned based on existing business models customized version of business model for the sub industries need to develop to make the business model more sustainable. Further, Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart (2011); Amit and Zott (2012); Teece (2010); Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart (2010) added more points for that by saying, powerful business models in this nature will create incremental demand towards the business model. According to the views of Tallman et al (2018); Bereznoy (2019) and Loon and Chik (2019) outperforming the industry rivals with more customized approach and innovative concepts will add more power to the business model. Michelli

(2008); Huckestein and Duboff (1999); Jones et al (2016); Jones et al, 2013 and Herrera (2016) identified why, hotels need business model saying that the business model will helps to align all the stakeholders, resources and other intangible aspects around the boundaries of the company to reach to the target. This aligning cannot be implemented with the generalized version of a business model since the elements in the business model will be general or standardized elements.

Thus, highlighting the fact, sometimes it is hard to develop the most applicable business model for long-term survival. Some authors stated that successful business models represent better results than exploring new business models as alternatives (Jones et al, 2013). However, specific and unique industries require a defined business model, which can replace the old-style business model while creating new era and standards to the industry.

Based on the Dincer et al (2016) and Jones et al (2013) article on Boutique hotel operations, the author would like to get the attention for the requirement of a business model for boutique hotels as a sustainable solution. Dincer et al (2016) mentioned in their articles that the Boutique hotel needs a customized business model and an operational model. Further, they have mentioned this development needs to be done through proper research activities by identifying the requirement of the industry. There is a gap in the literature in terms of application of the business models to the Boutique hotel for sustainability since the academic papers about the same concern are practically non-existing. Due to the non-existence of sustainable business models Goorah and Panchoo (2017) discovered many Boutique hotels have shown failed financial and non-financial performances.

Spieth et al (2014); Johnson et al (2008); Osterwalder et al (2005) and Formica and Kothari (2008) studied the role of the traditional business model on how to face the future challenges. Their studies revealed traditional elements in the business models are now eroding in relation to the latest developments in the marketplace. To the business models and how they respond to the market changes Diaconu and Dutu (2017) selected a few hotels. They have discovered business model innovation is taking place already, but it is a challenging task since hospitality trade is rapidly changing. This was further confirmed by Ghezzi and Ghezzi (2017); Reijonen et al (2016); Kavadias et al (2016) saying the

business model needs to move ahead with a customized driving approach. According to Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė (2015), this driving approach needs to go ahead with the latest market developments, and not the traditional elements in a business model. Moreover, Goebel et al (2017); Reijonen et al (2016); Pozo et al (2016); Melissen et al (2016); Devang et al (2017); Salvioni (2016) and Andreini and Bettinelli (2017) stated in their studies that, redevelopment of the business model needs to be implemented in the hotel sector business models with the application of the social media, digital concepts, economic challenges and etc. which are currently not available in the Business Model Canvas. Diaconu and Dutu (2017) found that efficient hotel business need to drive with hospitality sector driven business model elements. Further, Grant Thornton (2015) compared the business model which followed by the hotels and its response to the market changes and identified, reshaping of the traditional business model has been very slow and need to be addressed soon by redeveloping the business model specifically to the hotel sector. Agreeing with De Jong and Van (2015) and Mattimoe (2015) author would like to say, hotels need to think, whether they are going to update the existing offering or focus on growth with new business models.

Rogerson (2010) study about the Boutique hotel in South Africa, he has discovered nearly 400 Boutique hotels were suspended because of low performance in financial and non-financial elements. Further, he concluded saying for long-term sustainability the Boutique hotel needs to focus on a sustainable business model. Further, the need of a customized business model requirement for the South African Boutique hotel was clearly identified by Rogerson and Kotze (2011) with the findings of sustainable business practices for Boutique hotel. Adding to that Binkely (1999) indicated in his Wall Street Journal article New York based hotels were gradually following a transition approach to move to a new business model from the business model which they were practicing to avoid the hotels getting failed which happened in that time. Furthermore, the Sri Lankan government has recognized this growing Boutique hotel segment needs a clear strategic focus to sustain in the industry that has not fully explored (Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs, 2017; Ranasinghe, 2015). Some of the hotels were facing loss of the strategic focus due to the entrepreneurial challenges (Jogaratnam and Tse, 2004). Further, Jogaratnam and Tse (2004) pointed out the entrepreneurial characteristics needed to integrate to the sustainable practices as Mirage resorts and Kimpton Group

followed a new framework to overcome the rising challenges due to lack of strategic focus on the existing sustainable practices.

The Asia News Monitor (2010) identified another example, Thailand Boutique hotel market needs a sustainability oriented business model to halt the Boutique hotel getting less potential. Further, they have mentioned out of 100 Boutique hotels in Thailand only 40 have been selected as the best performing Boutique hotel with the defined characteristics.

As mentioned above, Boutique hotels operate with unique characteristics that need to answer specifically implementing specialized elements in that nature. Lwin et al (2014) mentioned since the studies and new findings are limited the development of this sub industry is stagnated into some level which cannot move forward to get the maximum output. Still the Boutique hotel industry gained interest for the investigation (Rutes et al, 2001a). Further, with the explanation of the Rutes et al (2001a) and Jones et al (2013) observations about the Boutique hotel, this particular sector needs some separate studies regarding the performance and operational elements to make this sub industry more competitive in the long run.

Aboutalebi (2016) clearly mentioned that though the Boutique hotel can survive in the growing market by making more profit, it is very important to demonstrate how the company initiatives can align to those requirements to business model. Adding to that Tallman et al (2018); Bereznoy (2019) and Loon and Chik (2019) indicated this alignment needs to be more specific and need to clearly define. According to Fasone et al (2016) this articulation can only be done by customized business model, but some of the business models are unable to identify the sector requirements.

Ricaurte (2011) mentioned in their report, the framework that they initially developed to the larger scale hotel operations was tested and identified with specific characteristics that any industry can use to drive the firm to sustainability. In some cases, some of the Boutique hotels have applied the same operational methodologies of the larger scale hotel operations and showed good results (Jones et al, 2013). Still, when it comes to the Sri Lankan context the Boutique hotel is struggling without having a long-term sustainable methodology to implement to survive in the marketplace. Rogerson (2010) argued in his

report that findings of the studies regarding the large-scale accommodation sector may not be applicable to this sub category.

Therefore, adding to that boutique hotel industry will be able to drive the industry to sustainability with a clear framework.

2.4.1 Meaning of a Business Model

As stated by Teece (2010) and Brocken et al (2014) essence of any business models is delivering value. As mentioned by Kalakou and Macario (2013) all these business model definitions were based on the same concept that is value creation, value delivery and value capture. Therefore, as explained by Teece (2010), Itami and Nishino (2010) and Yunus et al (2010) successful business model explains how organizations can convert the value delivery to the profits. Adding to this Zott and Amit (2010) mentioned business model is a set of independent activities that work together to long-term survival. Since definitions are ranging to different dimensions, key definitions for the business model are highlighted in following Table 7.

However, there is no generally accepted definition for the business models (Weill et al, 2011). Various authors from different backgrounds have defined the business models in different scientific nature. Peters et al (2013) mentioned a. Calculative; b. Descriptive and c. Dynamic. Burinskiene and Daskevici (2013) quoted Michelini and recommended a. Isolated Business Models and b. Interactive Business Models. Further, they have classified a. business model related with goods distribution; b. business model related with trade form; c. business model related with information technology applications; d. business model, allowing guests to buy goods staying at home; and e. business model oriented to generation of revenue. Adding to this Burinskiene and Daskevici (2013) further identified quoting Jovarauskiene et al (2009) business models further can divide into B2B and B2C.

Since the tourism industry is a service industry, specified business models are required to deliver satisfactory level services (Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė, 2015). Adding to this Lueg et al (2015) stated any industry needs to have an efficient, effective, and sustainable business model to answer to the stakeholder expectations with the rapidly changing environment and guest mobility (Crick and Spencer, 2011). Because business models

explain how to create the value for the guests and how to generate the profit by delivering an experience (Teece, 2010; Bocken et al, 2014). Further, competitiveness of any hotels decides not only by products and services offered by the hotel but also the creativity and the capacity of the business model to serve the guests in a delightful way (Teece, 2010; Bocken et al, 2014). These specified business models need to explain how the financial and operational architecture of the hotel will drive the firm to long-term sustainability (Rayport and Jaworski, 2000; Johnson et al, 2008; Kim and Min, 2015). For the logic of the hospitality industry, hotels get prepared through the business model while developing assumptions for guests, competitors, revenue and cost (Morris et al, 2005). All the essential structural components critical success factors for any hotel, which needs to include in the business model (Crick and Spencer, 2011; Wood, 2013; Walker and Walker, 2016). Therefore, a business model should be there to respond to the market changes if any changes are happening (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010).

Table 7: Definitions of the Business Model

Author, year	Definition
Timmers (1998)	Design which explains how product, services and information flows, including an explanations on how does the operational elements helps and works for that with a description of how to generate the revenue.
Zott et al (2011)	Combination of activities that relate to enterprise operations.
Bjorkdahl (2009)	Set of activities that can create an economic value to applying firm.
Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010)	Business model is a value creation process for the consumers to generate an income.
Newth (2012)	Business model is generating income by implementing ideas with own abilities while creating value proposals to the guests.
Girotra and Netessine (2013)	Business model is a logical sequence of how firms can create, deliver and capture the values.

table 7(cont.)

Allen (2012)	Defining two main aspects for the firms, saying how to create the value and how to receive the value.
Peters et al (2013)	Structured methodology that present how to create the value to the guests.

Source: Author's work adopted from Teece (2010)

2.4.2 Characteristics of a Sustainable Business Model

Business model implementation is a selection of a strategic choice by executives in an organization. This implementation part is a crucial role since sloppily developed business models having less probability of success (Shafer et al, 2005). Implementation of the business model to gain sustainability needs to go ahead with the key characteristics. During the implementation part of the business model, it should follow the path, which developed to achieve the company goals (Jabłoński, 2016). As per the identification by Benbunan-Fich (2000); Zott and Amit (2007); Bouwman et al (2012); Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart (2011); Taguchi and Clausing (1990) successful business model needs to have set of key characteristics to drive the business to sustainability. They are a. Gaining competitiveness by serving high valued guests, b. Efficiency with internal consistency, c. Achieving Robustness by maintaining strong long-term effectiveness, d. Maintaining exclusiveness by delivering a high value to the guest, e. Achieving profitability by delivering significant margins, f. Scalable and g. Path to achieve the goals and aims.

a. Gaining competitiveness by serving high value guests

To achieve this characteristic business model needs to operate in a way which the high valued guests accept the service delivery of the Boutique hotel (Das et al, 2017). Therefore, to meet that requirement the external and internal operational characteristics of the Boutique hotel should be above the minimum standards of the requirements and should be at delightful status for guests (Das et al, 2017). Furthermore, service delivery should be able to answer the niche market that the Boutique hotel is serving (Das et al, 2017). Therefore, to achieve this target element in the business model needs to operate in a way that the Boutique hotel will be able to understand the guest more in detail (Goh,

2015). Because the more the Boutique hotel knows the guest, the more competitiveness the Boutique hotel could achieve against the competitors (Wang et al, 2015).

b. Efficiency with internal consistency

For the long-term sustainability, the internal consistency needs to be maintained in every element of the service delivery, starting from the front end to the back end (Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2010). Morris et al (2005) suggested all the elements that may suggest the Boutique hotel needs to match with each other to achieve smooth operations. Otherwise confusions regarding how to operate may occur. Adding more Evans et al (2017) mentioned every element should have the capacity to drive the organization as a one model for the sustainability.

c. Achieving robustness by maintaining strong long term effectiveness

Piercy (2017) mentioned robustness will help Boutique hotels to achieve the successful survival in the ever changing competitive market place. For that, Zott and Amit (2013) mentioned direct correlation should indicate within the elements of the business model to operate. The correlation only makes the business model strong in the emergent market place. Furthermore, availability of the choices in each element to create value for the guests make the business model healthier and strong (Zott and Amit, 2013). These choices further can define as strategic choices for the business implementation (Batocchio et al, 2016).

d. Maintaining exclusiveness by delivering a high value to the guest

The service delivery needs to develop specifically for the Boutique hotel (Kurtulay et al, 2015). In order to achieve this exclusiveness, business models should have the capacity to create and capture more values than the rivals (Aggett, 2007). As per the explanation by Johnson et al (2008) creation of value is possible if the Boutique hotel can address the issues which the potential guest has regarding the wealth, time, skill and access. So the exclusiveness will be achieved by addressing those issues in a unique way to the industry (Aggett, 2007). Furthermore, high value and the exclusiveness will be the key reason to achieve the target audiences' favourability and familiarity for the Boutique hotel (Aggett,

2007). Apart from that, exclusiveness that the business planning to deliver should be extremely rigid to the similar business models which the rivals deliver (Chernev, 2017).

e. Achieving profitability by delivering significant margins

There is a greater possibility in achieving more profits through a strategic transformation by implementing an optimized business model. The flexibility of the elements, responding to the faster changing market place and addressing the guest needs make the business more profitable with a higher margin (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2002; Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010). Furthermore, the well defined elements and robust operational system allow the business to generate more profit by expanding the business (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2011; Osterwalder, 2004). This expansion will make the business shine among the rivals in the marketplace with more profitability (Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2010). Dramatic ramifications, radical reduction in the cost plans and changes of the profit formula need to be implemented along with the Boutique hotel service delivery to be sustainable (Johnson et al, 2008).

f. Scalable

The success of any business model and its implementation for sustainability further depend on the interaction with the other business models of the rivals in the marketplace (Breuer et al, 2018). This interaction could achieve more realistically if the business model is scalable. Because the key meaning of the Boutique hotel is the same, though the differentiation being created (Aggett, 2007). Therefore, the basic operational aspects are similar to all the rivals and should be able to get the third party support for the operations without having disruptions (Kaplan and Norton, 2006) to create the uniqueness. Ultimately, business model should drive the hotel to long-term survival (Carayannis et al, 2015).

g. Path to achieve the goals and aims

Ultimately, the business model is the pathway to drive the Boutique hotel for long-term survival while achieving all the objectives and the aims (Zott et al, 2010). This path should be defined in a clear manner to all the stakeholders as well.

Next section is an identification of the steps of business model redevelopment that can apply to the existing business models.

2.4.3 Process of Business Model Development

Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010) mentioned business model development needs to follow five different steps. The steps are a. Identification of the requirement of a new business model, b. Environmental analysis, c. Identification of the business model configurations, d. Implementation of the business model and e. evaluating the results. Each of these steps need to analyse carefully with the requirement (Yip and Bocken, 2018). This research followed these steps during the data collection, analysis and conclusion sections to arrive at the most suitable business model for the boutique hotels.

Next section will highlight the theoretical background of the business models which are going to be the fundamental mechanism to drive the boutique hotels for long-term survival in economic sustainability.

2.5 Theoretical Background of Business Models

Business models have played a significant role in the modern businesses' operations to face challenges in the market place and to achieve the objectives. Business models having capacity on generating better results while satisfying the guests and solving problems for hotels. Therefore, learning about the related strategies and underpinning theories for development of the business models is crucial when it comes to developing specific business models to specific industry contexts.

Teece (2010) and Amit and Zott's (2001) state the concept of business models lacks theoretical support and no specific single theoretical framework. Business models lack theoretical underpinnings in mainstream theories. The value creation process, development of the value propositions, generating profits and managing cost discussed with limited application in theoretical aspects in terms of economical aspect or business studies. However, some of the prominent theories that are applicable to the business model concept outlined in this section. These theories are applicable to the business model concept and discussed with reference to the hospitality industry. The principal

theories that identified are; theory of business, research based view of the firm, resource advantage theory and shareholder theory. Apart from that, the theoretical contribution for the business model elements demonstrate in following table 8.

Table 8: Theoretical Contribution which underpin the business models

Business Model Element	Applicable Theory
Value creation, Value Delivery	1. Resource Based View 2. Resource advantage theory
Value propositions	1. Resource advantage theory
Stakeholders	1. Stakeholder Theory
Revenue streams	1. Resource Based View
Competitive advantages	1. Theory of Business
Strategic Focus	1. Resource advantage theory

Source: Author's work adopted from Hedman and Kalling (2003)

2.5.1 Theory of Business

Peter Drucker developed the theory of business in 1994. Drucker defines the business model concept as "set of assumptions which company is getting paid for" (Ovans, 2015). Further, he has mentioned assumptions about what a company could do and what they could not implement to gain revenue. Drucker (1994) identified four major elements in this theory as the specification to validate the theory of business. They are; strategic focus should be strategically fit to face the environmental challenges, fully aware about the theory of the business throughout the business, business need to be monitored and controlled, all these three assumptions should fit each other.

Drucker (1994) states that not all the theory of business will last forever due to internal and external environmental challenges. Only a few theories of business will be surviving and the rest need to be readopted or redeveloped according to the changes which will be happening in the marketplace. But, in some of the cases filling the gaps or loopholes by

patching core mission, objectives and core competencies could work in a short time. But, redevelopment was recommended (Yani-de-Soriano and Slater, 2009).

Redevelopment can take place by implementing suitable preventive measures in internal policies and procedures (Drucker (1994). These preventive measures should take place after considering the challenges in the internal and external environment. For this early diagnosis is recommended. Finally effective actions can take place to redevelop the theory. But, due to two major weaknesses in the theory of business, it is no longer valid. That is limitations is measuring the unexpected success and failures by its own or competing firms (Daly and Walsh, 2010).

In the context of hospitality, implementation of a set of assumptions that explain activities to implement is visible (Wadongo et al, 2010). However, unlike other accommodation sectors, boutique hotels need to have specific elements to implement as argued by Rogerson (2010). Therefore, the challenge is achieving sustainability as an industry since key elements have not been identified.

2.5.2 Resource Based View of the Firm (RBV)

According to this theory, each firm consists of tangible and intangible resources (Hoopes et al., 2003). Concept was developed by Barney (1991) and further developed by many scholars such as Helfat and Peteraf (2003). The key idea about the concept is how effective and efficient firms can apply resources to gain the sustainable competitive advantages. In other words, RBV is known as a theory of competitive advantage because of its assumptions that managerial effort will achieve sustainable competitive advantages (SCA). Achievement of SCA needs deploying resources to the maximum utilization. As highlighted by Fahy (2000) essential elements for RBV are;

- Efficient performance and achievement of the sustainable competitive advantages
- Strategic Choices for the management to implement
- Advantages which can generate from the resources which exist in the firm

In Boutique hotel sector, achieving the SCA by utilizing the resources at the maximum utilization is a challenge. However, larger scale other accommodation providers develop

the SCA by maximizing the tangible and intangible resources (Božič and Knežević Cvelbar, 2016). Boutique hotels having limited resources and RBV indicating the resources can develop in the short term focusing on SCA (Lo, 2012). So the resources which firms may use should be unique to the Boutique hotel and resources should help to gain the opportunities (Fahy, 2000; Božič and Knežević Cvelbar, 2016; Rajala and Westerlund, 2007).

2.5.3 Resource Advantage Theory

Theory suggests the value of existing resources rely on its capacity to create competitive advantage and value toward the guests (Hunt, 2014). Theory is evolution of two theories; first theory says firms should be able to explain the factors that would help to exist in the current market place as mentioned by Conner (Peranginangin, 2015). Second theory is Alderson's competitiveness theory (Peranginangin, 2015).

Theory says, each firm needs to have unique resources rather than limiting to the resources as mentioned by neoclassical theory (Hunt, 2012). Therefore, unique resources could be knowledge about the market, level of experience of the human resources, strength of the business network etc... However, those unique resources need to be identified by the firm for long-term operational success and to survive in the marketplace (Hunt, 2012). Because these unique resources should be able to create competitive advantage to the firm over the competitors.

In relation to the Boutique hotel sector, unique service delivery capacity, level of understanding to serve the guests in intimate the personalised manner consider as some of the unique resources (Rodríguez-Díaz and Espino-Rodríguez, 2006). Therefore, by utilizing these resources as theory suggests Boutique hotels should be able to gain superior performance in the selected market place and should be able to achieve the expected financial performance as well (Hunt, 2012).

Further, theory suggests to improve the learning and to adopt innovation with the signals that receive from the market place with the financial performance (Hunt, 2012). If the inferior financial performance indicates in the applying Boutique hotels that indicates the loss of competitive advantage of the firm with the existing resources which need an

innovation to the process or service offering (Hunt, 2014). Or else, a reinvestment for the resources should take place (Hunt, 2012).

2.5.4 Shareholder Theory

Shareholder theory suggests without having the support of organization stakeholders would not exist (Zhang, 2011). Adding more theory says organizations should focus on the value creation for the stakeholders starting from customers to all the related parties toward the organization (Zhang, 2011). Focus on the business model from the theory is the importance of the value creation and value delivery toward the stakeholders. Further, this value creation and value delivery is not defined properly in the business models and remains in generalized view (Dembek et al, 2018).

In the tourism sector, most of the firms are applying the value creation and value delivery process to meet the meaning of the shareholder theory by implementing the business model (Mihalič et al, 2012). It has been further found that the tourism sector generates competitive advantages by achieving the value expectations of the stakeholders (Arasli, 2012).

A study by Gémar et al (2016) and Kernel (2005) summarises the importance of this toward the business model operations for long-term survival of any firm. They argue a clear relationship with the stakeholders from the business model operations should be established. Del Baldo and Baldarelli (2017) mentioned that this relationship could lead the firms to long-term survival as well.

Next section will be highlighting all major business models that are applying to the Tourism and Hospitality industry. However, in the academic context there are a number of business models but only the most significant business models have been discussed.

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2.6 Business Models in the Accommodation Industry

Hospitality industry applying a range of business models for their value delivery process. According to Ballon (2007), Kandampully (2006), Peters et al. (2013), Bocken et al. (2014), Aziz et al (2008), Laudon and Traver (2008), Johnson (2010), Al-Debei and Avison (2010), Drakulevski and Nakov (2014), Serrat (2012), Barquet et al (2013) and Litos et al (2011) following are the business models they have developed that hospitality industry is applying. However, Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015) mentioned the hospitality industry have extracted selected elements from following each business model to have a feasible solution to implement. Therefore, it is not evident that those following models specifically developed or applicable for the hospitality industry, but industry is adopting those models.

2.6.1 The Business Model Design Matrix

Ballon (2007) developed the following business model (Figure 3) by concluding any ICT business model needed to address those elements in either implicitly or explicitly. Furthermore, he has concluded saying, if those parameters are not feasible enough to run the operations of the firm, control the firm and enhance the value variables then the business models needs re align as per the industry requirements. From this business model, the hospitality industry is widely utilizing positioning, guest engagement and intendant values (Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė, 2015).

CONTROL PARAMETERS				VALUE PARAMETERS			
Value Network Parameters		Functional Architecture Parameters		Financial Model Parameters		Value Proposition Parameters	
Combination of Assets		Modularity		Cost (Sharing) Model		Positioning	
<i>Concentrated</i>	<i>Distributed</i>	<i>Modular</i>	<i>Integrated</i>	<i>Concentrated</i>	<i>Distributed</i>	<i>Complement</i>	<i>Substitute</i>
Vertical Integration		Distribution of Intelligence		Revenue Model		User Involvement	
<i>Integrated</i>	<i>Disintegrated</i>	<i>Centralised</i>	<i>Distributed</i>	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>
Customer Ownership		Interoperability		Revenue Sharing Model		Intended Value	
<i>Direct</i>	<i>Intermediated</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Price/Quality</i>	<i>Lock-in</i>

Figure 3: The Business Model Design Matrix

Source: Ballon (2007)

2.6.2 Laudon and Traver's E commerce Business Model

Laundon and Traver (2008) developed a business model to utilize with the E commerce activities. As per their explanation business modesl integrate with following elements (Table 9) and according to Laundon and Traver (2008) & Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015) highlighted element (Management Team) is widely accepted by the hospitality sector.

Table 9: Business model developed by Laundon and Traver

Elements in the business model		Elements for the Hospitality Sector
Value propositions	Revenue model	Management team
Competitive environment	Market opportunities	
Competitive advantage	Marketing strategy	
Development of organization	Management team	

Source: Laundon and Traver (2008) & Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015)

2.6.3 Four Key Factors by Aziz

Aziz et al (2008) done a literature clarification regarding the important elements for the business model implementation. From their study, they have identified fifty-four elements and out of those, they have highlighted four key factors for the business model implementation (Refer Table 10). According to Aziz et al (2008) and Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015) two elements (Target market and Value creation) are widely applied by the hospitality industry.

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Table 10: Four Key Factors Related to the Business Model

Four Key Factors Related to the Business Model		Elements for the Hospitality Sector
Stakeholders	Competencies	Target Market
Value Creation	Value Capture	Value Creation

Source: Aziz et al (2008) and Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015)

2.6.4 Johnson’s Four Box Business Model

Johnson (2010) suggested four different independent elements for a business model to drive any successful business. Four elements based business model known as “Four Box” model (Figure 4), these elements interact in a consistent and complementary way to gain long-term survival. As per the identification by Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015), the hospitality industry is widely using elements called key processes from this business model for their own operations.

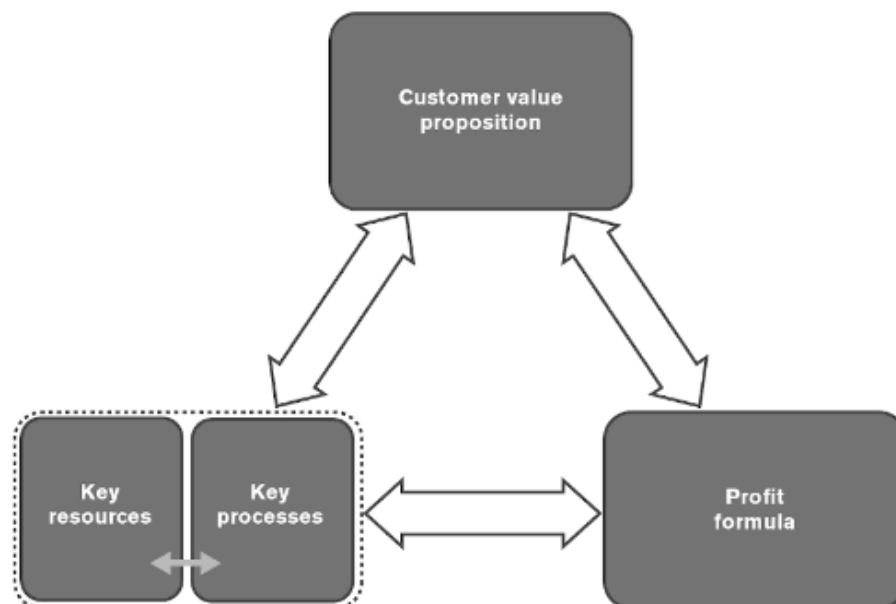


Figure 4: Four-Box Business Model

Source Johnson (2010) & Johnson et al (2008)

2.6.5 Business Model by Drakulevski and Nakov

Drakulevski and Nakov (2014) believes fundamental logic behind the business model is finding out the key value to the guest expectations and adding the rest of the elements for the value creation. By considering the predominantly described business model Drakulevski and Nakov (2014), developed following elements included business model as a sustainable solution (Table 11). According to their explanations, the hospitality industry widely applies value proposition elements for the business model implementation.

Table 11: Business Model by Drakulevski and Nakov

Elements in the business model		Elements for the Hospitality Sector
Value proposition	Value configuration	Value propositions
Target guest	Capability and core competency	
Guest handling and distribution channels	Partner network	
Guest interfaces and relationships	Cost structure	
Revenue model		

Source: Drakulevski and Nakov (2014) and Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015)

2.6.6 The Sustainable Business Model Archetypes

Bocken et al (2014) developed eight different sustainable business model archetypes. Each and every of archetypes based on the value propositions, value creation, delivery, and the value capture. By implementing those elements, they have confirmed the firms will be able to gain sustainable value by realizing new opportunities that can apply to the hospitality industry as well.

Groupings	Technological			Social			Organisational	
	Maximise material and energy efficiency	Create value from waste	Substitute with renewables and natural processes	Deliver functionality rather than ownership	Adopt a stewardship role	Encourage sufficiency	Repurpose for society/environment	Develop scale up solutions
Examples	Low carbon manufacturing/solutions	Circular economy, closed loop	Move from non-renewable to renewable energy sources	Product-oriented PSS - maintenance, extended warranty	Biodiversity protection	Consumer Education (models); communication and awareness	Not for profit	Collaborative approaches (sourcing, production, lobbying)
	Lean manufacturing	Cradle-2-Cradle	Solar and wind-power based energy innovations	Use oriented PSS- Rental, lease, shared	Consumer care - promote consumer health and well-being	Demand management (including cap & trade)	Hybrid businesses, Social enterprise (for profit)	Incubators and Entrepreneur support models
Additive manufacturing	Industrial symbiosis	Zero emissions initiative	Result-oriented PSS- Pay per use	Ethical trade (fair trade)	Slow fashion	Alternative ownership: cooperative, mutual, (farmers) collectives	Licensing, Franchising	
De-materialisation (of products/ packaging)	Reuse, recycle, re-manufacture	Blue Economy	Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	Choice editing by retailers	Product longevity	Social and biodiversity regeneration initiatives ('net positive')	Open innovation (platforms)	
Increased functionality (to reduce total number of products required)	Take back management	Biomimicry	Design, Build, Finance, Operate (DBFO)	Radical transparency about environmental/ societal impacts	Premium branding/ limited availability	Base of pyramid solutions	Crowd sourcing/ funding	
	Use excess capacity	The Natural Step	Chemical Management Services (CMS)	Resource stewardship	Frugal business	Localisation	"Patient / slow capital" collaborations	
	Sharing assets (shared ownership and collaborative consumption)	Slow manufacturing			Responsible product distribution/ promotion	Home based, flexible working		
	Extended producer responsibility	Green chemistry						

Figure 5: The Sustainable Business Model Archetypes
Source: Bocken et al (2014)

2.6.7 Unified business model Conceptual Framework by Al-Debei and Avison

Al- Debei and Avison (2010) mentioned in their article, researchers' view the business model in subjectively and firms perceive it in their business environment. Adding to this they have identified theoretical underpinning and logical reasoning is crucial to business model elements to apply to different industry contexts. They have developed the following unified business model conceptual framework (Figure 6). As per the identification by Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015) from this framework, the value proposition element is widely implemented by the hospitality sector.

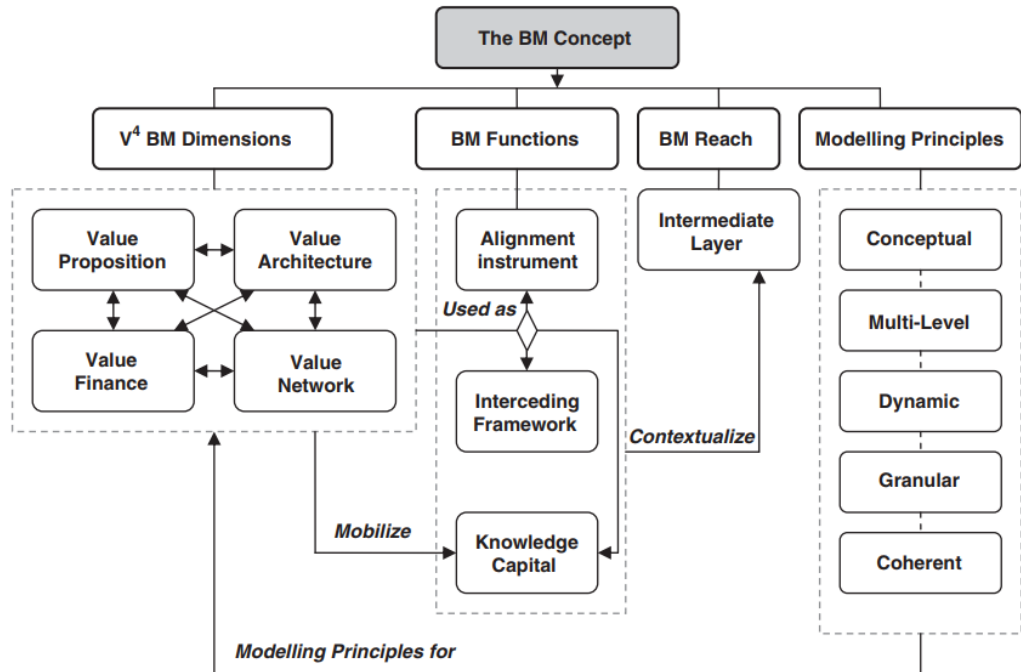


Figure 6: Unified business model Conceptual Framework by Al-Debei and Avison
 Source: Al- Debei and Avison (2010)

2.6.8 Customer Centred Business Model for Hospitality Industry

Kandampully (2006) developed a customer centred business model (Figure 7) for the hospitality industry by combining all the past literature through an extensive literature survey. However, he has concluded the study saying, the generalized elements in this model need to be further developed according to the applying firm. Therefore, though the hospitality industry has a customized business model with the above explained elements, those business models need further adaptation to the applying sub industries.

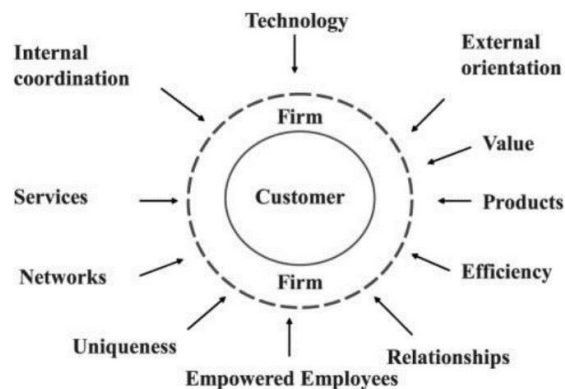


Figure 7: Customer Centred Business Model for Hospitality Industry
 Source: Kandampully (2006)

Next section will be highlighting the gaps of these business models that can be identified when applying to the accommodation sector and to the boutique hotel sector.

2.6.9 Operational Gaps of the Existing Business Models

Kandampully (2006) in his research to find the most applicable customer centred business model mentioned, with the changes happening in the existing hospitality environment it is unable to apply the past guaranteed business models to achieve the current business objectives. Therefore, it is very important to address these inadequacies as a new paradigm to transform the hospitality industry to long-term sustainability (Kandampully, 2006; Bojanic, 2008).

Shafer et al (2005) reviewed literature that was published during 1998 – 2002 to identify the major components that can consider including a common business model (See figure 8). However, those elements are missing in above business models as all in one model to customize and implement. This is the key gap of existing models. The ability of value creation and value capture should be defined by the business model in any organization (Johnson et al, 2008). Common business model is unable to meet the value creation requirement that can only be met by customizing the business model in the firms' requirement (Johnson et al, 2008).

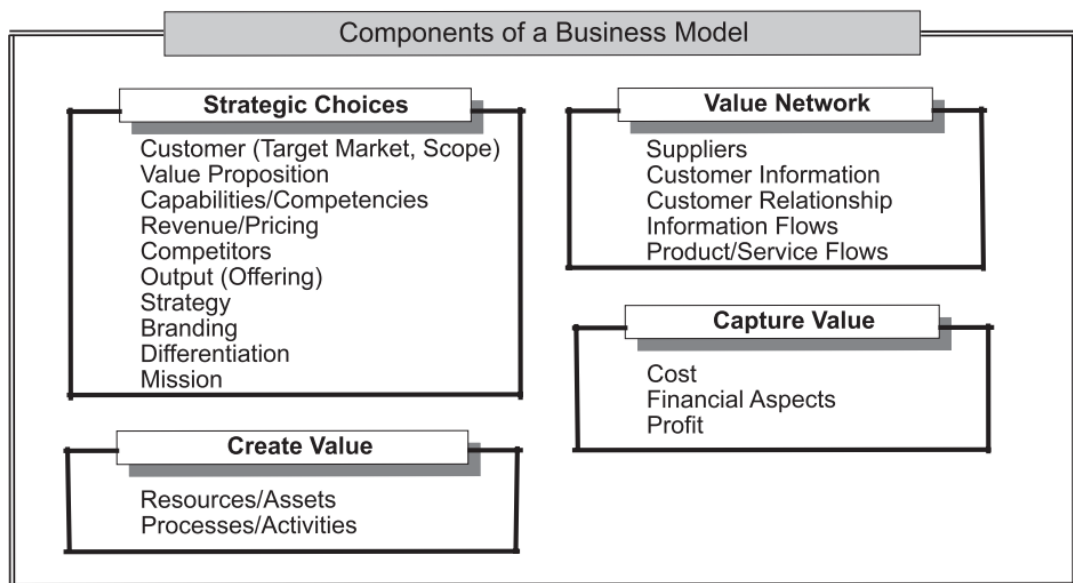


Figure 8: Components of Business Model Addinity Diagram
Source: Shafer et al (2005)

There are reasons that are against the current business models. Those reasons or else the structural aspects are considered disadvantages of the existing business models. Pölling et al (2017) mentioned in their report that the majority of the firms are protecting their profit margins with the business model differentiations. Adding to that Payne et al (2017); Bello et al (2017); Guercini et al (2017) and Van Looy and Shafagatova (2016) mentioned companies differentiate the offering with the value propositions, way of product or service delivery, process and system differentiation etc... However, in the modern era, companies need to focus more on competition, how to differentiate the business model against the competition and how to position in the business field against the competitors that are missing in the business model (Chernev, 2017; Wirtz et al, 2016).

Traditional elements or else traditional strategies in the business model are focusing on product innovation, cost innovation, communication plans and changing value propositions (Hacklin et al, 2017; Foss and Saebi, 2017b; Berends et al, 2016). Nevertheless, Komisar and Lineback (2001) mentioned that the entrepreneurs need more drivers than those traditional elements and traditional strategies in the business model. Foss and Saebi (2017a) and Guo et al (2016) identified these drivers as the components which the business models need to have in the present and future environment.

Further, Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015) identified most influencing factors for the success of a business model in the hospitality industry (Figure 9) that are hard to identify in a one model.

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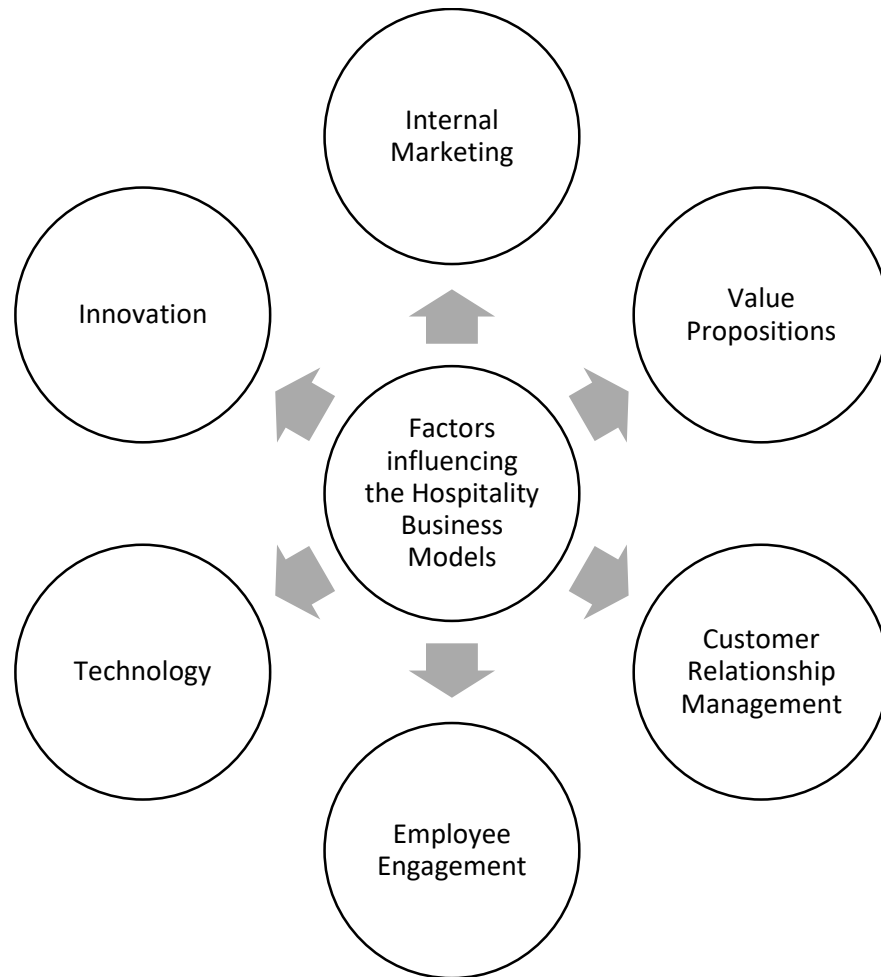


Figure 9: Factors influencing the Hospitality Business Models

Source: Kandampully (2006)

As a summary for this section, agreeing with the identification by Langviniene and Daunoraviciute (2015) there is no specific business model with sustainable characteristics for the boutique hotel sector to use as a sustainable business model. Plenter et al (2017), Fielt (2013) and Verrue (2014) identified Business Model Canvas as a more generalized version of a business model. Adding to that, Zolnowski et al (2014), Fritscher and Pigneur (2015) mentioned most of the firms follow a customized version of business models that developed as an extension to the Business Model Canvas to avoid or to mitigate the disadvantages of the Business Model Canvas. Peters et al (2013) mentioned the majority of the recent research is using the same elements that were proposed by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur in their Business Model Canvas for the future research to focus on this context. Furthermore, with the above explanations it is evident that each

and every Business model having common elements which are evident in the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Apart from that, Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur's Business Model Canvas is highly recognized in the hospitality sector to achieve the meaning of the business models (Wingit et al, 2017; Reinhold et al, 2017; Kreinberger et al, 2014; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010).

The selected model for this research as the base model to identify the most suitable elements for the proposed sustainable business model for boutique hotels is Business Model Canvas by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur.

2.7 Overview of Business Model Canvas

As mentioned in the previous section the influencing key model for this research is Osterwalder and Pigneur's Business model canvas. In this section, the meaning of the Business Model Canvas, key characteristics of the Business model canvas and the gaps of the Business model canvas highlighted.

2.7.1 Meaning of the Business Model Canvas

Business Model Canvas by its definition was a rationale on how to create value, how to deliver those values and how to capture those values (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Business Model Canvas by Osterwalder and Pigneur was an alternative to the traditional business models which the firms were adopting (Osterwalder, 2013). This Business Model Canvas included nine elements with separate hypotheses to be implemented by each organization. Those nine elements are demonstrated in the following figure 10.

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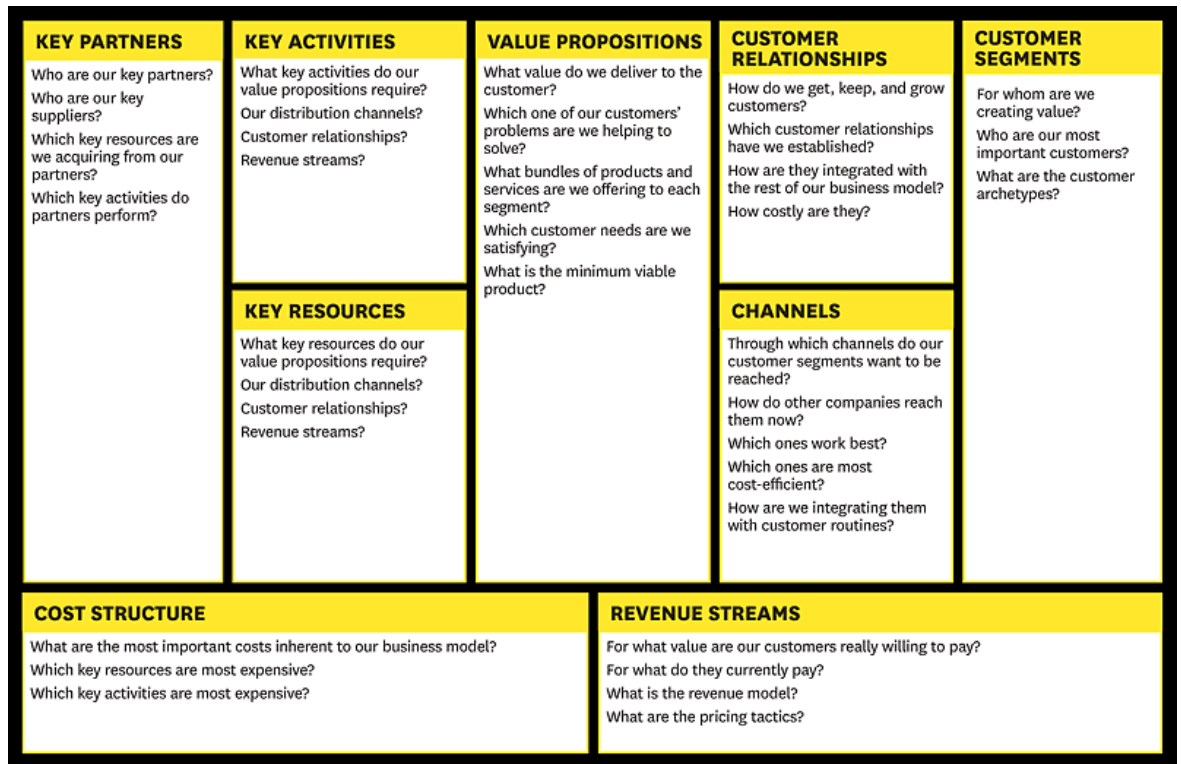


Figure 10: Business Model Canvas
Source: Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010)

As mentioned by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) combined implementation of the nine essential elements in the Business Model Canvas will be leading to the achievement of the company aims and objectives. When developing these nine elements in the Business Model Canvas Osterwalder and Pigneur wanted to develop this methodology as a simple, relevant and with the capacity of facilitating to each organization (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). However, attention was given not making it oversimplifying and over complex (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). In other words, Business Model Canvas is a conceptual model that describes the money earning methodology of the company that interlink all the business processes to the company aims and objectives (Keen and Qureshi, 2006). Detailed explanation of these nine elements is as below.

2.7.2 Value propositions

Value propositions (VP) define how the hotels deliver its products or services to its guests to meet their needs, and wants (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010). Further, VP shows and represents the bundle offer of the hotel to the selected target market (Osterwalder et al, 2014). Delivery of the VP can be in a quantitative manner or qualitative manner (Lindič

and Marques de silva, 2011). When it comes to those VPs, some of the VPs are similar to the existing offering of the market place and some of the VP are unique to the hotel itself (Barnes et al, 2009). However, hotels are using the VP as a factor to differentiate themselves compared to the competitors. That is due to the deeper understanding of what they offer to the target market compared to the competitors (Barnes et al, 2009). Deeper understanding about the VPs of the hotel allows them to understand the market position of the products and services and the competitive position of the hotel (Barnes et al, 2009).

For the visualizing purpose, based on the VPs, hotels can draw value maps or strategy canvases with the competitors (Barnes et al, 2009). By creating unique VP market frontiers can lead the market place compared to the competitors by attracting more target customers toward them (Lindič and Marques de silva, 2011). Therefore, hotels are trying to reinvent or extend the existing value propositions to remain in the position of the market leader using this element (Lindič and Marques de silva, 2011).

2.7.3 Customer Segments

Customer segment means the group of customers that the hotel is trying to reach (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Grouping customers to a common behavioural patterns and attitudes is crucial to any business organization to deliver their VP (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Through the business model canvas hotels should identify which customer segment hotel is going to serve. By implementing a business model canvas, different customer segment needs, different types of relationships, different types of channels, different types of partners, etc. could be developed according to the customer segment's needs and requirements upon identification (Anselmsson, 2006). By initiating this, hotels will be able to invest more in each element to deliver the expected value to the customers in business model (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Furthermore, with the appropriate customer segmentation and selection, hotels are able to customize the other elements to position in the market place as a leader (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Even after selecting the most suitable customer segment for the hotel, Dibb and Simkin (2010) suggested delivering a one standard product that many of the members prefer and a unique product that few members in the segment prefer could be essential for the long-term survival.

2.7.4 Channels

Distribution channel is the connection link the hotel could use to connect the selected customer segments and the VP (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). In order to implement these, hotels can select either one or two channels to reach the customer segment with the differentiated VP (Inversini and Masiero, 2014). The selected distribution channel needs to have the capacity of explaining how the distribution process is going to happen when reaching the desired product to the customer (Schott, 2007; Harrison and Hair, 2017). Throughout the customer buying behaviour and cycle, channels need to assess carefully since the channel is the customer touch point (Díaz et al, 2017). Adding more, required product, in required quantity, at required price in required time should be available through this selected channel (Diaz et al, 2017). However, some of the hotels managed to handle those channels by themselves or handing over to another party.

2.7.5 Customer Relationships

Every hotel needs to maintain a strong, robust and long-lasting relationship with the customers (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Carmen and Marius (2016) mentioned for the selected customer segments separate level customer relationships are required and should maintain at required level. Apart from that Sudhakaran and Ramu (2014) explained prior to the establishment of the customer relationships hotels should clarify the customer segment requirement, capacity and type of relationship. With the identification of those, different types of customer relationships could be established by the hotels which may lead to long-term survival (Yadav and Singh, 2014; Nazir et al, 2014).

2.7.6 Key Resources

Key resources required to deliver the promised value to the customers by the hotels (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Key resources can be identified in financial resources, non-financial resources, tangible resources, intangible resources, human resources etc... (Pearson et al, 2015). As the pillars of the organization, these aspects need to be managed in a more effective and efficient way. Therefore key resources need to customize according to the company service delivery process and the internal and external factors

for a sustainable future (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Hardy and Beeton, 2007; and Chen et al, 2014).

2.7.7 Key Activities

To create and deliver the perceived value to the customers, key activities need to identify and align to the strategy of the hotel (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Achtenhagen et al (2013) indicated a set of activities needed to develop and define clearly to make sure the proposed value is delivering to the customers. Further, Kindström and Ottosson (2016) mentioned all the processes and initiatives that may design to operate the business activities should further align to the key activities. Osterwalder and Pigneur (2009) mentioned that the key activities in a hotel could divide into three main sections, a. Network activities, a. Production Activities, and b. Problem Solving Activities. Finally, as mentioned by Witjes et al (2017) integration of all these activities to a one strategy is crucial for any organization for long-term sustainability.

2.7.8 Key Partnerships

For the operations of any business model a network of stakeholders are required. A key role will be played by partnerships to make sure the smooth operation of the business model (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). So well established and powerful partnerships are required for each business model to drive the hotels at a competitive level (França et al, 2017). According to Osterwalder and Pigneur (2013) and Osterwalder and Pigneur (2011) there are three reasons to have a strong partnership, a. To control and minimize the risk, b. generating economy of scales, c. getting the control of particular activity or a resource. With those, hotels can develop enriched business activities to deliver a superior value to the customer (Carayannis et al, 2015). Finally, agreeing with Carayannis et al (2015) this influence should integrate in a positive way to a sustainable future.

2.7.9 Revenue Streams

Revenue streams element explains how the business model canvas able to generate revenue by implementing the rest of the elements throughout the business cycle (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Massa et al, 2016). Revenue streams may stand for

different types, a. one time payment from the customer, and b. revenue that engaged with the post purchase behaviour of the customers. Zott et al (2011) mentioned that firms need to define the VP with the revenue streams to identify which VP customers are willing to pay. Furthermore, they have mentioned future directions of the company will be derived with this clear definition. By identifying these, the business model canvas of the company will be able create more revenue streams for the company from each customer segment for a sustainable future (Aversa et al, 2017; França et al, 2017; Yang et al, 2017).

2.7.10 Cost Structure

One the most important element which needs to be under the controlled conditions is the cost structure of the hotel (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; França et al, 2017). Because as mentioned by Clauss (2017) managing the cost structure is a critical success factor for any business and its sustainability. According to the Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010), two types of cost structures can be identified, a. cost driven and b. value driven. Adding to that Karimi and Walter (2016), and Spieth and Schneider (2016) mentioned based on the above mentioned elements in the Business Model Canvas the cost structure needs to manage in an effective and efficient way to deliver the promised VP to the customers for a sustainable future.

2.7.11 Business Model Canvas and Boutique Hotel Operations

As each Boutique hotel follows a business model extracted from Osterwarld's Business Model Canvas for the operations, it is observed that they follow the business models which large scale hotels are implementing (Kandampully, 2006; Kamburugamuwa, 2015; Barjaktarovic and Barjaktarovic, 2010; Kowalski, 2013). When it comes to implementing business models which other accommodation units follows, errors are occurring in the service delivery (Kandampully, 2006; Ranasinghe, 2015b; Cooray, 2016; Mann and Goel, 2014; Lelwala and Gunarathne, 2009; Samaranyake et al, 2013 and Jayawardane, 2013)

Melissen et al (2016) concluded their study for the sustainability search for the hotels by concluding, hotels are not at their optimal level to face to the future sustainability challenges. Apart from that Schaltegger et al (2016), Stubbs and Cocklin (2008), Wirtz et al

(2015), Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart (2010), Thaidigsmann (2006) and Magretta (2002) concluded their studies indicating the need of business model redevelopment, if the company business model is not suitable enough to drive the hotel to a sustainable future. Further, adding to that Amit and Zott (2012); Bertels et al (2015); Kiron et al (2013) and Sipe (2016) mentioned most of the management level senior managers does is, implementing the Business Model Canvas with strategies which were developed based on the past operations history, industry practices and what competitors does.

Furthermore, Hong and Fauvel (2013) developed an argument for the Business Model Canvas in their article by highlighting all the weaknesses of the Business Model Canvas. So based on the arguments developed by Hong and Fauvel (2013) and explanations from Chen et al (2017); Wood (2017); Chandiok and Sharma (2017); Prud'homme et al (2016); Lub et al (2016); Murray et al (2017); Baggio et al (2016); Melissen et al (2016); Holm et al (2013); Maurya (2010); Zott et al, (2011) and Guaracino and Salvato (2017) author has identified following factors as the reasons for non-applicability of the Business Model Canvas to the Boutique hotel.

1. Rising competition and unethical competitor behaviour (Goryushkina et al, 2016; Koh and King, 2017; Bukirwa and Kising'u, 2017; Gupta, 2017; Kiseli et al, 2016)
2. Globalization and interdependency of firms (Fortis and Crenna, 2016; Gupta, 2017; Madhani, 2016; Demirkan, 2016; Liu et al, 2014; Desai and Eric, 2015)
3. Rising online presence and development of the social media marketing (Melati and Febianty, 2016; Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014; Zhao et al, 2015; Inversini and Masiero, 2014; Ali and Ali, 2016; Stangl et al, 2016; Murphy and Chen, 2016; Christou, 2016)
4. Rising human resource management challenges (Solnet et al, 2016a; Jordhus-Lier and Underthun, 2014; Gibbs et al, 2015)
5. Changes in the consumer power and consumer buying behaviour (Gupta, 2017; Hui et al, 2016; Dixit, 2017; Wood, 2017)
6. Rising online travel agencies and price competition (Pal and Mishra, 2017; Guo et al, 2014; Chiappa, 2013; Vlaicu and Demetry, 2016)
7. Development of the communication channels (Law et al, 2014; Tang et al, 2015; Šeric et al, 2015; Escobar-Rodríguez and Carvajal-Trujillo, 2013)
8. Changes of the company supply power against the target customer (Manuel Martínez-López and Vargas-Sánchez, 2013; Özer and Saldamli, 2015; Law et al, 2015a; Law et al, 2015b; Astawa et al, 2017)

These are the key reasons for many boutique hotels to focus on a fundamental change in service offering compared to the traditional market offering (Zott et al, 2011). Mihalic et al (2015) indicated that a customized version of the business model is required for boutique hotels due to these reasons. Customized versions of a business model will help the Boutique hotel to deliver the perceived value of the Boutique hotel to the target guests. Furthermore, latest literature also suggests that the Boutique hotel needs a specified business model for the future sustainability (Yeoman, 2009). Because of those reasons, the only way to drive the Boutique hotel to a sustainable future is by redeveloping the Business Model Canvas to differentiated business models (Akyuz and Batman, 2015). This new business model needs to answer all the key elements that are discussed in section 2.2.3 while covering the loopholes identified in section 2.3.2 and 2.4.2. Therefore, the current Business Model Canvas needs to change in a way, which is; 1. Hard to copy by competitors and other industry sectors, 2. Aligning to the market patterns and trends, 3. Generating attractive profits while maintaining efficient cost structure which competitors or other substitute products are unable to copy, and 4. Which demonstrate growth platforms to make the company more sustainable in the future (Ching and Fauvel, 2013).

Though Osterwalder (2013) mentioned that canvas allows business to move beyond the product centric approach, more attention should give to sustainability (Bocken et al, 2014). Adding more Kowalski (2013) did a research for Poland hospitality market and mentioned that there are no proper business models or operational value chains for different hotel segments in the marketplace that needs to be answered soon. Therefore, in order to secure a sustainable future for the Boutique hotels nine elements in the Business Model Canvas needs to redevelop (Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2011). Therefore, based on Kandampully (2006); Ranasinghe (2015b); Cooray (2016); Mann and Goel (2014); Lelwala and Gunarathne (2009); Samaranayake et al (2013) and Jayawardane (2013) author developed a customized version of business model as a survival method for the Boutique hotels to overcome above issues. Further, the author argued on the Osterward's Business Model Canvas and new elements required for the sustainability with the research findings (Johnson et al, 2008; Giesen et al, 2010; Hartesvelt, 2006; Affuah and Tucci, 2001; Betz, 2002; Sheresheva et al, 2016).

2.7.12 Main Criticisms against Business Model Canvas

The main criticisms against the Business Model Canvas (Kraaijenbrink, 2012) are; a. Attention to the rising competition is very low, b. Strategic purpose of the company is not highlighted in the Business Model Canvas, c. Performance measurements are missing; d. New Product development and innovation is not included, e. Service Customization is not there as problem solutions, f. Low level of prioritization of the elements and g. Human Interaction is not included.

a. Attention to the Rising Competition Is Very Low

Zott et al (2011) done an article regarding the business models and recent developments in the context. According to their explanations, modern business models should explain how to create the value against the competitors. Adding to this Massa et al (2016); Kajanus et al (2014); Gurău et al (2015); Barquet et al (2013) and Wirtz et al (2016) mentioned attention towards the competitions in very low and Business Model Canvas is not guiding the business on how to face to the rising competition by implementing suitable strategic initiatives. Therefore, Kajanus et al (2014) and Zandoval Bonazzi et al (2014) have mentioned a business model should develop in a way of analytical method to drive the organization against the competitors.

b. Strategic Purpose of the Company Is Not Highlighted In the Business Model Canvas

Chesbrough and Rosenbloom (2002) article on the business model innovation they have mentioned that a clear focus should give to the managers of the company on where the company is heading. Adding more, Teece (2010) and Trapp (2014) indicated that fundamental directions should provide the business model to operate to long-term sustainability. However, these aspects were not identified in the Business Model Canvas. Further, Breuer (2018) mentioned an explanation regarding how a company can create, deliver and capture the value not defined in the Business Model Canvas. These key aspects make any of the modern organizations sustainable along with the business model implementation (Phillips and Moutinho, 2014; Marcelino-Sádaba, 2015; Fielt, 2013).

c. Performance Measurements Are Missing

Missing of the performance measurements or the key performance indicators for the business operations is a key weak point in Business Model Canvas (Heikkilä et al, 2010). A clear link should be available for the business model to measure the performance with the strategic goals and aims of the company (Batocchio et al, 2016; Melkonyan and Gottschalk, 2017). With those measurements, the success or the negative performance will be able to evaluate which is a critical success factor for any applying organization (Parmenter, 2015; Fiel, 2013).

d. New Product Development and Innovation Is Not Included

Zott et al (2010) done a review about the business models regarding the theoretical roots and recent developments in the business environment. They have indicated innovation and creativity is a crucial element for the present business models. With innovation and creativity, business models can drive the organization with enhanced value additions through differentiation against the competition (Taran et al, 2016; Saebi and Foss, 2015). Adding more, this is confirmed by the research carried out by Sweden by Pedersen et al (2016) saying that the corporate sustainability is relying on the innovation element in the business models. However, based on the criticism developed by Hong and Fauvel (2013) and Owolabi (2016) Business Model Canvas has not given attention to the innovation concept.

e. Service Customization Is Missing as Problem Solutions

According to Mok et al (2000) and Zaman et al (2016), customization of the service delivery may achieve guest satisfaction and loyalty, higher productivity, higher profitability and higher market share. Sievänäna et al (2010) mentioned identification of the direct impact of customization and the business model performance an essential element. Knowing the fact of attention to the value creation to the guest satisfaction, it is identified that this attention should improve more toward the Boutique hotels (Aggett, 2007). However, Business Model Canvas does not have a functionality for service customization to drive the organization to long-term sustainability (Ching and Fauvel, 2013).

f. Low Level of Prioritization of the Elements

Level of prioritization is a needed aspect for the business models since the implementation part of the business process is done through the elements in the business model (Fielt, 2013; Pekuri et al, 2014). However, as mentioned earlier the prioritization of the elements in the Business Model Canvas not done in a proper way to drive the organization into a sustainable future (Ching and Fauvel, 2013). The research which was carried out by Corbo (2017) identified the misalignment between the elements in the business model will hinder the performance of the company. Therefore, the components need to arrange according to priority to achieve the company objectives in the long-run (Bocken et al, 2014). Further, these elements need to align to the business processes of the company that has not been done clearly in the Business Model Canvas (Sam and Harry, 2012).

g. Human Interaction Is Not Included

Human element found to be an important element in the business model during the value creation process (Christian and Marco, 2012). However, Ching and Fauvel (2013) mentioned, in the Business Model Canvas, the attention to the human element is very low which is a disadvantage for the implementation and performance measurement. Integrating and enabling the human resources need to describe clearly through the Business Model Canvas to align the VP to the human resources. These initiatives are missing in the Business Model Canvas (Slavik and Bednár, 2014; Engdahl and Rensfelt, 2011).

h. Missing Of Attention to the Social and Intellectual Value

The key attention through the nine elements in the Business Model Canvas is for the physical value which the company is trying to deliver covering through the revenue and cost element (Indrawan et al, 2016). According to Sparviero (2019), attention to the social and intellectual values is a critical success factor for long-term survival. However, Sparviero (2019) mentioned the Business Model Canvas ignored social and intellectual values. Furthermore, according to Bocken et al (2015) one of the most emerging trends

that is shared value concept needs to integrate to the Business Model Canvas that is missing which is another factor long-term survival.

i. Missing Guidance to Apply to Strategic Management Aspects

Guidance to apply to the strategic management tools to the Business Model Canvas is missing in the Business Model Canvas. Adding to this critique Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) and Osterwalder and Pigneur (2013) mentioned Business Model Canvas is an abstract version of how to perform the business functions. However, Hill et al (2014); Wahl and Prause (2013); DaSilva and Trkman (2014) identified through the studies saying that if Business Model Canvas is a concluded graphical version on how to operate the business functions, the users should have a clear guidance on how to apply the strategic management tools to implement through the Business Model Canvas for the delivery of the values to the guests. This lack of multifunctional aspects are one of the major drawbacks in Business Model Canvas (Trimi and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2012).

As a summary, above are the key drawbacks of the Business Model Canvas that indicated the requirement of the Business Model Canvas redevelopment. Next section will highlight the suggested solutions which are indicated in the existing literature.

2.7.13 Suggested Solutions for the Business Model Canvas for Redevelopment

To answer the existing gaps in the current Business Model Canvas, the hospitality industry needs to re adjust with industry requirements. Jayawardane (2013) carried out a study to develop suggestions to future Sri Lankan tourism development. In his study, he has suggested strategic solutions for sustainable tourism until 2026 starting from strategic focus to positioning strategies. According to the solutions, the hotel or else the accommodation sector needs a revamping of their existing business models or else the service delivery process to the current market development.

Furthermore, Kandampully (2006) identified essential elements that need to include in a hospitality sector focused business model. However, their scientific literature surveys concluded by saying, these elements can be further redeveloped with the future research

perspectives to apply for specified industries, which is the ultimate objective of this research.

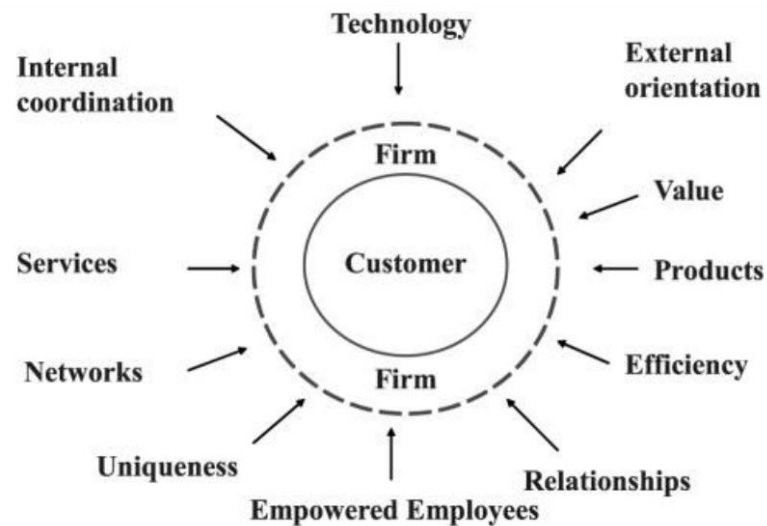


Figure 11: Essential Factors in the proposed new model

Source: Kandampully (2006)

Gambardella & McGahan (2010); Gassmann et al (2016) developed another solution. They have suggested successful innovation in the business model canvas could drive the hotels to profit in long term. Many of the studies that carried out regarding the business model innovation have revealed changes to the business model are a fundamental requirement to any organization to achieve sustainability. Proposed business model is an innovative solution specifically developed for the boutique hotels.

As mentioned by Zott et al (2011) characterization of the new model on how to lead to sustainability needs to be explained by the model itself clearly to gain the expected value addition. So far, the new business models that developed generally for the long-term sustainability were lacking with the theoretical grounding (Osterwalder et al 2005; Boons and Lüdeke-Freund, 2013). All the proposed structural changes and innovations clearly linked to each other in the proposed business model to drive the boutique hotel to long-term sustainability.

Adding to these Yang et al (2017), Perrini and Tencati (2006) there should be structural changes to the business model canvas of hotels to achieve sustainability. Therefore, the proposed model developed with conceptual changes to the structure regarding how it

deals with all the required elements. Adding more, the sustainability innovations suggested by this study are not only the technical changes to the Business Model Canvas, it will be procedural, thinking, process and pattern changes of the Business Model Canvas to sustainable aspects towards the Boutique hotel (Szekely and Strebel, 2013).

2.8 Indicators of Business Model Elements for Sustainability

Based on the existing literature evidence, researchers have identified eight most applicable indicators to drive the research to identify the most applicable business model elements for the proposed business model in the section 2.8.1. Apart from that, a critical review carried out for those eight performance indicators indicating the applicability of those indicators to the boutique hotel sector in section 2.8.2 to 2.8.9.

2.8.1 Identification of the Indicators

These indicators were planned to be identified from the guests and senior management expectations. These expectations are considered as the expectations that these two parties are expecting from the boutique hotels performance. Therefore, two separate reviews were carried out to determine these indicators covering expectations from senior management and guests. First attention given to determine the expectations of senior management and then the attention paid to identify guests' expectations.

According to Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė (2015), Kandampully (2006), Litos et al (2011), Geller (1985), Brotherton (2004), Hua et al (2009), Avcikurt et al (2011), Chu and Choi (2000), Milović (2012), Ottenbacher and Gnoth (2005), Ottenbacher et al, (2006), Shen (2015) there are six essential elements which management of the boutique hotels are expectation from a sustainability focused business model.

1. Enhanced and Improved Marketing activities,
2. Delivering delightful guest value,
3. Application of the developing technology,
4. Strong and robust guest relationship management,
5. Employee engagement and empowerment
6. New product development with innovation and creativity.

It was evident that these expectations are emerging in the hospitality industry and Boutique hotel sub industry with the changes in the social, cultural, economic, technological, legal and environmental aspects (Rao, 2014; Teja, 2010). As mentioned by Sangwichien and Jaroenwisan (2017); Sharma and Sharma (2016); Laytikun (2015); Cetin and Walls (2016); Goh (2015) if these expectations are unable meet by existing business models guest dissatisfaction may occur and will drive the Boutique hotels to a less competitive status and less sustainability in long run.

Anunsirikulchai's (2012) study about the guest preferences for selection of Boutique hotels indicates demographic factors, behavioural factors, psychographic factors etc... getting affected when it comes to selecting a hotel. Further, study reveals guests expect the key characteristics of the Boutique hotel from each hotel they prefer to stay. Adding more Boutique hotel guests have set different expectations compared to the other accommodation options (Victorino et al, 2005; Aggett, 2007; Lin, 2016; Sotiriadis and Sarmaniotis, 2016; Ahmad et al, 2017). Meeting these guest expectations should be done through defined Boutique hotels standards. Adding to this Rogerson (2010) also mentioned that almost all the Boutique hotels in South Africa are focusing on experiential qualities to link the key characteristics of the Boutique hotel to their Boutique hotels. Dincer et al (2016) confirmed with their Istanbul Boutique hotel study saying guest expectations should meet first to implement suitable marketing strategies. Therefore, based on those findings, the author identified following guest expectations to develop indicators for business model elements.

1. Mun Lim and Endean (2009) and Olga (2009) identified, outstanding personal and intimate services,
2. Henderson et al (2013) and Henderson (2011) indicated cultural embeddedness,
3. Novelty service experience comparing to traditional service offering (Yuan and McDonald, 1990; Wang et al, 2015),
4. Acquiring social status and prestige through the journey (Yuan and McDonald, 1990; Wang, 2013; Wang et al, 2015),
5. Bansal and Eiselt (2004) noted relaxation and comfort,
6. Excellent Relationship (Shoemaker, 1994),
7. Sirakaya and Mclellan (1997) and Turnbull and Uysal (1995) mentioned location of the hotel,
8. Mun Lim & Endean (2009); McIntosh & Siggs (2005) discussed the design and the layout of the hotel,

9. Facilities and amenities in the property (Lim & Endean, 2009)

10. Value based pricing (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005).

Integrating above mentioned elements to a business model as a sustainable methodology becomes important in a business environment which consumer have access to wide range of products and higher stakeholder involvement (Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė, 2015; Kandampully, 2006; Litos et al, 2011; Diaconu and Dutu, 2017). Therefore, traditional business models no longer have a guaranteed success for the hotels as a sustainability methodology (Diaconu and Dutu, 2017).

With the review of established business models (Refer section 2.6), Business Model Canvas (Refer section 2.7) and guests' and entrepreneurs' expectations (Refer section 2.8.1) with Boutique hotel performance and for the future sustainability (Refer section 2.3) author has identified following eight major indicators (Table 12) as performance elements to drive the research to determine the most applicable business model elements. Section 2.8.2 to 2.8.9 discussed those indicators in detail.

Table 12: Proposed elements for the business model

Evidence from the previous research	Proposed element for the Boutique hotel Business model
Nidumolu et al (2009); Mullins (2001); Lee et al (2010); Abdullah and Haan (2012); Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė (2015)	Design and Development of the Stage
Crick and Spencer (2011); Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė (2015); Mullins (2001)	Service Delivery of the Hotel
Livi (2009); Kim et al (2007); Milović (2012); Bocken et al. (2014)	Online Presence of the Hotel
Horner and Swarbrooke (2016); Moutinho et al (2011); Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė (2015);	Managing the Guest
Chang et al (2011); Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė (2015); Connolly and McGing (2007); Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė (2015)	Managing Stakeholders

table 12(cont.)

Aziz et al. (2008); Johnson (2010); Al-Debei and Avison (2010); Drakulevski and Nakov (2014); Langvinien̄a and Daunoravīpinjt̄ob (2015)	Financial Performance of the Hotel
Manaktola and Jauhari (2007); Molina-Azor̄i et al (2009); Fraj et al (2015); Chou (2014); Park et al (2014)	Environmental Concern of the Business Activities
Ballon (2007); Aziz et al. (2008); Laudon and Traver (2008); Langvinien̄a and Daunoravīpinjt̄ob (2015)	Managing the Strategic Focus of the Hotel

Source: Author's work adopted from (Diaconu and Dutu, 2017); Jones et al (2016); Morris et al (2005); Collins et al (2010); Zou and Dai (2003); Agmapisarn (2015); Ai hua (2008); Angeli et al (2012); Hitchcock et al. (2009)

2.8.2 Design and Development

a. Meaning of Design and Development of the Boutique Hotel

SLTDA (2019b) explained in its definition for Boutique hotel, that it should have unique features, luxurious facilities, personalized services and intimate environment. According to Deroos (2011) and Aggett (2007), this key characteristic combination is known as functional, layout and aesthetic issues in a Boutique hotel. Furthermore, the concept or the key theme of the hotel needs to bridge with the financial capital of the investment to have a healthy return. Due to this nature as mentioned by Day et al (2012) and Mun Lim and Endean (2009) designing and developing one of a kind Boutique hotel including all these characteristics is a challengeable task to any architect and investor. This process is getting more complex when this designing and development part needs to meet the requirements of the clients', employees', top management and other stakeholders simultaneously. Prior to handing over the construction of the hotel to a constructor, a safe, efficient, unique, user friendly and cost effective theme based design needs to develop for the Boutique hotel (Deroos, 2011; Lawson, 1995; Mun Lim and Endean, 2009).

b. Importance of Designing and Developing the Hotel as per the Guidelines

Cassedy (1993) and Templin (1999) identified in their study the success of the Boutique hotel depend with the unique design and the creativity of the hotel. Kotler and Armstrong (2003); Kosar (2014) and Gustavo (2013) mentioned when designing a hotel concept developers should clearly define the layers of consumer needs to make the hotel more sustainable in the long run. Therefore, agreeing with Kotler and Armstrong (2003); De Klumbis et al (2010); Kosar (2014); Mun Lim and Endean (2009) and Gustavo (2013) the core product of the hotel should be room comfort and convenient location, Basic Product is, providing the services to experience the core product, Expected Product is, value added services the hotel provide to the guests and Augmented product is, capacity to differentiate the service offering comparing to the other concepts in the market. Once all these areas are answered by the hotel design, then characteristic application can be implemented.

c. Designing and Developing the Boutique Hotel for the Long Term Survival

According to the SLTDA (2019b); Mun Lim and Endean (2009); Day et al (2012) following (table 13) are the key characteristics which the Boutique hotel needs to consider when developing a Boutique hotel. Further, following Table 13 indicates the supporting literature from academia to validate the importance of those elements.

Table 13: Key characteristics to include to Boutique hotel design and development

Elements highlighted	Author and the year
Location	Chow et al (1995); Mccleary et al (1993); Yang et al (2018); Adam and Amuquandoh (2014); Li and Du (2018);
Hotel Design	Fidzani and Caughey (2015); Wenkatha and Aruna Shantha (2016); Şahiner (2016); Mentzer (2010); Mwendwa (2016); Lee and Lee (2015);
Guest Rooms	Schwartz (2008); Su (2004); Mattila and O'Neill (2003); Wind et al (1989)

table 13(cont.)

Main services Ariffin et al (2013); Sohrabi et al (2012); Su (2004)	House Keeping Facilities	Sohrabi et al (2012); Su (2004); Jones and Siag (2009); Wind et al (1989)
	Kitchen, Restaurant and Bar	Baker et al (2001); Johnston and Jones (2004); Hemmington (2007); Wind et al (1989)
	Sanitary and Safety requirement	Sohrabi et al (2012); Su (2004); Wind et al (1989)
	Swimming pool and other facilities	Sohrabi et al (2012); Akbaba (2006); Ryan and Huimin (2007)
	Facilities for disable guests	Sohrabi et al (2012); Navarro et al (2014)
	Common Area	Sohrabi et al (2012); Ryan and Huimin (2007)

Source: Author's work adopted from Harris and Mongiello (2001); Wadongo et al (2010); Tavitiyaman et al (2012)

Author would like to categorize the above element to following four main themes that hotels need to consider mainly when developing hotels.

1. Location: Location is one of the key element to attract guests to the Boutique hotel (Waas et al, 2020; Anhar, 2001; Dokmeci & Balta, 1999; Shoal et al, 2011; Rivers et al, 1991). Hotel location decision means determination of geographical site for the establishment of the hotel. As mentioned by Timothy and Teye (2009); Adam (2012); Shoal et al (2011) and Van (2006) guests are attracted to Boutique hotels due to the location competencies. Further, they have mentioned that establishing a Boutique hotel in a common tourist destination have both negative and positive characteristics. Among them, as per the explanations by Urtasun and Gutierrez (2006); Yang et al (2014); Shoal et al (2011); Rigall-I-Torrent et al (2011) and Egan and Nield (2000) higher competition may arise, differentiation may be hard to achieve, guests may start to compare the prices and

facilities, geographical disadvantage, access issues will be the negative characteristics. Pizam and Ellis (1999); Rigall-I-Torrent et al (2011); Yang et al (2014); Shoval et al (2011); Rogerson (2010) and Mun Lim and Endean (2008) identified the positive characteristics, such as higher favourability for the Boutique hotel from guests, flexible infrastructure availability, well established location name as a tourist destination, positive competition, will gain the guest favorability and convenience, will shorten the payback period, and improve the profit of the hotel and stronger position in the marketplace (Chou et al, 2008; Adam, 2012). Therefore, it is recommended including either cultural heritage, natural establishments, local contemporary scenes, manmade secondary developments etc... For the key theme of the Boutique hotel design (Khosravi et al, 2014; Shoval et al, 2011). This establishment can then transform to the service delivery of the Boutique hotel by incorporating the key characteristics of those establishments. Moreover, Olga (2009); Shoval et al (2011) and Begin (2000) mentioned trendiness and chicness should be added to the hotel through the location to get more attraction from the guests. However, building a well-hidden Boutique hotel in a tourist destination is a challenge to a Boutique hotel that needs to achieve to have a sustainable future.

According to Stevenson (1993), following are the four steps in the procedures of making the location decision. 1. Identifying all possible criteria to evaluate the locations, 2. Identification of the most important criteria, 3. Identify the possible locations to establish the hotel and 4. Evaluating the options and making the final decision. In order to select the most potential location Wind and Saaty's (1980) Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is proposed since it is the most widely used efficient multi-criteria decision making (MCDM) method to evaluate alternatives (Chou et al, 2008; Kundakçı et al, 2015; Hsu et al, 2009; Yang et al (2014); Vaidya and Kumar (2006); Lin and Wu, 2008). Following figure 12 indicates the criteria that Boutique hotels could follow to evaluate the alternatives and to select the best location according to AHP and MCDM.

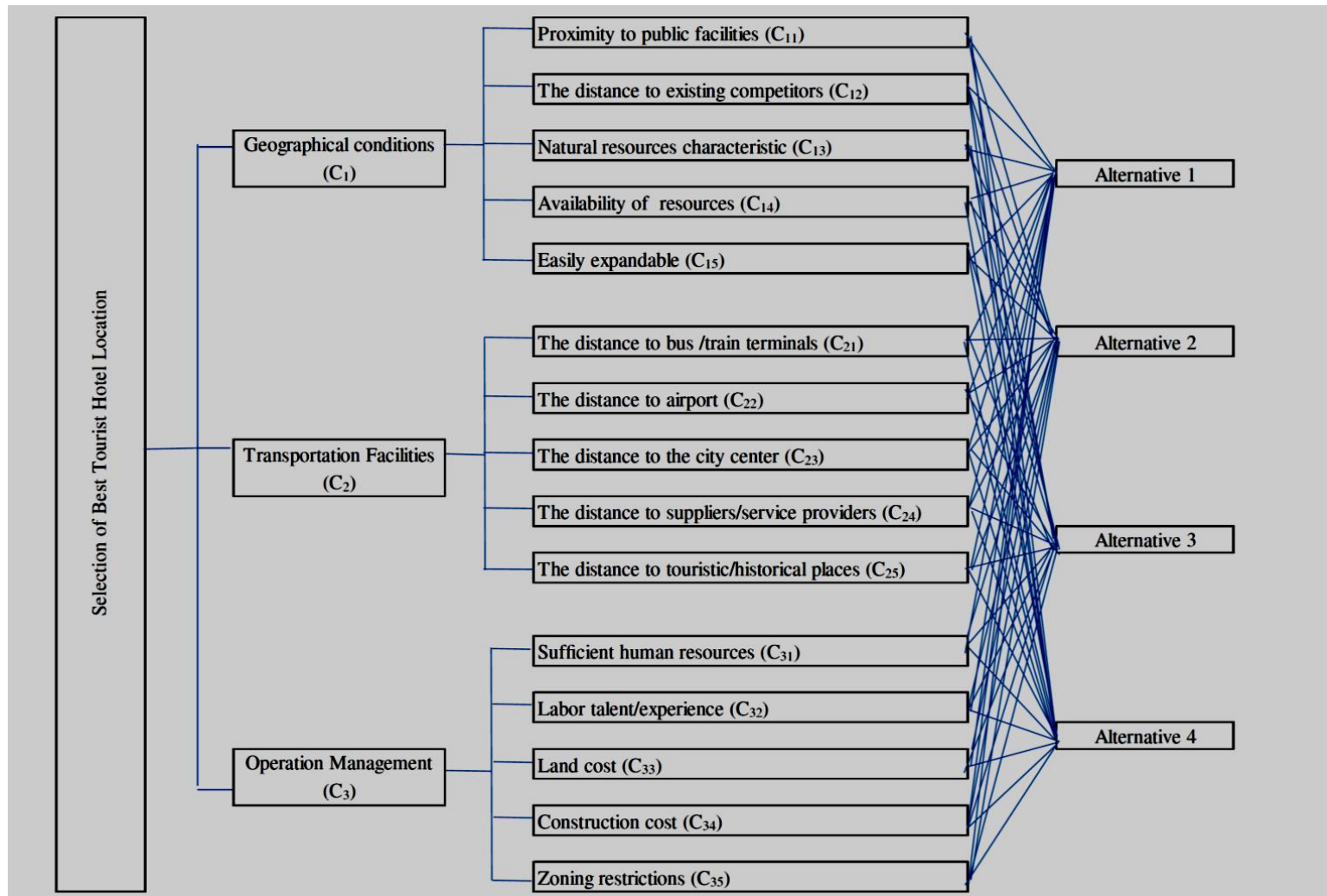


Figure 12: Factors to follow to select a location for a hotel
Source: Kundakçı et al, 2015

2. Hotel Design: Deroos (2011); Penner et al (2013); Ahmed et al (2017) proposed a standard layout plan which the hotels can follow as the following diagram (Figure 13) indicated. Adding to that Rutes et al (2001a) mentioned hotels could follow three methods when deciding the layout, such as slab, tower or atrium methods simultaneously with the standard layout.

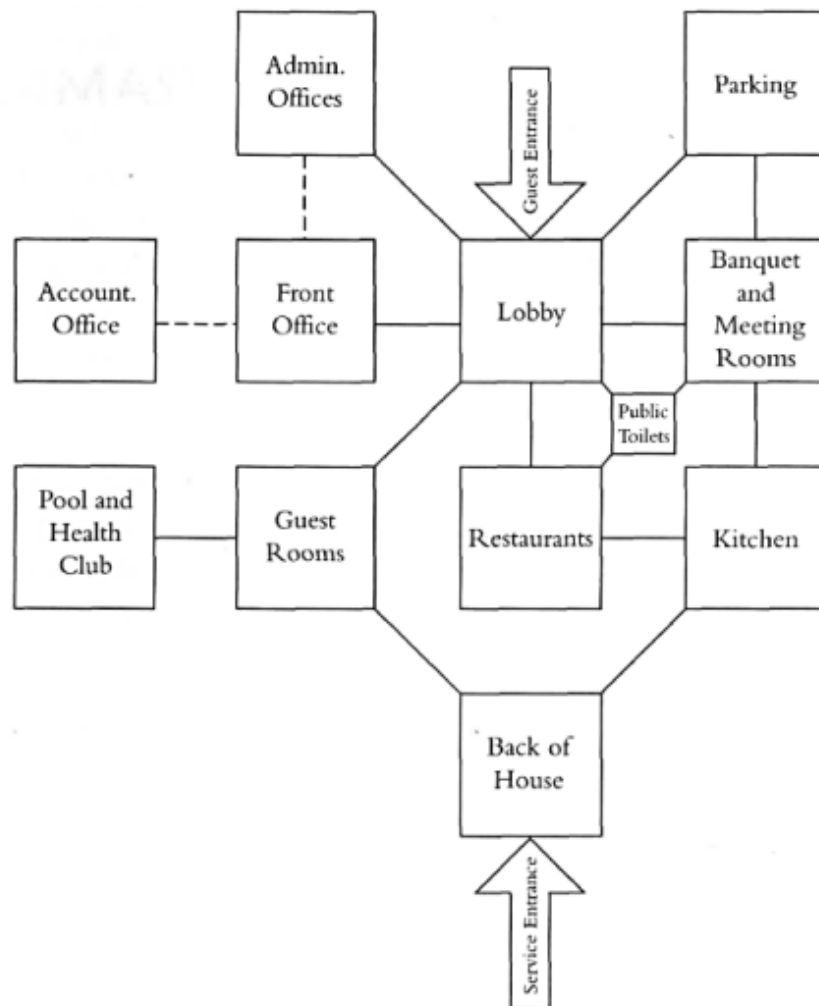


Figure 13: Standard Hotel Layout Plan based on the relationships
Source: Deroos (2011); Penner et al (2013); Ahmed et al (2017)

Aksoy (2012) suggested following layout (Figure 14) as the indoor plan for any Boutique hotel. Based on this plan, Boutique hotel can customized their service offering.



Figure 14: Suggestions for Indoor plan for Boutique hotel
Source: Aksoy (2012)

In order to have a sustainable future with the development of the hotel, as per the explanations by Deroos (2011) programming needs to be carried out. Under this programming part, top management needs to discuss with the architect regarding the activities planning and relationship building. According to the O'Fallon and Rutherford (2010), activities defined as the set of practices which a hotel may perform during the operation process of the hotel to make sure the smooth run of the hotel. Those activities include; check in, check out, kitchen operations, sales and marketing, front office operations, food and beverage operations, back office operations, maintenance, housekeeping operations, safety operations etc.. Moreover, relationship building is defined as interconnecting all the employees and departments of the hotel to achieve the targets of those activities. Among those relationships, relationship between the housekeeping and front desk, relationship between front desk etc... Once the activities planned and relationships were established space allocation could be done through the planning part. In order to facilitate the activities and relationships this space planning needs to carry out. Adding to that, Zemke et al (2018) mentioned that space allocation needs to give priority to both direct activities and support activities. Such as each room access from the front desk plus attention to the space for maintenance.

3. Main services: The main services need to combine with the individuality, intimate delivery and customized offering (Day et al, 2011; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005). Rogerson (2010) mentioned luxurious service offering is a critical success factor for the Boutique hotel in long-term survival. Therefore, during the designing period of the hotel, planners need to give higher attention to the main service planning. This main service designing and development needs to have innovation and creativity since the innovation and creativity got a higher positive relationship to influence the guests to select a hotel (Victorino et al, 2005). Apart from that, differentiation should adapt to each main service to differentiate the hotel offering with the existing service offerings in the marketplace (Chiu and Huang, 2011; Rogerson, 2010; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005). Furthermore, please refer Appendix B for the detailed version of the main services requirement for a Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka.

4. Guest Rooms

McIntosh and Siggs (2005); Khosravi et al (2014) pointed out room design should have a feeling of private home in the guest's mind set. Further, Riewoldt (2006); Rogerson (2010); Mun Lim and Endean (2009); Rutes et al (2001b) mentioned this could be done through the designing part of the hotel by incorporating a theme for the guest rooms. Balekjian and Sarheim (2011); McIntosh and Siggs (2005); Heo and Hyun (2015) highlight the key characteristics which the guest rooms need to include in a Boutique hotel. They were, 1. Concept and theme oriented, 2. Inspiring, 3. Experiential and motivational, 4. Intimate and personalized, 5. Exclusive and Unique, 6. Trendy and chill. According to Masiero et al (2015); Pawlicz et al (2017) and Masiero et al (2016) these key characteristics determine the rates per room which ultimately are the key revenue generation for the Boutique hotel. So, higher attention is required to guest room designing to have a long-term sustainability. Based on the argument which developed by Honcharenko et al (1993), Rutes et al (2001b); Ransley and Ingram (2001); Lockwood and Jones (1990); Elliott et al (2015) and Zhou et al (2014) author has identified a standard guest room layout plan which Boutique hotel can follow. According to Ransley and Ingram (2001); Rutes et al (2001a) and Rutes et al (2001b) the basics standard as demonstrated in figure 14 and 13 should meet by the Boutique hotel. Moreover, based on this layout (Figure 15), Boutique hotels can enhance the service offering. Moreover, these modern rooms need to incorporate the modern technological developments to the room to make

the service delivery more intimate and personalized. However, O'Connor and Murphy (2004) explained, technology should not disturb the key theme of the Boutique hotel.

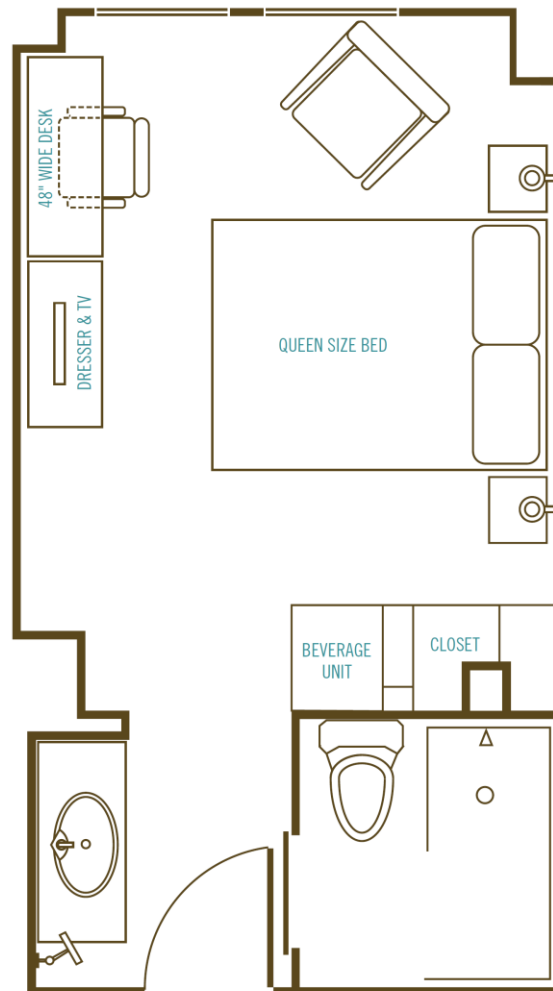


Figure 15: Proposed standard layout for the Boutique hotel

Source: National Trust
Historic Hotels of America (2017)

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2.8.3 Service Delivery of the Hotel

a. Meaning of Service Delivery in a Boutique hotel

Service delivery in boutique hotels is unique due to its products and services (Razalli, 2008). As mentioned by Clarke and Chen (2007) and Henderson (2011) the key differentiation of the Boutique hotel against the other accommodation categories starts from the service delivery. Service delivery of the Boutique hotel needs to consist with specified characteristics to meet the definition of the Boutique hotel or the standards of the Boutique hotel concept. Rogerson (2010); Aggett (2007); Chan (1998) and Victorino et al (2005) identified those characteristics as Individual attitudes, intimate surroundings and environment, customized and personalized services, offering intimacy and exclusivity, guest oriented experiences and high end luxurious facilities. Based on the studies which were carried out by Gregorec et al (2015); Peter and Mattsson (1994) and Mensah and Dei Mensah (2013); Qu et al (2000) the key processes of a boutique hotel can categorize in to stages and delivery plan as following table 14. Driving the service delivery to the sustainability discussed in 2.8.3.c.

Table 14: Service Delivery Stages

Physical Evidences	Hotel Interior	Hotel Exterior	Marketing Tools	Employee outfits	Amenities	Other physical elements
Customer Actions	Evaluating the hotel	Reserving the hotel	Check in & Check out	Stay in the hotel	Enjoying the theme	Feedback
Onstage Actions	Check in	Check out	Value added service delivery	Food and beverage service delivery	Greetings	Employee behaviour
Backstage Actions	Check in	Check out	Value added service delivery	Food and beverage service delivery	Managing the processes	Quality assurance
Support Processes	IT systems	Service suppliers	Security	-	-	-

Source: Author's work adopted from Razalli (2008)

However, as mentioned by Chand (2010); Bharwani and Butt (2012) the hotel service delivery is highly dependent on human interaction. The situation is getting more concerned when it comes to the service delivery with more personalized and intimate manner in Boutique hotel service delivery. Therefore, as mentioned by Brownell (1994); Chand (2010); Spinelli and Canavos (2000); Ariffin et al (2013) and Carev (2008) it is very important to consider the a. respecting guests, b. listening to guests, d. responding to the guests efficiently and effectively, e. serving the guests delightfully and f. understanding the guests to drive the boutique hotels for sustainability.

b. Importance for the sustainability

As mentioned above the service delivery of the Boutique hotel should be in a more specific and unique way to meet the expectations of the target audience. The service delivery of each component should be intimate, customized and personalized as per the client requirement and to the theme of the Boutique hotel to satisfy the each type of guest (Aggett, 2007; Rogerson, 2010). According to the study which was carried out by Baruca and Civre (2012) identified four types of guests, they are guests who select from personal experience, guests who verify all details, guests who need value for money and guests who are adoptable to advertising. Therefore, it is very important to understand how guests perceive the hotel service delivery to their requirements compared to the competitors in the marketplace (Yavas and Babakus, 2005). Delivering the promised memorable story telling experience is the key success factor for long-term survival in Boutique hotels. Phenomenal level of service delivery is the key success to retain, and attract more potential guests to the hotel for long-term survival.

As results from the study of service failures in UK hotels by Lewis and McCann (2004) indicates to lead to sustainability each service delivery process should include a recovery strategy as well. Furthermore, Razalli (2008) focused their study about the Malaysian hotels and identified continuous attention to the new product development as a part of their service delivery process. This continuous innovation should be implemented with the guest participation to get the guest attention to be the innovative leader in the industry (Victorino et al, 2005). So other than the guest focus, service delivery needs to focus for the innovation and service failures for long-term survival.

c. Delivering the Defined Service for Long Term Survival

Services have been defined as an intangible effort delivered by a set of people towards a target group that cannot be owned (Tsang and Qu, 2000). Guests who evaluate the service delivery of any hotel use quality as an evaluation criterion in common. Therefore, as explained by Adesina and Chinonso (2015); Amy et al (1999) hotel quality should be embedded in the long-term service delivery commitment of the hotel. Adding to this study by Tsang and Qu (2000) explained quality excellence in a hotel as achieving higher service standards, gaining competitive advantages, higher guest satisfaction and higher company performance.

When delivering the service, the entire delivery process should be delivered in a way to convince the guests that they are important for the hotel and appreciating them to treat them individually. These steps will lead guests to take the guest actions as explained by Razalli (2008). Furthermore, since Boutique hotels are serving in a more intimate manner the complaining process should follow a “Guest is Always Win” mechanism and complaints should be absorbed into the system in a way to improve the overall service.

Boutique hotels should always listen to the guests on how to serve them in a way that is more delightful. Opening the suggestions and feedback will make the hotel capacity to listen to the guests more in advance. Responding to the guests, within the company framework is essential for long-term guest satisfaction. Though guests sometimes have unrealistic and unfair requests, it is very important to customize and personalize the service delivery effectively to delight the guest rather than following the rules, processes, procedures and manuals like in larger scale operations. Serving the guests with the promised concept and theme is essential to any Boutique hotel. In order to get fulfilled the guest expectations hotel process should be understood by the guest. This understanding should be gained by the guest when evaluating the Boutique hotel to the final decision. Once the decision is taken by the guest the serving can move forward with the unique serving methods of the Boutique hotel. As mentioned by Das et al (2017), giving more than expected is crucial for the success of any Boutique hotel. Therefore, the serving Boutique hotel should understand the guest in detail. With this in detail understanding, a better solution can derive from the hotel system [with the concept and theme] to satisfy the guest.

Mun Lim and Endean (2009) identified how the Boutique hotel service should be in terms of physical evidence. They have stated, physical evidence should be one off design that is rich with a theme or a concept. Followed by Freund de Klumbis (2005); Aggett (2007) mentioned these physical evidences should be more individualistic to be a unique service offering among the key competitors. Open, interactive and high-end luxurious environment should create the guests to go ahead with the guest actions (Mun Lim and Endean, 2009). For example, themed rooms, customized amenities, guest only events, latest technology, etc... can add more values to the Boutique hotel.

Onstage actions by the staff should be highly personalized, intimate and high quality (Razalli, 2008). Furthermore, the professionalism, warmth welcome and friendly service delivery need to add to the onstage service delivery by the staff (Brownell, 1994; Chand, 2010; Spinelli and Canavos, 2000; Ariffin et al, 2013 and Carev, 2008). Apart from that as mentioned by Mun Lim and Endean (2009) staff needs to go the extra mile with company protocols to serve the guest to make them delighted. Adding to this Torres and Kline (2013) and Walls et al (2011) mentioned the sophisticated manner of attention needed to give to the guest with better understanding of the guest rather than leaving to wait until the service was delivered.

All the backstage actions should follow well-defined standards to make sure the luxurious and personalized service to the guests (Rutherford and O'Fallon, 2007; Jones and Lockwood, 2002). Furthermore, the back stage operations should have a capacity to customize the service offerings as per the requests from the in house guests (Bowen and Chen, 2001). As mentioned by Mun Lim and Endean (2009) relaxed ambiance of the Boutique hotel is highly dependent on how the back stage operations are supporting the on stage actions.

Support services should be at high quality to make sure the product and services are meeting the hotel standards (Heung, 2000). Furthermore, Rogerson (2010) and Henderson (2011) value added services of the Boutique hotel needs to be handled either by the on stage staff or the support services. Finally, though the process has different aspects, Petkova (2016) identified the following model (Figure 16) that indicates the process performances along with the responsibilities. Furthermore, Petkova (2016) mentioned

hotel need to perform in their service delivery process as per the model to add a value to the guest to drive to long-term sustainability.

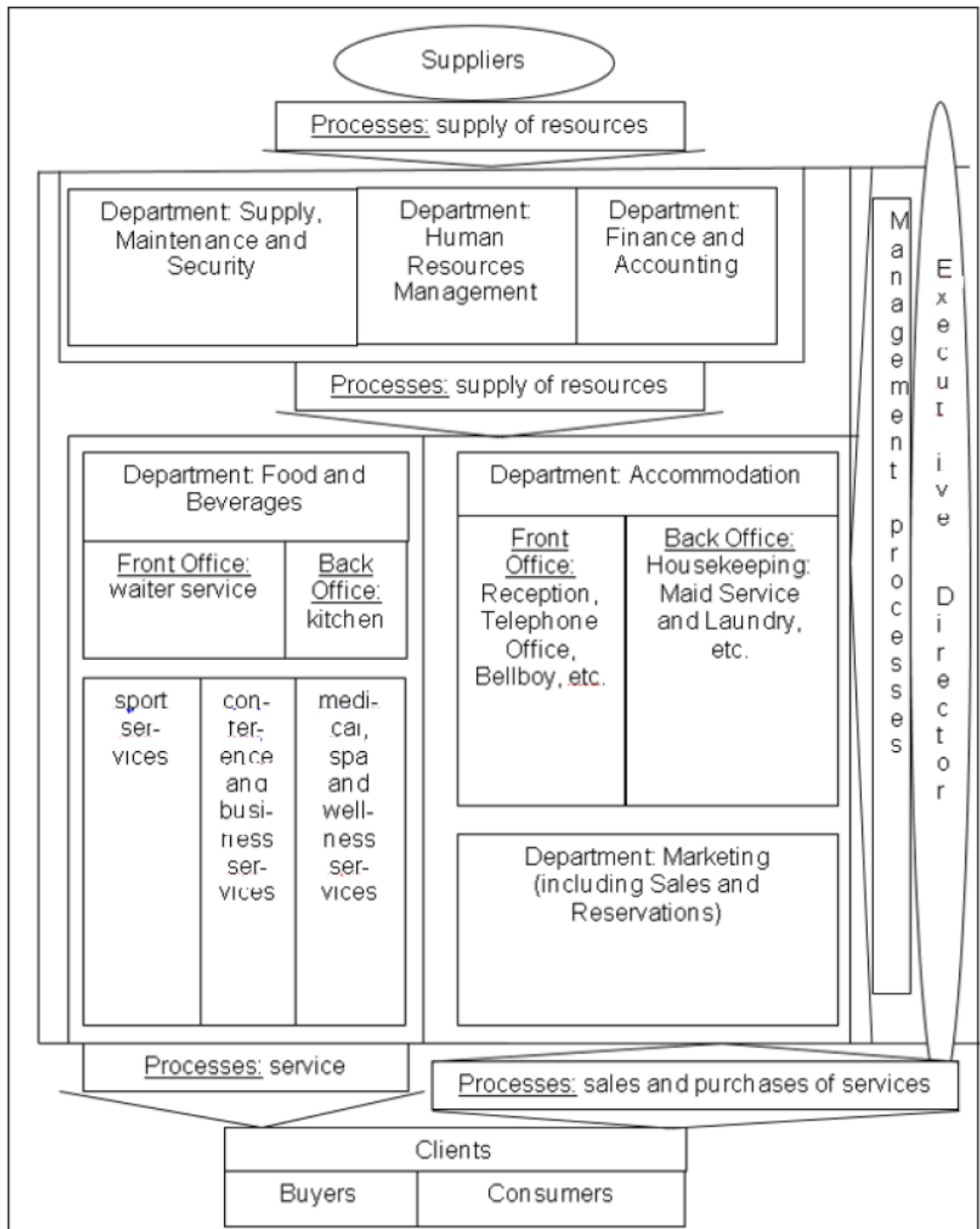


Figure 16: Alignment between the performance and organizational structure
Source: Petkova (2016)

2.8.4 Digital Marketing of the Hotel

a. Meaning of the Digital Marketing Concepts

Hospitality industry is growing fast using digital communication tools (Lwin and Phau, 2013) and refers to appendix C for selling channels for Boutique hotels. Revolutionised the ecommerce activities creating a link between the Boutique hotel and the target guest by implementing digital marketing tools (Law and Hsu, 2006; O'Connor and Frew, 2004; Toms and Taves, 2004). Due to the online activities, competition among the hotels is getting more complex. Furthermore, by utilizing the digital technologies players in the marketplace are pulling the market share from competitors. This online presence can be defined into various sub sections as following table 15 shows.

Table 15: Type of Digital Marketing and Application to the Hotels

Type of Marketing	Description of the Tool to Apply to the Hotel	Source
Social Media Marketing	Implementing social media tools to promote the values or the destination.	Hays et al (2013); Leung et al (2013)
Search Engine Marketing and Search Engine Optimization	Transforming the search engines to a hotel distribution channel.	Paraskevas et al (2011)
Affiliate marketing	More revenue expectations.	Hyun and Perdue (2017)
Content marketing	Creating and publishing content focusing the audience.	Rowley (2008); Koiso-Kanttila (2004)
Email marketing	Utilizing emails to reach the target audience to maintain a direct relationship.	Sterne and Priore (2000)
Pay per click	Brand Awareness could improve	O'Connor (2009)
Maintenance of the website	Product awareness can improve in the target audience.	Law and Chung (2003)

Source: Author's work adopted from Sigala (2003); Shyu et al (2015); Sonlitz and Kozak (2015)

Buhalis and Deimezi (2004) and McBride (2013) advising implementation of all these methods simultaneously not only make attractive in the online environment, but also long term sustainability and will be able to gain with higher brand positioning in the target market mind set.

b. Importance of Being Online

As per the findings of Primorac et al (2012) and Schmidt et al (2008) online presence of the modern hospitality era is considered as the most strongest, efficient and effective communication mode to reach the target consumer. Due to the current method of integration, most of the hotels are now getting higher reservation through this online presence. Furthermore, Kim et al (2006); Wen (2009) and McCarthy et al (2010) researched about the consumer behavior in the hospitality industry and identified, majority of the respondents prefer to have an online communications with the service provider which they are going to select. Adding to this Pilepic et al (2015), Carroll and Sigauw (2003) and Jeong (2004) with the development of the digital technologies, guests are now highly relying on digital technology when it comes to selecting hotels, reviewing hotels, paying to hotels, and rating the services of the hotels. Therefore, according to their studies it is evident the importance of the online presence to any service provider in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, Mills and Law (2004) further identified this behavior. They have mentioned consumer behavior, internet, tourism, and hospitality are interconnected factors that need to integrate to a model to operate to drive the applying organizations to sustainability.

There is no one feasible model that is applicable to every e business activity in the world. However, according to the definitions and scope of the operations Boutique hotels need to be online such as the rest of the hospitality service providers (Jones et al, 2013). That is because, most of the time Boutique hotels are offering tailor made services to the client and highly depending on the guest satisfaction. Meantime, even in Sri Lanka a larger number of Boutique hotels are established island wide without having higher brand awareness in the target audience but still charging similar or higher room rates to upscale hotels. Larger hotels who have higher resource capacity already engaging with the online activities to mark their presence (Thomson & Failmezger, 2005). But as per the criticisms

developed by Mistillis et al (2004) Boutique hotels are lacking behind full implementation of strategic initiatives to grab the advantages of being online. Therefore, as explained by Dinçer et al (2016); Kleinrichert et al (2012) a model or a tool needed by the Boutique hotel industry to get the highest efficiency through their marketing activities.

c. Implementing Online Marketing Strategy for Long Term Survival

Range of factors are getting affected to any hotel when it comes to development of an e-marketing strategy (El-Gohary, 2012, Samaraweera and Jayasiri, 2016). However, developing a sustainable online marketing strategy to deploy along with the offline modes are crucial for the success of being present in online world. Spencer and Giles (2001) and Sharma (2011) suggested following frame as the suggested planning steps to the digital marketing mix implementation.

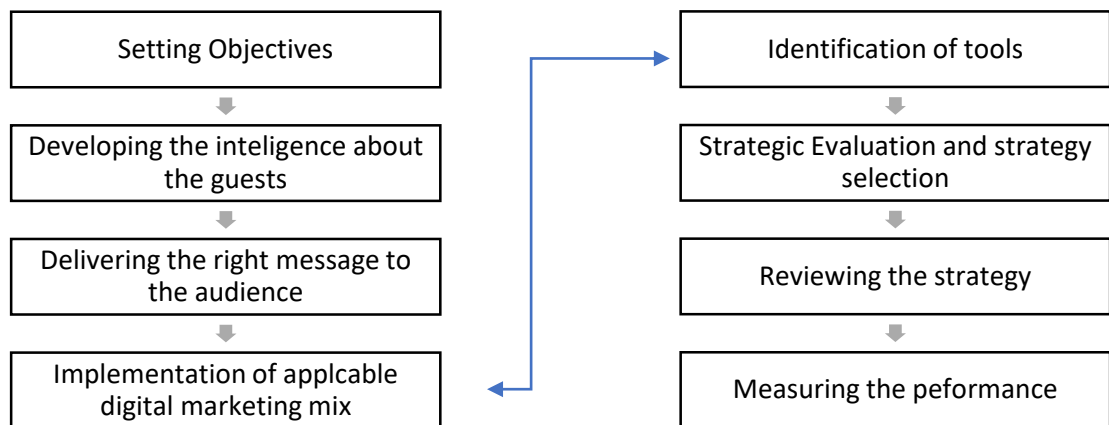


Figure 17: Planning Digital Marketing Mix

Source: Author’s work adopted from Spencer and Giles (2001) and Sharma (2011)

Pilepic et al (2015); Gazzoli et al (2008); Thakran and Verma (2013) and O'Connor and Frew (2002); Radwan (2016); Bulankulama et al (2015) indicated in their studies attention to 1. Branding the hotel website, 2. Search Engines, 3. Online travel agents, 4. Email gateways, 5. Mobile booking functions, 6. Central reservation systems and 6. Social media, as elements to consider for a suitable digital marketing strategy. Based on above key criteria Pilepic et al (2015) explained five different aspects that need to be implemented to be established in the online world as a hospitality service provider, 1. Hotel Room Rates (Maintaining best available rate), 2. Hotel Value Added Services, 3. Availability of the hotel rooms, 4. Attractive contents (Photos, offers, events etc...).

As identified by Dinçer et al (2016); Jones et al (2013); Jones et al (2016); Khosravi et al (2014); Kleinrichert et al (2012) linking the online presence to the operations of the Boutique hotel will drive the Boutique hotel to a sustainable future. This can be achieved by giving priority to 1. Guest reviews and comments on delivered services and making positive comments visible to other users (Ye et al, 2011; Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009), 2. Establishing the brand name in the destination positioning map through search engine optimization (Dou et al, 2010; Paraskevas et al, 2011), 3. Allowing guests to personalize the service which they intend to have (Rus and Negruşa, 2014; Kim et al, 2011), 4. Viewing and delivering a virtual experience which they are going to experience (Kim and Mattila, 2011), 5. Delivering cost advantages to guests by minimizing the intermediaries (Carroll and Siguaw, 2003), 6. Implementing differentiated revenue generating mechanisms and achieving higher revenues (O'Connor and Murphy, 2008) and 6. Capturing every corner of the target audience through all the online modes (Noone et al, 2011).

First method to have successful digital marketing is to be positioned with online guest reviews. According to Öğüt and Onur (2012), online guest reviews are known as an online review in digital format about the product or service they experienced. Öğüt and Onur (2012) mentioned in their study that the majority of the hotels are focusing on bad or negative reviews which is actually a minor percentage compared to positive comments they have received online. Therefore, a clear and focused attention needs to develop to move forward with the positive reviews and comments to gain higher target audience attention. All the positive comments received by the guests need to make available in all the digital formats to get the familiarization and favourability for the target audience (Öğüt and Onur, 2012)

In order to position the hotel in the destination map along with the search engine optimization and search engine marketing, hotel websites need to be maintained in the most updated nature. As the second method, Law and Cheung (2006) mentioned hotel websites as the most basic method to mark the presence online. Further, Baloglu and Pekcan (2006) advised based on the company website, hotels can move ahead with the other forms of online modes. Further, according to the Lu et al (2017) results about the online behavior of the guests, the percentage of reservations that receive from the mobile devices is increased compared to the desktop based reservation systems. Therefore, along with the standard desktop style website, Ozturk et al (2016) suggest an

online solution needs to develop to cater the mobile devices as well. As mentioned by Aggarwal and Aggarwal (2010) higher investment for mobile technologies are very important for the long-term survival of any hotel in the current business environment. Adding more, the website of the hotel needs to be realtime and ability to cater the personalized guest requirements (Law and Hsu, 2006).

Third, according to the results that derive from Chan and Guillet (2011) maintaining social media platforms for the company got a higher potentiality to be discovered by the target audience rather than other online methods. So as identified by Kim et al (2015) 1. Social media accounts – such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, are very important to any hotel in the current business environment to drive the hotel to long-term sustainability. Kim et al (2015) mentioned these social media channels need to be maintained through a centralized system that is able to maintain the hotel reputation in a uniform manner to avoid unethical and higher pressures from competing firms. Moreover, in order to get the maximum opportunities of the social media accounts, hotels need to link the positive comments to the social media accounts to increase the guest favorability towards the hotel (Chan and Guillet, 2011). With data Kim et al (2006) and Tikkanen et al (2009), mentioning adding virtual experience is necessary to satisfy the guest that will lead to profitability.

Fourth method, is maintaining a direct and positive relationship with the online travel agents and with other suppliers (Pilepic et al, 2015). According to Inversini and Masiero (2014) and Lee et al (2013), online travel agents are one of the key partners to generate more sales to a hotel. Therefore, managing rooms through a centralized online system and allocating rooms through online travel agents are very important. Apart from that, maintaining the best available rate for every online travel agent is important for the supplier attraction and guest attraction (Choi and Kimes, 2002).

Fifth is, developing differentiated revenue generation initiatives through the digital marketing platforms. As explained by Jackson and Ahuja (2016) advertisement, sales promotions, direct marketing, public relations activities and personal selling activities need to be implemented through online platforms. Innovative features, creative aspects and differentiated methods will always mark the hotel presence in the online arena and finally will allow the hotel to gain a higher position in the market place against the

competitors. This position will be able to sell to different target audiences to generate additional revenue towards the hotel (Weinstein and Morritt, 2012).

Finally, as mentioned by Wang (2019) and Mebuge et al (2019) implementation of the digital marketing activities should perform with all offline sales and marketing activities. However, higher competitive advantage will be able to gain by giving higher priority for digital marketing (Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Yelkur and Nêveda DaCosta, 2001; O'Connor and Frew, 2004).

2.8.5 Managing the Customer

a. Meaning of Managing Customers

Most of the previous studies agree with the fact that managing the customer and satisfying the customer is a key success factor for any hotel (Choi and Chu, 2001, Lu et al, 2015). Furthermore, it is very clear that the target market of the Boutique hotel is the guests who prefer high level of intimate, personalized, customized and upscale luxurious facilities and service delivery (Mun Lim and Endean, 2009; Nur Farahwati Ahmad, 2017; Götz, 2015, Gao, 2012). Through managing customers successfully, hotels should achieve customer satisfaction. Meaning of customer satisfaction can be defined as an individual interpretation regarding the perception about the service performance against the expected performance from the same service (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004; Nasution and Mavondo, 2008).

However, limited research has been carried out regarding the Boutique hotel operations and guest satisfaction in Sri Lankan context (Kumbukage and Gunawardana, 2016). It is very important to have a clear understanding about the Boutique hotel guests through extended surveys and studies.

b. Importance of Managing Customers

There is a positive relationship between the customer satisfaction and the profitability in a hotel (Torres and Kline, 2006). This assumption is a heart of the sustainable relationship between customer satisfaction and profitability (Heskett et al, 1997).

According to Jones & Sasser (1995), they indicated highly delighted customers are six times likely to repeat to the service than a satisfied customer. It is always believed retaining an existing customer is more profitable than attracting a new one (Weinstein, 2012). Therefore, hotels need to make sure that the guests are experiencing the hotel service satisfactorily. Apart from that, frustrated guests spread the negative word of mouth throughout the target audience for the hotel (Weinstein, 2012).

Standard components such as guest rooms, extended dining hours, restaurants, swimming pools, spa and wellness packages, bar and travel solutions are no longer luxury service offerings in a hotel (Dominici and Guzzo, 2010). As mentioned by Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) these have become the basic components or the fundamental service aspects to meet the customer expectations. Moreover, with the developments in the industry, with the intense competition in the global hospitality industry and with the changes of the guest behavior this traditional service offering has been eroded (Choi and Chu, 2001). Adding to that, as mentioned by Choi and Chu (2001) nowadays the guests are expecting more advanced service offerings with many more value added services. According to Walls et al (2011), this has become more complex in upper scale hotels that are charging premium pricing for luxurious service offerings. Furthermore, as mentioned by Herstein et al (2018) this advanced type of consumer behavior can be expected in the Boutique hotel guests as well.

Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) mentioned in their study volume and the pace of the hotel competition is growing. Kosar (2014) and Dominici and Guzzo (2010) mentioned Boutique hotel competition has created extended choices to the guests to select for the value they pay and further more Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) indicated that the hotels are now focusing on delivering augmented level services to distinguish themselves from the competitors. Mostly, hotels are achieving the competitive advantages through price leadership or service differentiation. According to Dominici and Guzzo (2010) to succeed with those strategies, Boutique hotels need to define the customer they serve while focusing on the target market.

c. Managing Customers Successfully for Long Term Survival

Herath et al (2016) identified all the key elements which need to include in the Sri Lankan hotel service delivery to meet the customer satisfaction as, 1. Service Quality, 2. Service Dimensions and 3. Distance to the destination. Achieving higher customer satisfaction with an intangible service delivery is a challenging task. Measurement of the customers satisfaction is the most important actionable element during the delivery of higher customer satisfaction (Athula, 2014; Culiberg and Rojšek, 2010; Carol et al, 2015). Good level of customer satisfaction measurement will provide feedback regarding the areas that need to improve indicating service delivery elements that got higher influence for higher customer satisfaction etc... (Gunaratne, 2014; Gupta, 2017; Herath et al 2016).

Therefore, very close attention should be given to the customer on how to manage the customer, who are the customers, what type of customers, what are the key components customer expect from the Boutique hotel service delivery, how to deliver a delightful service, what makes customer dissatisfied in Boutique hotel service delivery and how to gain the customer loyalty needed to define and apply to the service delivery (Kumukage and Gunawardana, 2016, Athula, 2014; Culiberg and Rojšek, 2010; Carol et al, 2015). Since the satisfaction of the guests' are driving the service quality of the hotel service delivery, meeting the perceived quality of the customers by the hotel service will make the customer satisfied (Sudin, 2011; Nasution and Mavondo, 2005). Adding more, Valdani (2009) mentioned the sustainable advantage of achieving customer satisfaction relies on meeting above-mentioned factors through a defined method. As Figure 18 demonstrates with a clear service quality model between the expectations and actual delivery this objective could be achieved by a Boutique hotel.

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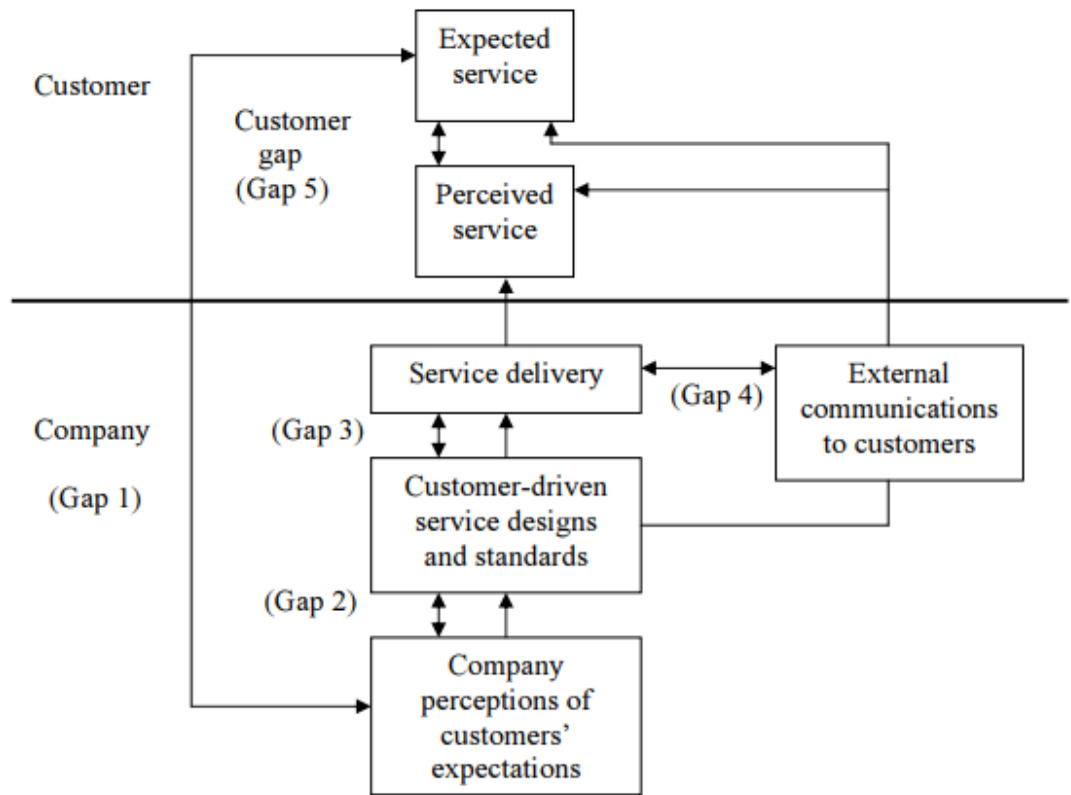


Figure 18: Service Quality Model

Source: Parasuraman et al (1985); Parasuraman et al (1988); Chinedum et al (2017); Mohsin and Lockyer (2010); Islam et al (2015)

Achieving an improved service quality level is the success factor for the higher customer satisfaction along with the survival of the hotel in modern business environments (Amin et al, 2013; Demirkan, 2016; Gunaratne, 2014). Therefore, identification of the dimensions of the service quality for customer satisfaction is vital (Culiberg and Rojšek, 2010). Available literature suggest a range of dimensions to measure the service quality (Erto and Vanacore, 2002; Franceschini and Rossetto, 1997). Out of those dimensions, SERVQUAL instrument was attracted as the most suitable method to measure the service quality level (Gilbert and Wong, 1999; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Devi Juwaheer, 2004; Stefano et al, 2015). Following (Table 16) are the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument that can be used to measure the service quality for a greater customer satisfaction that will lead to manage the customer.

Table 16: SERVQUAL instrument

Measurement Tool	Description of the Tool to Apply to the Hotel
Tangibles	Available facilities, appearance of the human resources and key personals, instruments
Reliability	Capacity to deliver the promised service accurately
Responsiveness	Willingness to respond customer needs and requirements
Assurance	Knowledge about the service delivery and the capacity to inspire the trust and confidence
Empathy	Intimate and personalized service delivery to each customer

Source: Author's work adopted from Akbaba (2006); Taylan Dortyol et al (2014); Raza et al (2012); Alharbi et al (2016); Rauch (2015).

Finally, as mentioned in above sections, customer satisfaction at a delightful level is a critical success factor for a hotel for long-term survival (Pozo et al, 2016). With higher satisfaction levels, a higher number of customer attractions will be able to get for higher room prices that will be leading to a higher profitability (Amin et al, 2013; Demirkan, 2016; Gunaratne, 2014). Furthermore, customer loyalty will be able to gain towards the hotel that will be another critical success factor for the long-term survival (Bowen, and Chen, 2001; Carev, 2008; Carmen and Marius, 2016; Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000; Chow et al, 1995; Yang and Lau, 2015). With all these elements, a higher number of repeat customers will be able to gain which will hinder the cost of sales and marketing. Apart from that, customer referrals will generate more customers with lesser sales and marketing costs that will lead to long-term survival (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2003).

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2.8.6 Managing Stakeholders

a. Meaning of Managing Stakeholders

According to Freeman (2010), stakeholders are known as a person, group or organization who got an interest towards the company and its operations. Adding to this Eden and Ackermann (1998) mentioned stakeholders could be recognized as a set of people who can change, negotiate, drive and stimulate the strategic direction of the company. Furthermore, these stakeholders might get affected from company strategic direction (Freeman, 2010; Zech, 2014). As per the identification two types of stakeholders, which are internal and external stakeholders need to be identified clearly by any organization. Same as other accommodation providers, Boutique hotels also have the same stakeholder groups. The key term of stakeholder management means achieving stakeholder needs, interest and objectives throughout the life cycle of the company by implementing appropriate levels of engagement strategies (Perrini and Tencati, 2006; Lo, 2013; Huckestein and Duboff, 1999).

b. Importance of Managing Stakeholders

To survive in the massive competition in the tourism industry managing multiple stakeholder relationships has become a challenge to all the hotels (Lo, 2013). This is getting more challenging due to the intangible nature of the service. Furthermore, due to the globalization and pressure from the stakeholder groups, stakeholder management has become further challenging to the hospitality industry (Gnanapala, 2016a; Gnanapala, 2016b; Bryson, 2004). Many of the scholars are arguing to implement a spacious strategy to manage the stakeholders since by managing the stakeholders and by having a positive relationship with the stakeholders the firms' performance can get enhanced and will be able to drive to long-term survival (Jones and Wicks, 1999; Rodgers and Gago, 2004; Godfrey, 2005; Ferreira and Wanda, 2012).

Stakeholders have a direct influence towards the hotel service deliveries and outcomes. As mentioned by Huckestein and Duboff (1999) hotel management process without the stakeholder participation will make the outcomes into negative outcomes and will slow down the move of the delivery process. Stakeholder management and the relationship

with the operations are crucial for the implementation of the company strategies and processes while driving the hotel to the vision and mission of the company (Ivanova, 2011; Huckestein and Duboff (1999).

According to Markwick (2000), quoting Mendelow introduced a framework called power influence framework to identify the power and influence that the stakeholders have towards the applying company. Further, as per Markwick (2000), power and influence need to integrate to the strategy implementation part of the company. As mentioned by Raisal and Gunapalan (2014); Lo (2013) and Rodgers and Gago (2004) power of the stakeholder can simply convert to a negative actions against the company strategies and Kang et al (2010) mentioned company should know the negative influences which the stakeholders can perform against the company strategies. Therefore, in order to be successful with the hotel operations, strategic planning needs to be implemented after prioritizing the stakeholders' needs and objectives (Freeman, 2010). Further, Matos and Silvestre (2013) mentioned once the identification part has been done, through the business model of the hotel company should know how to address the stakeholder needs to satisfy those. Adding to this Dedeoğlu and Demirer (2015) and Al-Ababneh (2016) did research about the differences in the service quality perceptions in the hotel industry. According to their finding stakeholders at different levels, perceive same quality aspects in SERVQUAL model. Therefore, when it comes to evaluating the satisfaction and requirements it is very important to align stakeholders to make the hotel business practices smooth and efficient (Köseoğlu et al, 2017; Nair and Choudhary, 2016).

For example, Shangrila Hotels and Resorts have conducted a quantitative and qualitative research regarding the sustainability performance of the hotel, long-term plans and stakeholder involvement and communication for the strategic focus (Shangrila Hotels, 2012). Based on the findings of the survey they have categorized the stakeholders as per the level of importance mentioning the key tactic to manage the stakeholders positively (Figure 19).

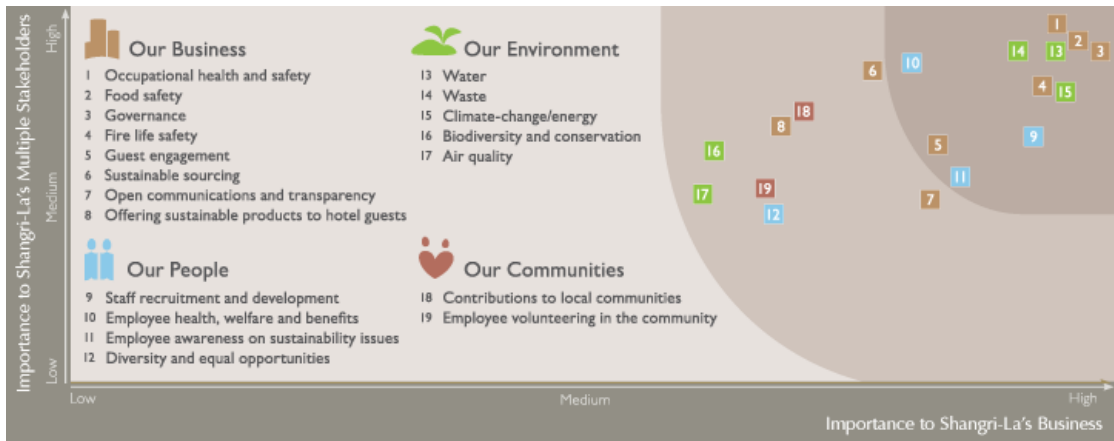


Figure 19: Shangri-La Stakeholder map

Source: Shangri-La Hotels, 2012

c. Driving Stakeholders to Obtain Long Term Survival

As mentioned above since the stakeholder relationships are important to the strategy formulation of the boutique hotels, a comprehensive approach is required to integrate the stakeholder management to the business model for the Boutique hotels. Two established models are common in practice to manage the stakeholders. First is stakeholder view (SHV) (Figure 20) which was developed by Post et al (2002). As per the model, Post et al (2002) and Lo (2013) suggested the long-term sustainability of the hotels relying on the relationship with the stakeholders. Furthermore, with the application of the SHV analysing and managing the stakeholders will be much smooth (Post et al, 2002).

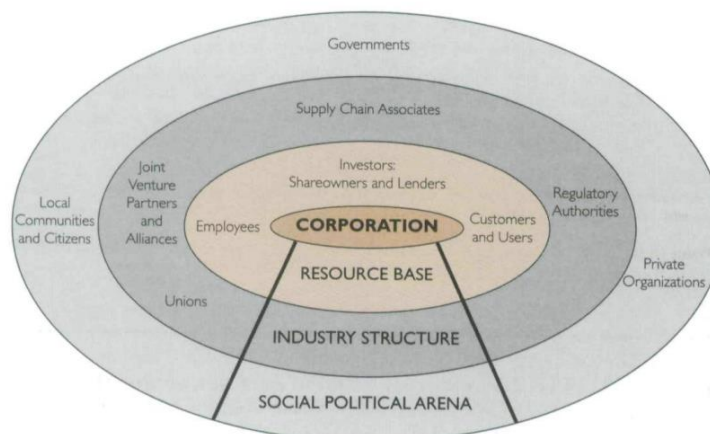


Figure 20 : Stakeholder View

Source: Post et al (2002)

Once the identification is completed, the “*Power Influence Frame*” (Figure 21) that was identified by Mendelow A in 1991 can apply to realize the power and influence to implement the strategic aspects for long-term survival.

		Level of interest	
		Low	High
Power	Low	A	B
	High	C	D

Figure 21: Mendelow's power interest matrix

Source: Gledhill (2010)

Refer section 2.8.5 regarding managing guests. Other than the guests, the most important stakeholder group for a hotel is their employees. Doherty et al (2001) study about large hotels indicated sophisticated and committed HR policies and procedures are maintained by large hotels. However, clear attention to the HR is vital for the success of the Boutique hotel (Agget, 2007). Hiyal and Chandana (2013) mentioned Sri Lankan hotels are facing inadequacy in finding HR for the hotels. In their article, they have suggested solutions promoting overseas experience, requesting mandatory qualifications, promoting second career options and improving learning packages. Furthermore, for the sustainable development of the hotel, the business model needs to deliver mutual benefits to both HR and the management of the company (Daily News, 2012; Jayawardane, 2003; Jayawardane, 2012; Chandra et al, 2013). According to the study by Domínguez-Falcón et al (2016) and Hakan et al (2006) mentioned in their study high commitment HR practices need to be implemented along with the hotel business practices to link employee satisfaction and superior guest service to delight the guests. To face this challenge as per the study Domínguez-Falcón et al (2016) HR commitment model can apply to the business model (Figure 22) for the Boutique hotels to have a greater sustainability.

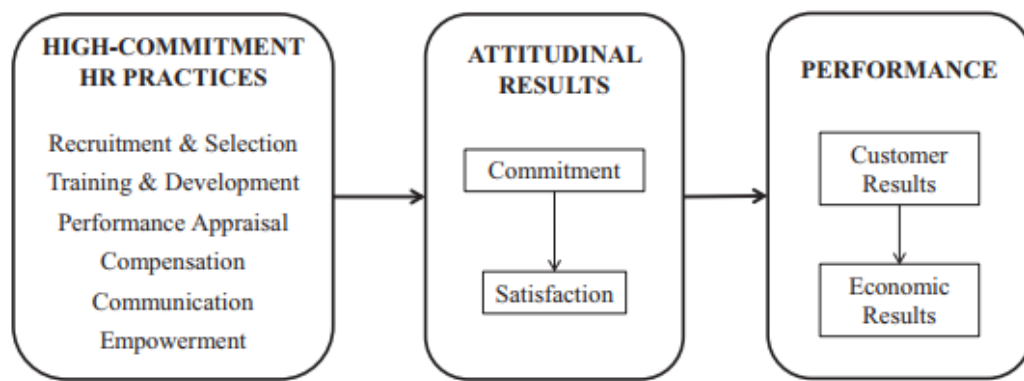


Figure 22: Proposed Framework to have higher HR commitment

Source: Domínguez-Falcón et al (2016)

Owners of any hotel have a higher influence toward the performance of hotels (Lo, 2013; Xiao et al, 2012). For an example, citing Xiao et al. (2012) Lo (2013) mentioned financial performance of the Chinese hotels were highly influenced by the corporate strategies which were implemented by the owners. Lo (2013), identified from their study, trust and commitment are the key antecedents to manage the owners of hotels. Through a process of trust development, needs of owners could realize (Lo, 2013). Adding to that, to maintain a long-term relationship with the owners' commitment should realize the respect and appreciation of the owners (Lo, 2013).

Suppliers of any hotel need support to operate responsibly to achieve the core objectives of the hotel. Co and Barro (2009) mentioned according to the stakeholder theory three attributes can identify to interact with the stakeholders. Moving further, citing Mitchell et al. (1997) in Co and Barro (2009) mentioned eight categories of stakeholders identified based on attributes of stakeholder theory. Finally, Co and Barro (2009) identified eight supplier management strategies to implement to have a positive relationship to achieve objectives. Therefore, according to Fco and Rodríguez (2004) what type of supplier, when and who can be selected based on the tendency to outsource by the hotel (Refer table 17).

Table 17: Stakeholder Management Strategies for profitable supplier relationship

Attributes for stakeholder interaction	Categories of Stakeholders	Stakeholder Management Strategies
Power	1. Dormant; 2. Discretionary; 3. Demanding; 4. Dominant; 5. Dangerous; 6. Dependent; 7. Definitive; and 8. Non-stakeholder.	1. Defend
Legitimate		2. Cooperate
		3. Isolate
Urgency		2. Pressure
		3. Follow
		4. Adapt
		5. Educate
		6. Lead

Source: Author’s work adopted from Co and Barro (2009)

Competition in the tourism sector is intense. Managing them with an ethical business relationship is essential to avoid price inflation or loss of market share in the long run (Tunming and Tunming, 2019; Fernandes and Duma, 2019). Enz and Thompson (2011) developed a tool to analyse the competitors to take the strategic decisions. The proposed tool demonstrated in figure 23. They suggest categorizing the competitors based on critical success factors and ranking them helps to evaluate them.

	A	B	C	H	I	J	K	L	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X		
1	Critical Success Factors																		
2	#	Factor	Weight	Sea Breeze	Daisy	Ocean View	Yorshire	Regal		The Palace	Grand	Drifters	Sea Breeze	Daisy	Ocean View	Yorshire	Regal		
3	1	Customer loyalty & repeat business	23	7	4	5	1	1		161	138	115	161	92	115	23	23		
4	2	Strong employee culture of service	21	8	3	7	1	1		63	147	105	168	63	147	21	21		
5	3	Strong brand differentiation	19	5	4	5	1	1		95	95	95	95	76	95	19	19		
6	4	Well furnished guest room	16	6	6	8	5	6		64	112	80	96	96	128	80	96		
7	5	Convenient Location	12	5	8	9	3	8		84	60	72	60	96	108	36	96		
14	Total Weight:			100							Absolute Percentage Score:	46.7%	55.2%	46.7%	58.0%	42.3%	59.3%	17.9%	25.5%
15											Relative Percentage Score:	78.8%	93.1%	78.8%	97.8%	71.3%	100.0%	30.2%	43.0%
16	Number of Critical Success Factors:			5							Ranking:	4	3	4	2	6	1	8	7
17	LEGEND																		
19	Parameters/Inputs																		
20	Calculated Cells																		

Figure 23: Competitor profiling and analysing tool
Source: Enz and Thompson (2011)

2.8.7 Financial Performance of the Hotel

a. Meaning of Financial Performance Management

Financial performance assessment is a key role to make the hotel sustainable in the competitive market place (Nunes and Machado, 2012; Anderson et al., 1999). Financial performance means achievement of the financial objectives by performing financial activity (Cvelbar and Dwyer, 2013; Bercovitz and Mitchell, 2007). Furthermore, achievement of long-term profitability is the key aim of any successful financial performance of any hotel (Cvelbar and Dwyer, 2013; Bercovitz and Mitchell, 2007; Inanov and Zhechev, 2012). But, financial performance of any hotel not limited to profitability, but also efficiency, liquidity and gearing also can be applied (Neuman et al, 2010). Those are considered as indicators or the performance measurements for financial performance for a hotel. Based on the above four main indicators Wadongo et al (2010); Li and Ma (2016) and Kimes (2016) developed following (Table 18) financial performance measurements.

Table 18: Financial Performance Measurements

Financial Performance Measurements	
Net profit and gross profit attained	Total sales
Room turnover	Paying suppliers and creditors on time
Quick Ratio	Total operating costs of the hotel
Labour cost percentage	Food and beverage sales
Total shareholder' capital investment	Food cost percentage
Daily room occupancy	Daily average meal check
Total revenue achieved	Daily average room rate

Source: Author's work adopted from Wadongo et al (2010); Sherma and Upneja (2005); Ferguson and Smith (2014)

b. Importance of Managing Financial Performance

As mentioned by Anderson et al (1999) and Chen (2009) financial performance is a needy assessment for the long-term and short-term survival. Better financial performance

means the achievement of profitability. However, according to the studies done by Kaufman et al (1996) and Poorani and Smith (1995) profitability in a hotel is positively linked with the revenue of the hotel, pricing techniques and the level of the investment for the fixed assets. Further, Sritharan (2015) identified in his study of Sri Lanka, the size of the firm is positively related to the profitability of any hotel. Quoting SLTDA, Miththapala (2018) mentioned per room cost of manufacturing for Boutique hotels as a comparison to other grades depicted in the following Table 19.

Table 19: Per Room Construction Cost

Hotel	Per Room Cost Rs. Mn
5 stars	28
4 stars	23
3 stars	18
2 stars	12
1 stars	7
Boutique Hotels	30

Source: Author's work adopted from Miththapala (2018)

Above table 19 indicates the importance that the entrepreneurs of boutique hotels should pay in Sri Lankan context compared to the other hotel operations in terms of securing the expected return on investment. Hotels that are focusing on long-term sustainability need to implement financial tools on behalf of long-term profitability rather than focusing for the short-term profitability (Alagathurai, 2013). Since Boutique hotels have a higher capital investment, short-term profitability is not realistic. Therefore, analysing the contribution which is going to cover the variable cost and the fixed cost is very important (Burgess and Bryant, 2001). Higher the contribution to cover the fixed cost and the variable cost in the short term will be able to drive the hotel to a higher financial performance (Aissa and Goaid, 2016). Furthermore, with this all the financial objectives will be able to achieve. Therefore, in order to achieve a higher contribution, starting from revenue management to cost management all the initiatives need to be implemented (Aissa and Goaid, 2016).

For long-term survival, efficient and effective resource management is crucial. To achieve this resource allocation and distribution need be arranged with the proper knowledge of performance requirements with existing resources. This target for the sustainable future will only be able to be achieved if proper financial performance measurement exists (Boll, 2011; Martin & Petty, 2000). The key advantages of having financial performance measurement to any hotel are 1. Easy access to data through financial statements, 2. Easy to calculate the value and interpretation, and 3. Ease of comparing with different levels (Cvelbar and Dwyer, 2013).

However, there is an indication that registered properties manage the financial aspects effectively and efficiently for long-term survival, which needs to be addressed with a proper business model inclusion (Alagathurai, 2014).

c. Implementing Financial Performance Management for Long Term Sustainability

Five major studies have been identified as the studies regarding the financial performance and assessment in the hotel industry. They are Emeksiz et al. 2006; Heo and Lee, 2009; Kimes and McGuire, 2001; Kimes and Singh, 2009). However, In order to achieve the long-term sustainability a higher level of contribution needs to be maintained until the fixed cost and operational cost gets covered (Donaghy, 1996; Burgess and Bryant, 2001). Therefore, to drive the hotel revenue management to a sustainable level, two proposed methodologies are revenue management and cost management. Adding more tools and techniques needs to be implemented to enhance the contribution through these methodologies (Donaghy, 1996).

As per the explanation by Haktanir and Harris (2005), Hung et al (2010), Weatherford and Kimes (2003) when it comes to managing independent hotel operations revenue management plays a significant role. In other words, this is Yield Management. Yield management is about selling the room to the target guest at the right time with the right price (Farouk El et al, 2011). However, unfortunately this yield management strategy still has not been fully implemented by the Sri Lankan Boutique hotels (Wahab, 2018). This has led to a financial pressure with the operations (Wahab, 2018). Revenue management has five pillars which the hotels need to address as a part of the process of managing financial resources for sustainability (Sigala et al, 2001; Donaghy et al, 1998; Hansen and

Eringa, 1998; Tranter, 2009). Those pillars are 1. Guest segmentation, 2. Existing capacity identification, 3. Predictions and forecasting, 4. Distribution strategy identification and 5. Pricing strategies (Ivanov, 2014; Queenan et al, 2011; Chung et al, 2004).

First technique is to identify the guest segmentation that the hotel can use based on the existing capacities (Bowen, 1998). Furthermore, with predictions and forecasts, hotels can move ahead with product development to attract new guests. The idea is effective use of resources (El Haddad et al, 2015). However, as mentioned by Aragon-Correa et al (2015); Ivanov (2014) and Wilson and Moutinho (2018) these strategies need to have a strong strategic management alignment to create long-term sustainability. Second technique is selling a higher number of rooms at the maximum revenue-generating rate for minimum cost that can lead to higher room occupancy (Tranter, 2009). In other words, yield management (Ivanov, 2014). This technique needs to be implemented in a way that the existing resources are also utilized at the maximum level. For this, pricing strategies and distribution strategies need to be implemented (Ivanov, 2014). Furthermore, acquiring more partnerships that are profitable and maintaining healthy partnerships within the business partners rather than focusing on price and cost competition is necessary to any Boutique hotel that can help to achieve more revenue (Preble et al, 2000). Traditionally financial forecasting has been done by preparing occupancy forecasts and rate structures looking at past records and competitors behavior. However, this method is less practical in the modern business environment in Sri Lanka. Therefore, improved predictions and forecasting need to apply to increase the revenue (Farouk El et al, 2011). Dynamic pricing structure including yield management strategy is the most applicable method to have a sustainable future with financial management in Boutique hotels (Wahab, 2018).

Finally, as per the findings by Guillet and Mohammed (2015) the following process (figure 24) can be applied to the revenue management process to achieve the key objective of the process.

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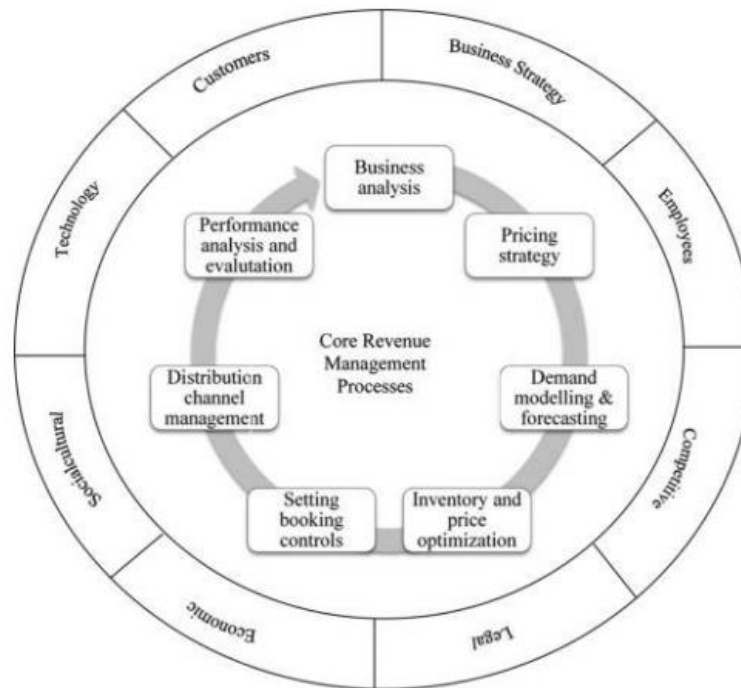


Figure 24: Revenue Management Process

Source: Guillet and Mohammed (2015)

Cost management is controlling and planning the predicted and forecasted cost of any particular business for a given time period (Hansen et al, 2007). Further, Hansen et al (2007) and Alsoboa et al (2015) mentioned planning and controlling the cost need to go ahead with the policies of the company to have a long-term survival of any firm. This is applicable to boutique hotels as well. Variable costs of operations need to minimize to generate a higher contribution for the fixed cost coverage. Cost management in a hotel can implement by implementing, 1. Managing room operational cost, 2. Managing the HR cost, 3. Automating the processes, 4. Streamlining the functions, and 5. More updates for the sustainability measures.

Lockwood and Jones (1990) developed a model called “Rooms Profitability Model” which explained the room cost in two aspects. They are serving cost and raw material cost.

Room sales mix percentage	High sales mix percentage, low contribution margin	High sales mix percentage, high contribution margin
	Low sales mix percentage, low contribution margin	Low sales mix percentage, high contribution margin
Contribution to profit, per room type		

Figure 25: Rooms Profitability Model
Source: Lockwood and Jones (1990)

Room sales mix need to be maintained to keep the operational cost low to improve the contribution by selling as per the Rooms Profitability model. Proposed initiatives are as follows.

Managing the HR cost needs to be handled in a sustainable way since the core delivery is a service (Yan et al, 2016). Madera et al (2017) suggest wage hikes, promotions; bonuses etc... need to plan with the company HR policy to avoid unnecessary costs. Further, HR costs will be able to be managed by improving the productivity of the employees by organizing the regular training (Morsy et al, 2016; Gannon et al, 2015).

Automating the processes is a needy initiative to any hotel in the current industry setting (Popov et al, 2017; Mancheva-Ali and Dimitrova, 2017). According to Kovaltchuk et al (2017) identification of the processes that can be automated, specially the reservations, checking in, payment handling etc... and automating those processes will be able to reduce the manual operational cost, furthermore it will be required only less staff members.

Streamlining the functions is a part of the reengineering plan that the hotels could follow (Wei-hong, 2009). Krstic et al (2015) and Anthonisz (2014) mentioned by reengineering the hotel existing function to a fastest route with the least operational cost will reduce the cost of the operations and also will be improving the guest satisfaction.

More updates for the sustainability measures are regular updates for the measurements that have been taken to reduce the cost of operations (Yan et al, 2016; Hsiao et al, 2018). Such as fixing an automated Air conditioner switching off facility when guests move out from the room and regularly checking functionality of this system. As mentioned by Xu et al (2016) this will be able to maintain the forecasted variable cost at a low level as expected.

As a summary, these indicators give possible indications about the expectations that management and guests could have in their mindset in relation to the Boutique hotel pricing.

2.8.8 Environmental Concern of the Business Activities

a. Meaning of Environmental Concern

Environmental responsibility is the way a company operates to protect the environment (Janković and Krivačić, 2014). Development of the hotel related activities have created an environmental impact that may lead to environmental pollution, global warming and depletion of the environment in the short term and long term (Rosa and Silva, 2017). Bohdanowicz (2006) mentioned in his study 75% of the environmental impact by hotels are created through the excessive use of water, energy, goods, air and soil. Furthermore, the societal pressure that comes toward the hotel operations regarding the environmental sustainability getting increased (Rosa and Silva, 2017). According to Prud'homme et al (2016), environmental concern has become a decisive factor for selection of the hospitality sector by any stakeholder. According to Janković and Krivačić (2014), responsible environmental aspects can be defined as 1. Increasing the energy efficiency of the hotel operations (Becken et al, 2001; Pieri et al, 2015), 2. Managing the water consumptions (Styles et al, 2015), 3. Managing the greenhouse gas (Filimonau et al, 2011), 4. Managing the waste (Trung & Kumar, 2005), 5. Achieving resource efficiency (Zhang et al, 2012; Zhang et al, 2014), and 6. Actions and measurement to protect the environment (Erdogan & Baris, 2007).

b. Importance of Environmental Concern for Long Term Sustainability

Smith et al (2015) study points out in order to get sustainable development to any accommodation property while developing all the requirements to the stakeholders, it is very important to create responsible environmental practices. An article by Kularatne et al. (2019) mentioned these environmental practices not only create sustainable development, but also helps to achieve long term financial and non-financial benefits as well (Siew, 2013; McElroy and Van, 2012). Such as control the cost of the operations, ensure the competitiveness of the hotel, improve the business viability, and comply with the rules and regulations, increase the brand awareness, increase the brand loyalty etc... (Janković and Krivačić, 2014; Mattera and Melgarejo, 2012; Bohdanowicz, 2005; Fukey and Issac, 2014; Arachchi, 2014).

c. Achieving Long Term Survival by Gaining Environmental Sustainability

Rahman et al (2012); Dolores López-Gamero et al (2011); Bonilla Priego et al (2011) mentioned to promote sustainable environmental practices few criteria need to meet. They are, 1. Clear process to meet the guest expectations, 2. Good Financial Performance and 3. Responsible environmental practices. In order to gain long-term sustainability by protecting the environment, hotels should implement an environmental management system (Janković and Krivačić, 2014; Sloan et al, 2009). Further, Janković and Krivačić (2014) mentioned management systems may directly influence the current business practices of the hotels. Therefore, as mentioned by Petrić and Pranić (2010) environmental management system planning has to be aligned with the characteristics of the hotel. Furthermore, introduction and implementation of these systems to the current business practices should be done in a way that the processes are not getting any destructive. First, management of the hotel should take the decisions to implement the relevant actions and tools to be long-term sustainable. As mentioned by Shah (2011) in his Caribbean hotels related study these decisions should lead to define an environmental policy, objectives and a strategy. To support these decisions hotels can get guidance from International Standard Organization and their standards and then can move ahead. Based on the reviews done by many scholars, application of Middleton's (1998) 10 Rs tools to shift the unwanted practices to a more sustainable Environmental management system (EMS) is more applicable to develop an EMS system. Middleton's (1998) 10 Rs tools in

relation to the hotel operations to achieve the environmental objectives demonstrate in following table 20.

Table 20: Middleton’s (1998) 10 Rs tools for environmental sustainability

Performance factors for environmental sustainability	10 R s model	Implementation Schedule
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing the energy efficiency of the hotel operations 2. Managing the water consumptions 3. Managing the greenhouse gas 4. Managing the waste 5. Achieving resource efficiency 6. Actions and measurement to protect the environment 	<p style="text-align: center;">Recognize Refuse Replace Reduce Re-use Recycle Re-engineer Retrain Reward Re-educate</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognizing the current status of the practices, 2. Refusing the practices which damage the operations, 3. Replacing the practices if unable to remove, 4. Reducing the usage level with maximum utilization, 5. Reuse the items, if not, 6. Recycle the items, 7. Re-engineer current process to modern cost effective ways, 8. Train the staff to practice environmental sustainability, 9. Reward employees to recognize 10.Re-educate to change the behaviour if needed

Source: Author’s work adopted from Molina-Azorín et al (2009); Fletcher et al (2013); Cvelbar and Dwyer (2013); Mahachi et al (2015); Pereira-Moliner *et al* (2015)

However, as mentioned by Doody (2010); Bohdanowicz (2006) still there is resistance in implementation of the sustainability factors for environmental concern in the majority of the hotels. For an example Smith et al (2015) did a study about the environment practices in USA hotels, and identified if energy consumption reduced by 10% of a typical hotel it would generate the same financial results as increasing the room rate by 6%-10%. In order to gain green energy sources as advised by Smith et al (2015) higher attention should give to solar energy generation. Twenty five percent of the energy requirement of a typical hotel will be able to generate through solar energy sources that can ultimately lead to low operational cost. For another example, Water consumption of any hotel depends on the facility type, size, climate and existing water management practices (Bohdanowicz, 2006). The benchmarked water usage as explained by (Bohdanowicz,

2006) is 540 litres per guest night to make the guest happy. Conserving water has two aspects that are reducing the water wastage and recycling the water. According to Kumar (2005) water wastage can be reduced through using water efficient appliances, In order to improve the recycling of waste water, waste water can be used for the secondary activities such as a customized irrigation system for the hotel garden.

However, Kleinrichert et al (2012) concluded their study indicating future research agendas are required for the Boutique hotel environmental practices since most of the studies are focusing on the chain or mainstream hotels.

Finally, when we think about the future of the business environment the environmental sustainability and its relationship to the business success will be one of the most important critical success factors to a hotel (Rosa and Silva, 2017; Shanti, 2016; Smith et al, 2015). This situation is more applicable to the hotels since the future hotels guests will be highly concerned about the environmental friendliness of the hotels which they will be selecting (Bruns Smith, 2015). Growth rate of the eco-friendly travel option seekers are increasing every year and at the same time their expectations in eco-friendly tourist experiences are increasing. Furthermore, this new trend is not limited only to experiences but also tourists are looking into the impact of their actions on the environment (Han et al, 2011). As explained by the Shanthi (2016) hotels in India, these expectations are achieved by communicating the eco-friendly practices to the guests. With these initiatives, hotels have created higher brand awareness and brand loyalty in target audience mindset. Positive guest attitudes and perceptions regarding the eco-friendly activities of the hotel green practices will generate a long-term brand sustainability.

In order to achieve all these financial and non-financial benefits through environmental concerning practices, business models and related elements should clearly define how to operate the hotel in an environmentally friendly way (Stubbs and Cocklin, 2008). Standardization of the practices relating specifically to the Boutique hotel is very important since the operationalization of the practices are different in a Boutique hotel than a large-scale hotel (Kleinrichert et al, 2012). As mentioned by Erdogan and Baris (2007) integrated systems of policy and practices can be introduced to reach these targets.

2.8.9 Managing the Strategic Focus of the Hotel

a. Meaning of Having Focus for Strategic Aspects

Strategic focus of any organization can define as identification of the desired path of the organization with the consideration of all micro and macro elements and preparation of strategic initiatives to face to all the negative and positive impacts while proceeding to the desired position (Kaplan and Norton, 2004; Kaplan and Norton, 2010; Kaplan and Norton, 2007). Furthermore, Mintzberg (1987a); Mintzberg (1987b) and Porter (1996) mentioned the mechanism that any of the organizations follow to implement the best practices to achieve the competitive position in the market place by following all the opportunities that are available in the market place known as strategy. However, to implement the strategic focus, strategic variables for a hotel need to identify. Therefore, as mentioned by Claver-Corte et al (2007) strategic variables are as following Figure 26.

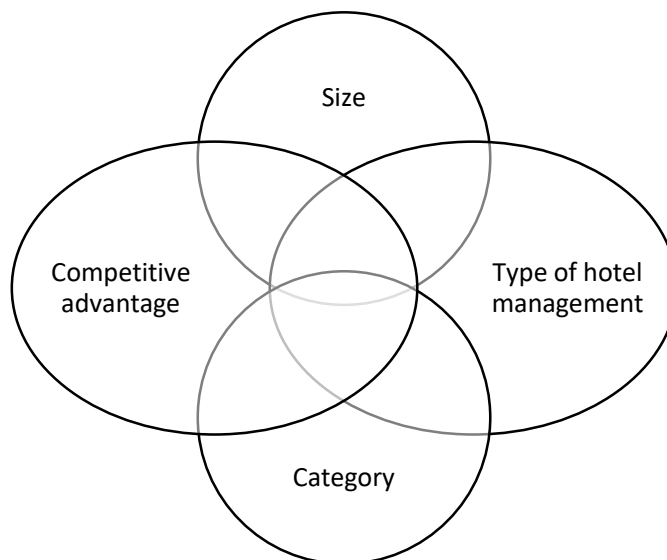


Figure 26: Strategic Variables for a hotel

Source: Author's work adopted from Claver-Corte et al (2007)

Business model of any organization built around the strategy to achieve the objectives (Morris et al, 2005). Therefore, by looking at the company business model, viewer can identify the strategy of the company (Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2010).

b. Importance of Having Focus to the Strategic Aspects

A strategic focus in any hotel should be to understand to whom the hotel is delivering the service, how to make the guest satisfied, nature of the business, current situation of the business, managing the business resources and the tactics for the strategy implementation (Aggett, 2007; Henderson, 2011; O'Neill and Mattila, 2010; Walls et al, 2011). With a successful implementation of a strategic focus management of any hotel will be able to avoid a strategic drift (Herstein et al, 2018; Bonazzi and Schegg, 2016; Lin, 2016; Ahmad et al, 2017; Kurtulay et al, 2015). As mentioned by Zafirova (2014) and Dwyer et al (2009) strategic drift can define a company as a company getting less competitive within its environment and leading to stop making profit. Therefore, with a successful implementation of strategic aspects a hotel can avoid a strategic drift or will be able to change the focus of the business to make the hotel more competitive within its environment (Zafirova, 2014).

Many of the Boutique hotels and the small-scale hotels have a business plan as a strategy, which explains in a standardized way regarding how the business operates. As mentioned by Enz (2009); Lin (2016); Ahmad et al (2017); Firat et al (2014) there are a number of reasons to be the strategic focus is important to any hotel.

1. To drive the company for the sustainability.
2. To settle all the employees in a one platform to achieve the core aim of the company.
3. To align the leadership to the company core aims and objectives.
4. To get financial and non-financial resource efficiency to gain higher efficiency and productivity.
5. For a successful environmental scanning.

c. Achieving Strategic Focus for Long Term Survival

Three theoretical concepts were identified which got the similar characteristics to explain how the strategic focus needs to be when it comes to Boutique hotel operations. They are

Porter's definition for strategy, Drucker's theory of Business and Hamel and Prahalad strategic intent.

According to Porter's definition for strategy, companies need to engage with three important activities (Porter, 1996). 1. Activities similar to the competitors, 2. Implementing the existing and potential activities in a differentiated way and 3. Implementing the activities as a bundle with altogether (Porter, 1996). Adding to this concept Porter further mentioned the level of these activities could determine the hotel's current level of differentiation, and activeness of the existing strategy (Porter, 1996). With the implementation of these activities, hotels will be able to reach the desired position in the target mindset. For the positioning, Porter has suggested hotels can follow, 1. Variety based positioning, 2. Need based positioning and 3. Access based positioning (Porter, 1996). While in the process of reaching the desired position, hotels should know how to address the trade-offs, since none of the hotels will be able to beat the competitors and position in the same time (Porter, 1996). Due to the company reputation and brand name, operational capacity of the hotel and limits of internal coordination (Porter, 1996). Therefore, through the strategy the trade-offs should manage to gain the competitive advantages. Finally, Porter explained about the fit. According to Porter (1996), fit means interlocking all the aspects to implement the strategy of the hotel to reach the focus. To make the activities fit, three levels were suggested by Porter (1996) 1. Aligning the company activities to company strategy, 2. Reinforcing and interlinking the key activities, and 3. Optimizing all the activities.

Peter Drucker in 1994 introduced a management theory called 'Theory of Business'. According to Drucker (1996), the business development and implementation build around assumptions. Furthermore, he has mentioned business organizations can follow this as a blueprint for then sustainable competitive advantages. Moreover, he has mentioned this assumptive framework explaining what to do and what not to do to reach the desired objectives of the organization. According to this "theory of business" a valid operationalized theory to achieve meaningful vision will be able to operationalize with three main assumptions. While fixing those three assumptions one another the company theory of business needs to check constantly (Refer section 2.5.1). Drucker (1994) further mentioned by checking the company theory of business constantly, chances to get the theory to collapse can minimize. Drucker (1994) four main ways to identify the invalidity

of the theory of business such as 1. When the company goals and aims were achieved, 2. Company or industry experiencing a rapid growth, 3. If there is an unexpected company failure or a success and 4. If there is a failure or a success at competitor performance. By implementing preventive cure to those four main points, the theory of business can be changed and companies can focus on the strategic focus that the company was originally focusing on.

Hamel and Prahalad (1994) and Mburu and Thuo (2015) developed a model (Refer below Figure 27) including components to take the decision regarding the future of the company. Future of the company as in new markets, new industries and new values are based on the four main components of the model. Hamel and Prahalad (1994) mentioned that a good “Foresight” is required to design the “Strategic Architecture”. So based on that by creating “Strategic Intent” all the “Core competencies” will be rebuilt for a better future (Mburu and Thuo, 2015). Aligning the key activities of the hotel to this frame will be able to drive the hotel to focused strategic aspects.

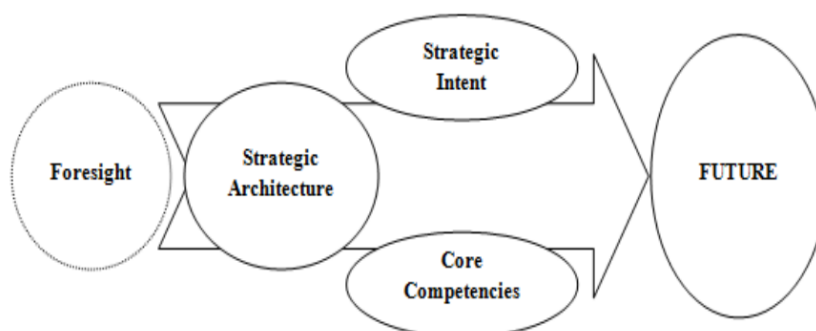


Figure 27: Strategic Intent Model

Source: Hamel and Prahalad, 1994

So in order to implement the strategic focus of the hotel to achieve the key objectives of strategy implementation there are a set of tactics which the hotels should implement (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994).

1. Defining the long-term survival in relation to the boutique hotel operations with the vision, mission, aims and objectives (Jönsson and Devonish, 2009).
2. Developing relationships with the stakeholders (Ackermann and Eden, 2011).

3. Set goals and targets to each action and initiatives in terms of financial and non-financial aspects (Tavitiyaman et al, 2012).
4. Establishing systems and procedures to achieve the long-term survival in the boutique hotel operations (Quirós, 2005).
5. Developing smooth communication to track the achievement and to drive the boutique hotel (Salas and Huxley, 2014).

2.9 Summary

Sri Lankan boutique hotels are leading to less competitive status due to the sustainability challenges the hotels are facing in the current market and industry context. Sustainability challenges could categorize to three major pillars. Attention in this study was to the economic sustainability to achieve through the successful operations of a business model.

A business model with sustainability characteristics is a key path to achieve economic sustainability in any firm. The selected base model for the research to determine the applicable elements is business model canvas. However, there are a range of existing business models that boutique hotels in international and local context are implementing. However, operational gaps have been identified in those models since those models were adopted from Business model canvas. Apart from that, Business model canvas itself has operational gaps indicating unsuitability of application to the boutique hotel sector. Due to the uniqueness of the operational processes, it is always difficult to align the generalized business models to the Boutique hotel concept in the international context and Sri Lankan context. International and local literature collectively indicated the importance of the customization of the business models toward the Boutique hotel operations.

Eight performance indicators have been identified from a critical review of the literature based on the existing business models and operations concerning the boutique hotel operations. Based on those eight performance indicators this research was intended to develop the most applicable business model for the boutique hotels for economic sustainability.

CHAPTER 03 – METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the methodology part of this research with the justification for the chosen strategy. Furthermore, this discussion led to explain how the research methodology has been derived for this study. In the first section of the discussion author discussed the research methodology with academic underpinning along with the research approach and research strategy. Adding more positions of the case study research in the selected research context have discussed. The research methodology has been designed in a systematic way to obtain the information from the entrepreneur mind-set and guest perspective. This section followed the case study selection process for this research and detailed explanations about the selected cases have been given.

Data requirement explained along with the data collection method in section 3.7. Section 3.8 justifies the process of collecting data by undertaking case study research including the pilot study. The first stage of this research was implementing a pilot study with the first two boutique hotels to fine-tune the interview guides and the interview procedures. Second stage of the study was implementing the research in the case study hotels. This second stage was the main data collection of this study. Second stage included carrying out interviews with the senior management of the Boutique hotels or the top most senior personnel in the hotel and their guests. Furthermore, these interviews were targeted at Boutique hotels that are located in Sri Lankan context under the registered category as per the SLTDA.

Data analysis explanation is section 3.9. Section discussed about the within- case study method and cross-case analysis as the selected data analysis methods.

3.2 Selection of the Research Methodology

3.2.1 Research Methodology

According to Flick (2018), there are two types of research methodologies. They are quantitative and qualitative. Based on the explanation of Sanja et al (2017); Denzin and

Lincoln (2011); Patton (2005); Maxwell (2012); Bernard and Bernard (2012) to answer to the main research question, in way of identifying the existing phenomenon of the boutique hotels more in depth and facilitating the findings to the business model development, qualitative research method was chosen. It is understandable the qualitative method is the most appropriate way to understand the hospitality operations in the investigation aspects since the sector is a service sector. According to the analysis performed by Walls et al (2011), they have concluded saying experiences, expectations and requirements vary with the situation in the hospitality industry. So it is more effective to conduct the research in a qualitative manner to get an in-depth understanding from different dimensions about the identified phenomenon (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010; Saunders et al, 2014). Adding to this Konrad and Ekiem (2011) suggested rather than following a generalized quantitative approach it is more advisable to follow qualitative research.

Qualitative research methodologies are more in case studies. Further, those methodologies are focusing on empirical data (Cassell et al, 2018). Case study methods can be used as a method to theory development. As mentioned by Perry (1998) theory development can have two main research approaches. They are deductive theory testing and inductive theory development (Bitektine, 2008).

3.2.2 Research Philosophy

Since this research is focusing on developing the most suitable business model, this research, consider as theory development. Therefore, this research belongs to an inductive approach due its nature of being contemporary and preparadigmatic. This inductive approach is evident in many types of qualitative data analyses as well (Corbin et al, 2014; Miles et al, 2013; Backett & Davison, 1995; Marshall, 1999). As explained by Perry (1998); Hyde (2000); Thomas (2006) and George and Bennett (2005) both deductive and inductive approaches are theory development approaches. However, since this research aims to model development from the emergent themes inherent in the raw data, an inductive approach is the most suitable approach for this research. This will avoid reframing the raw data to the preconceptions during the data analysing in deductive approaches. Inductive approach allows the investigator to reflect the frequently reporting patterns from the collected data (Saunders et al. (2014). Through linking the raw data to

the key objective of the study author would like to establish a model underlying the experience that is justifying from the raw data (Ayres et al, 2003). Based on the underlying theory the data may be identified into more importance and less importance (Ayres et al, 2003).

With the application of those two approaches to the scientific paradigms deductive approaches are more into positivist approaches and inductive approaches are in phenomenological approaches. As mentioned above phenomenological approach can divide into three sub paradigms. Critical social theorist's paradigm, constructivism and realism. Guba & Lincoln (1994) suggest realism provides a worldview which actual phenomenon may have though it is imperfect. Due to the external reality (Hunt, 1992), method involve in identifying real world perception which is unobservable (Hunt, 1992) and due to the nature of addressing to the descriptive research questions in case studies, realism or else inductive theory building is the right paradigm for this type of research. Therefore, cases study based, inductive theory building belongs to the realism paradigm. As per the explanation by Hunt (1992) since the case study approach consists of external phenomena that are not perfect, realism is the most applicable paradigm for the inductive – case study theory building approach.

3.2.3 Research Strategy

As per the explanations by Sekaran and Bouige (2010), the most common research strategies in business research are 1. Surveys, 2. Experiments, 3. Case studies, 4. Action Research, and 5. Grounded Theory. To select the applicable research strategy for this study attention has given primarily to identify whether the selected strategy will be enable to answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

Case study strategy is the selected strategy for this research to investigate the selected cases. Case study method is the most applicable when the research intend to investigate the context with in-depth understanding (Given, 2008). Further, Flick (2014) mentioned this method would further assist to investigate a selected phenomenon or an issue in a firm. This research strategy have selected based on three factors identified by Rowley (2002); Yin (2003a) and Yin (2003b) to determine the best research strategy. They are;

the level inclusiveness of how and why type of research questions, the level of difficulties of controlling the participants' behavioural patterns and need of a separate study due to the strong relationship between the phenomenon and the research context. Moreover, case study approach is much more applicable when developing theories. For an example, Eisenhardt (1989) defined case study method saying, this research strategy is well suited for new theory building where the existing theory is not adequate to answer the current requirement.

As mentioned above, Case study methods is a best method to answer how and why questions in more in-depth and detailed manner and who, what when questions can be answered by other methods (Anderson, 1993). This is more evident with the table 21 which Yin (1994) developed.

Table 21: Choosing a research Strategy

Research Strategy	Research Question
Case study	How, why
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much
Experiments	How, why
Archival	Who, what, where, how many, how much

Source: Author's work adopted from Yin (1994); Jansen (2010); Yin (2003a) Yin (2003b)

As mentioned above Yin (2003) identified if the research is trying to answer "why" and "how" type of questions the most applicable research is case study research. In this research, the main purpose is how to design the most applicable business model for long-term survival in Boutique hotel operations. Therefore, this research was designed to answer "why" and "how" nature questions. Furthermore, as per the explanations in section 2.0 it is very important to study the organizational context of the selected case studies to determine the most applicable business model elements to design the most applicable business model.

Adding more the level of difficulties of controlling the participants' behavioural patterns is high since the research context is a service and investigating the expectations in the mindset of two different participant categories. This is the second reason to select the case study strategy as the research strategy for this research (Rowley, 2002; Yin, 2003). Apart from that, literature evidence in the section 2.0 indicating that there is a strong relationship between meeting the expectations of the stakeholders is a key path to drive the boutique hotels to long term survival. Therefore, as mentioned by Rowley (2002) and Yin (2003) the third reason to select the case study method as the research strategy also gets validated since the relationship is indicating a separate study to prove this relationship.

Case studies have been much discussed in the hospitality industry or in the academic context (Ladkin, 2002; Rudež and Mihalič, 2007; Collier and Gregory, 1995; Jones et al, 2006; Devi Juwaheer, 2004). Agreeing with Nicoli and Papadopoulou (2017) case study strategy is one of the most applicable methods to carry out qualitative research in the hospitality industry. This strategy will help researchers to gather in depth information from the selected cases in rich nature (Patton, 1987). As Yin (1984) explained this detailed contextual analysis for the real life phenomenon about the Boutique hotel operations will be strengthened by the case study approach, because Yin (2003) again confirmed when it is difficult to identify the phenomenon and context separately, most applicable research strategy is case study method. This is further justified by Noor (2008) since he holds a position saying that case study method is studying a one particular issue than studying the whole organization.

Selected cases means the units that have selected to investigate and in this study Boutique hotels are the units. As defined by Yin (1989) and Yin (2017) case study analysis can be defined as empirical inquiry which uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate real like phenomenon. Since the main purpose of the research is to develop the most suitable business model for the long-term survival of the boutique hotels, the unit of analysis for this research is the key expectations of the guests and managers from the boutique hotel performance to drive the hotel to long-term survival on each boutique hotel. Though it is a study of two perceptions regarding the expectations, study focused it as a single unit analysis under each boutique hotel. Adding more the definition of

the boutique hotel, business model and sustainability considered as the boundaries for this research.

Through the successful design of the research, it will be helpful to the researcher to collect the required information to test the research requirement to answer the main research question. Stake (1995) explained three types of research for case studies. They are Exploratory, Explanatory and Descriptive.

Explanatory research is generally used by the researcher. The main intention is to develop hypotheses or any research into theoretical ideas. Furthermore, this is a research where the researcher wants to know more about the given situation in detail which he has ideas or more observations. Descriptive research is implemented to describe situations or people (Saunders et al, 2014). Since this type of research describes the situation based on the data analysis, this type of research has research questions to drive the research. Furthermore, the descriptive researches normally follow guidelines to implement the research. So descriptive research has a pre-planned structure, furthermore guidelines regarding what needed to implement, and what should follow. Pre-planned questions have been asked by the research with the pre-planned restructured choices to select. With this, opinions or the ideas that are held by sample will be able to collect regarding the given situation. Exploratory research is applicable if the research is aiming to explore an issue or an unanswered question in a given situation (Saunders et al, 2014). A situation where little research has been done or if it is a new topic, exploratory research is the most applicable research method. Apart from that, through exploratory research the first step or else the beginning of the future research can commence for an inadequate understanding regarding a problem. With this deeper understanding a clear picture of the situation has developed. Based on this picture, theories will be able to develop hypotheses as the solution for the research problem (Saunders et al, 2014). Generally the exploration starts with a literature review or group discussions to move ahead with exploring the situation.

There is only a limited number of research has been carried in the Sri Lankan Boutique hotels, specifically focusing on the development of the business models for a sustainable future. The main requirement of this research is to understand how to develop a business model for the Boutique hotel for future sustainability. Therefore, at the initial stage

exploratory research approaches have been employed to identify the suitable elements. Then this followed by explanatory nature as in-depth analysis was used to determine how to develop the business model (Haktanir and Harris, 2005). Addition to that as per the explanations and identification by Lidén & Edvardsson (2003); Li et al (2011) and Wang et al (2000) this approach is so much common in guest expectations oriented study approaches.

3.3 Case Study Method

3.3.1 Types of Case Studies

As Yin (1994) and Yin (2003) mentioned there are case study research classifications. Yin (1994) developed a typology matrix that indicated four types of case study research classifications (Refer Table 22). Yin (2003) further categorizes the four types of case study to two different categories such as single and multiple case studies. Alternatively, Stake (1995) identified three case study types, such as the intrinsic case study, the instrumental case study and the collective case study.

Table 22: Typology matrix

	Single Case	Multiple Case
Holistic	Type 1	Type 2
Embedded	Type 3	Type 4

Source: Author's work adopted from Yin (1994)

Research design for this research was type-four and employed with aims of intra – and inter-case comparisons to achieve with multiple cases and units of analysis (Yin, 1994; Firat et al, 2014). As mentioned by Yin (2003) multiple case evidence was selected to understand the in-depth situation of the phenomena than single case evidence this research employed multiple cases. Multiple case method is more applicable to this research as the researcher's main aim is identifying the sustainable requirements of the Sri Lankan Boutique hotel management and the guests. With the selection of the multiple-case method, researchers were able to compare and evaluate each case that collected for the single situation to develop the proposed business model (Miles and

Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, this multiple case method allowed generalizing the findings to develop more methods that are descriptive. Yin (1994) further mentioned the number of cases for the research dependent on the data requirement to develop the answer to the aim other than considering the population or sample number. In practice, it is more advisable to use a 4-10 case (Stake, 2005; Hedges, 1985). Furthermore, the number of cases for this research further depends on the availability of the information. Furthermore, this strategy would give data from two embedded units of analysis. That is within one case context data will be collected from guests and Boutique hotel management as units of analysis (Yin, 1994). This will allow having a comparative inter-case analysis to achieve the objectives (Brotherton, 2005).

3.3.2 Time Period of Cases

According to Saunders et al (2014), a study can take place just once or more than one point. This selection is based on the research questions and the research objectives. Saunders et al. (2007) further mentioned there are two types of approaches. They are cross-sectional study and longitudinal study. Cross-sectional study means gathering data one time over a defined period using the cases in the sample (Payne and Payne, 2004). However, longitudinal study means studying a given phenomenon more than one time during the period (Payne and Payne, 2004).

This research will be a cross-sectional study since the data requirement is one time from each case study. That is, what senior managers and guests expect in terms of Boutique hotel performance. Therefore, during the data collection time period data have gathered from each case study hotel using one time approach. With this approach, it was helpful to compare the proposed elements with each case study. Longitudinal approaches have not been selected since the proposed model will not test during this study to see the outcome.

3.3.3 Role of Theory in Case Studies

Social science based on multiple theoretical orientations since research could be a discovery and interpretation of world phenomenon rather than checking hypotheses. Role of the theory in the case study research depends on the type of research design in

any study including this case study research (Cresswell, 2007). However, Yin (2009) mentioned identification of the theoretical influence in qualitative research is very important since it influences the research questions, situations to explore, to select the cases. Those have been identified as roles of theory in conducting case study research (Yin, 1993). Adding more, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explains theory provides the directions to the qualitative research with the research conditions that are complex. Moreover, theory in this research helped to generalize the findings to the Boutique hotel and specify the things that need to be explored (Yin, 2009). However, Yin (1993) mentioned the selected theory could be a support to design the research steps. Since the phenomenon for this research is a new context, it was not able to find the applicable theories to most of the required roles by the theory. So theory of action utilized as a model for this research. Because as Patton (2002) mentioned, theory of action will guide the problem which needs to be studied.

As mentioned in the previous sections, the underlying model for this research is Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas. Based on this model, guidance for the research has developed. Further, the theory helped to identify the pre identified performance factors to draft the interviews. Therefore, it is very clear that the underlying theory of action played a significant role under this research.

3.3.4 Case Study Research in Tourism Industry and Boutique Hotels

Literature shows case study method has been widely applied by many research done for the hospitality sector especially in South East Asia and Sri Lanka (Minh et al, 2015; Sun et al, 2017; Serafini and Szamosi, 2015). For example case studies about online usage of hotels (Aksu and Tarcan, 2002), stakeholder management in hospitality sector (Davidson et al, 2010; Lee et al, 2013), guest satisfaction in hospitality industry (Dominici and Guzzo, 2010), strategic management accounting in hospitality industry (Collier and Gregory, 1995), efficiency and hotel operations (Peng and Chen, 2004), human resource management in hospitality industry (Taylor and Finley, 2008), Corporate social responsibility and sustainability in hospitality industry (Kang et al, 2015), quality maintenance in hotels (Al-Rousan and Mohamed, 2010; Ingram and Daskalakis, 1999; Lu et al, 2015), renovating hotels (Hassanien, 2006), financial performance in Sri Lankan hotels (Priya and Nimalathasan, 2013), eco-tourism practices in Sri Lanka (Fernando and

Kaluarachchi, 2016; Arachchi et al, 2015), Sri Lankan case study for tourism development (Raisal and Gunapalan, 2014); E tourism in Sri Lanka and hospitality development (Bandara and Silva, 2016; Sambhanthan and Good, 2016), formalizing domestic tourism (Shantha, 2010), Emission of Sri Lankan hotels (Gamage, 2014).

Both the quantitative and qualitative methods have been applied and used in many previous studies that have done to the same research contexts of this research. However, for the exploration nature, and for the deeper understanding about the contexts qualitative methods are getting more popular among the investigators (Li, 2008). There is a higher potentiality to apply the qualitative methods to the hospitality and tourism research (Wilson et al, 2010). Haktanir and Harris (2005) mentioned the case study method is an accepted and important strategy to develop a solution for this kind of research question in the hospitality and tourism context.

3.4 Achieving Reliability and Validity

Achieving reliability and validity in the case study research is a challenge (Guest et al, 2012). However, according to Guest et al (2012) a range of methods are available to achieve the reliability and validity in case study methods. Reliability of this case study has been achieved through the transparency method by maintaining a clear record of research procedures for each interview (Tellis, 1997; Noor, 2008). Furthermore, replication methods have applied to study patterns of predicted results and collected results to get an overall pattern (Ayres et al, 2003). Validity of results expected to achieve in three forms (Leung, 2015; Golafshani, 2003). Internal validity achieved through pattern matching, external validity achieved through the replication method which was implemented for the reliability testing and construct validity achieved through maintaining a chain of evidence for the entire research process (Leung, 2015; Riege, 2003).

3.5 Case Study Selection Process

Choosing the most suitable case studies have a greater impact on the success of the research, likely the research design (Altinay and Paraskevas, 2009; Maxwell, 1992). According to the recommendations done by Yin (2011), a larger number of cases can build

a greater confidence in the research findings. Apart from that, Merriam (2009) mentioned inclusion of multiple cases for the research to enhance the external validity and generalization of findings.

3.5.1 Population Frame

The population frame for this research is the registered boutique hotels in Sri Lanka tourism development authority in 2018. The population frame for the study explained in the following Table 23. The key reason for the selection of the registered category for the study is to gain the reliable data since all the properties are adhering to the requested rules and regulations to operate as boutique hotels. Further, this category has been selected to achieve meaningful and rich information with prior approval to obtain information (Patton, 1990).

As mentioned by Guruge (2017) Assistant Director Sri Lanka Tourism Authority the accepted and recognized Boutique hotel list in Sri Lanka is the registered Boutique hotel list by SLTDA (Refer Appendix D). The assistant director has been considered as an industry expert with his experience and industry knowledge. As per the study done by Smith et al (2014); Wijesundara and Gnanapala (2016); Kamble and Bouchon (2014); Katugampala and Weerakoon (2015) industry should focus more on the registered category to avoid the challenges facing by the industry. Furthermore, as per the explanation by SLTDA (2019a) and SLTDA (2019b) the registered category only meets the minimum standards to become a Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka (Section 2.1.2). This list is further divided to the established district by the authority.

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Table 23: Population Frame: Registered Boutique Hotels in Sri Lanka in 2018

Population Frame		
	District	Number of Hotels
Registered Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka (28)	Ampara	-
	Anuradhapura	1
	Badulla	-
	Batticalow	1
	Colombo	2
	Galle	9
	Gampaha	1
	Hambanthota	4
	Jaffna	-
	Kaluthara	-
	Kandy	1
	Kegalle	-
	Kilinochchi	-
	Kurunegala	1
	Mannar	-
	Matale	4
	Matara	2
	Monaragala	-
	Mulaativu	-
	Nuwara Eliya	1
	Pollonnaruwa	-
	Puttalam	-
	Rathnapura	1
Trincomalee	-	
Vavuniya	-	

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

3.5.2 Sampling Strategy

An in-depth investigation is required to this kind of case study research to achieve aims and objectives. Therefore, to meet this requirement than obtaining data from a sample estimate from a population, it is recommended to select subjects to gain more knowledge and understanding about them (Brotherton, 2010).

Two major samples have been considered under the sampling strategy for this research. That is selecting the cases from the population and subjects within the case. For both situations, as mentioned by Yin (2009); Russell and Gregory (2003) Marshall (1996) and Merriam (2009) samples were selected based on a purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling method allowed selecting the sample subjects based on important characteristics. Further, based on expert choice approach hotels as the multiple cases and guests and management staff (as respondents) as sample subjects were selected (Brotherton, 2010; Palinkas et al, 2015).

a. Selection of Case Studies

As explained by Yin (2009) two-stage selection procedures have followed for the selection. That was obtaining the full list quantitatively. List further reduced using the standard criteria as mentioned by SLTDA (2019b). As demonstrated in the population frame in table 23, 28 Boutique hotels have identified as registered Boutique hotels in 2018. Mirror Business (2018) reported Mr John Amarathunga's statement (Minister for Tourism Development) Galle district is the top performing district in the island. Adding more with the explanation by the assistant director author, Galle district has the most performing Boutique hotels in terms of Financial and non-financial elements. As confirmed by Economy Next (2018) agreeing with SLTDA (2019b) statistics growth rate in Galle district in terms of number of hotels is high.

As explained by Yin (2009) this is the best fit (Theoretically or literally) multiple cases studies for this research assuming similar results and with predictable reasons will be generated. Therefore, all the nine hotels which have registered to the Galle district were chosen for this research. This sample size explained by Stake (2013) says the benefits of

multi case study is effective in a number between 4-10 cases. Following table 24 demonstrates the summary of chosen case studies for the research to collect the data.

Table 24: Details of the selected hotels

Population Frame		
District	Number of Hotels	Name
Galle	9	Case A
		Case B
		Case C
		Case D
		Case E
		Case F
		Case G
		Case H
		Case I

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

b. Section of Subjects (Interviewees)

Qualitative studies are available in more than one interpretation. Therefore, qualitative studies are using qualitative inquiries as purposeful strategies than statistical aspects (Coyne, 1997). Yin (2011) explained the number of interviewees for a study could fall in the range of 25-50. However, the sample size of the qualitative research is very important to give attention to the rich fullness of data, to validity of the data and to generate insights from the data (Kvale, 2008; Gabriel, 1990). Furthermore, the sample size depends on what is the key aim of the research to find from the data set, why these answers are expecting from the data set, how does the data set will be interpreted and the resources to reach the sample. As mentioned by McCusker and Gunaydin (2015); Hair et al (2015); Njau et al (2017) compared to the quantitative data collection methods, the qualitative data collection methods are time consuming and expensive. Therefore, aligning with Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) and Dworkin (2012) it is always advisable to select a smaller number of samples to have a detailed in-depth understanding about the issue (Brotherton, 2015).

Since Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest identifying the most suitable interviewees are important for the success of the research, Two type of respondents was selected from

each case study hotel to identify the most applicable components from both ends of the service delivery (Patton, 1990), (Refer section 3.6.2 for more details). They are specifically knowledgeable staff from the case studies and loyal guests from the case studies.

According to Merriam (2009) sampling within the case done through purposive sampling technique. Initial telephone communications that the author had with each hotel helped to identify nine most suitable senior personals to answer the research questions. By the time research is taking place, randomly selected one guest has been selected from each hotel to be in nine guest interviews. The number of interviews from each category further gets justified with the Kvale (2008) explanations about the minimum number of interviews for a qualitative study that is 9-12. For the selection of guests from each case study, following (Table 25) criteria have applied. Data collection for case E and H took place after the Easter Sunday terrorist attack. Due to the attack occupancy has gone down and with that reason only one from each hotel was selected as the sample.

Table 25: Sample of subjects

Name of the Case study Hotel	Obtaining the guests' sample for the interviews				Sample size for the Top most senior Member
	Maximum Guest Capacity	Galle District Boutique Hotel Annual (2016) Average Occupancy rate 74.24%	Minimum Number of guests at any given time	Randomly selected guests	
Case A	24		18	1	GM (1)
Case B	54		40	1	GM (1)
Case C	56		42	1	GM (1)
Case D	28		21	1	GM (1)
Case E	106		79	1	GM (1)
Case F	36		27	1	GM (1)
Case G	34		25	1	GM (1)
Case H	60		45	1	GM (1)
Case I	28		20	1	GM (1)
Total			9	9	

Source: Author's work

3.6 Overview of the Sample

3.6.1 Overview of Case Studies

Following Table 26, demonstrate a brief overview about the selected Boutique hotels for the research. Data have been obtained from the initial discussion carried out through the telephone with the most senior personnel in each selected Boutique hotel. This initiative helped to maintain a positive relationship with each hotel to implement the Face-to-Face interviews.

Table 26: Summary of Case Studies

Case study Hotel	Types of Rooms	Number of Rooms	Number of Employees	Location
Case A	3	12	23	Galle
Case B	3	27	42	Ambalangoda
Case C	3	28	45	Aluthgama
Case D	3	14	24	Galle Fort
Case E	3	53	112	Koggala
Case F	3	18	18	Galle Fort
Case G	4	17	25	Benthota
Case H	3	28	19	Galle Fort
Case I	4	16	15	Hikkaduwa

Source: Personal Interviews

All the chosen case study hotels are located in South Province - Galle district since the highest registered Boutique hotels are located in this province in Sri Lanka. Majority of the Boutique hotels are located in this South Province - Galle district due to the attraction of the south beach and infrastructure availability. An overview about each case study listed below.

Case A

This property is owned and managed by a chain of hotels as a part of their Sri Lankan hotel chain. Previously Manor house in a three-acre land in Galle and now converted to a luxury Boutique hotel. Antique furnishing and heritage interior and exterior are the key concept of the hotel. Following table 27 illustrates key characteristics of this case study hotel.

Table 27: Key Characteristics of Case A

Case A	
Facilities Available	Magnificent infinity-edged swimming pool A spa that embedded with ancient Ceylon healings. Bar and a lounge to experience world class spirits Quite cosy extensive dining experience Excursions Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Historical architecture blended with modern amenities. Large sun-dappled courtyard. Beautiful antiques and excellent reproduction of architecture. Any place, any time dining option.
Room Rates	LKR 35000 upward
Types of Rooms	Crayford Room Captain Suite Admiral Suite Hotel Suite

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

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Case B

Sri Lanka's first Boutique hotel that was established in 1995 in Bentota Sri Lanka. This four times presidential award winner for the excellent service delivery was initially established as a four star hotel and then converted to a Boutique hotel with the Boutique hotel concept development. Following table 28 illustrates key characteristics of this case study hotel.

Table 28: Key Characteristics of Case B

Case B	
Facilities Available	27 luxury suites Private pools for each suite Sunset lounge Boardroom facilities Recreational activities Sauna, hot tub and spa Private gardens Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Undeniably romantic boutique hotel facing glorious Indian Ocean. Lap pools with private gardens Balance between privacy, comfort and tropical opulence Magnificent view of the Indian Ocean due to the location
Room Rates	LKR 45000 upward
Types of Rooms	Superior suite Deluxe Suite Deluxe Suite with swimming pool Grand Deluxe Suite with swimming pool Villa suite with swimming pool

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

Case C

One of the recent additions to the registered Boutique hotel category in Sri Lanka by a chain of hotels. This magical hotel is located in Turtle beach Kosgoda Sri Lanka that is famous for Turtles. This is a result of long-term partnership with Japanese investors to drive Sri Lanka tourism. Table 29 is the list of key characteristics that you can identify from the hotel.

Table 29: Key Characteristics of Case C

Case C	
Facilities Available	Exclusive styles of guest rooms and residences Luxurious Spa & Health Club Luxurious Ayurveda bath amenities Infinity pool Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Private courtyard or balcony High end technological aspects for each room Signature brand from excellent service delivery
Room Rates	LKR 25000 upward
Types of Rooms	Deluxe Rooms

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

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Case D

Established in an iconic building that is originally a Dutch mansion and warehouse in 18th century. UNESCO recognized as a masterpiece of cultural heritage and conservation and main operational concept is historical luxuriousness. Higher attention has been given to the cultural and aesthetic values of the Dutch period. Following table 30 further illustrates key characteristics of this case study hotel.

Table 30: Key Characteristics of Case D

Case D	
Facilities Available	Frangipani scented courtyard for relaxation. Room in dining Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Perfect mixture of culture and comfort for the service delivery. Luxurious surroundings to enhance the guests' experience. Amazing restoration of a Dutch mansion to a luxury high-end boutique hotel. Awarded hotel to stay and experience the Galle Fort Heritage site. Individual characteristics and quirks for each room with Dutch heritage. Inspirational dining experience
Room Rates	LKR 25000 upward
Types of Rooms	Garden Rooms Loft Suite Porcelain Suite Admiral Cheng Ho Suite Library Suite Grand Apartment Suites The Grand Apartment

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

Case E

Hotel located along the magnificent Indian Ocean. Panoramic view and beautiful sunset are some of the key selling points for the hotel. This colourful and tranquil resort was operating for more than a decade in Sri Lanka with the high quality service delivery and won a number of awards due to the extraordinary service delivery. Managed by one of the biggest conglomerates in Sri Lanka. Following table 31 demonstrates the key characteristics of the hotels.

Table 31: Key Characteristics of Case E

Case E	
Facilities Available	Exclusive styles of guest rooms and residences Luxurious Spa & Health Club Ayurveda Centre Infinity pool Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Private courtyard or balcony High end technological aspects for each room Private indoor plunge pool
Room Rates	LKR 35000 upward
Types of Rooms	Fortress Rooms Ocean Rooms Beach Rooms Beach Splash Rooms Ocean Loft Suites Fortress Residence Suites

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

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Case F

A Dutch era merchant house converted to a Boutique hotel. The Middle Eastern vibe is the concept of the hotel to deliver a welcoming retreat to the guests. Promised high-end service delivery was the success story of themselves until now. Adding more following table 32 are the key characteristics of the hotel.

Table 32: Key Characteristics of Case F

Case F	
Facilities Available	Gourmet modern dining Welcoming Spa Vibrant restaurant Contemporary-styled rooms Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Private balcony or terrace Most luxurious accommodation in Galle Fort Terrace with views of the Galle Fort Private open plan lounge Signature massages Personal Yoga sessions Excursions
Room Rates	LKR 35000 upward
Types of Rooms	Fifteen courtyard rooms Three upper flow suites

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

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Case G

World-renowned architect Geoffrey Bawa designed this Boutique hotel and located in Bentota. Hotel having 17 modern rooms with the mix of Sri Lankan hospitality. Establishment covers one acre and half to give a wide natural experience along with the beach. Following table 33 illustrates key characteristics of this case study hotel. Refer

Table 33: Key Characteristics of Case G

Case G	
Facilities Available	Private dining Swimming pools Signature spa with signature therapists Relaxing lounges Pool with relaxing spaces Room in dining and personal dining with most exclusive gastronomic delights. Excursions to the enjoy the stay Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Individually handpicked furniture for each room. Designed to a concept of colonial Dutch period. Garden view standard rooms, private balcony enabled deluxe rooms, extra space suites.
Room Rates	LKR 25000 upward
Types of Rooms	Ten standard rooms Six Deluxe room One club suite

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

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Case H

Established in a 17th century building in the well-known Galle Dutch Fort. One of the remarkable citadel that was serving for the last 100 years now converted to a high-end luxury Boutique hotel. Owned and managed by a Singapore based luxury hotel operator. Key concept of the hotel is giving an atmospheric insight regarding the 17th to 19th century artefacts. Following table 34 illustrates key characteristics of this case study hotel. Refer

Table 34: Key Characteristics of Case H

Case H	
Facilities Available	21m pool with shades of pavilion Archived extensive library A spa complex with treatment rooms Barber shop with facilities of a saloon Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Original antique atmosphere to prove the Dutch influence. Colonial ambience in each room interior and hotel exterior. Hydrotherapy pools, Saunas and steam rooms, cold plunge rooms. Yoga sessions including meditation sessions. Five different dining locations in the hotel itself, The Zaal, Dining Room, Sunset Balcony, Pool and Library and Private dining.
Room Rates	LKR 35000 upward
Types of Rooms	Nine Double Rooms Ten colonial Fort or Garden view chambers Seven Garden, Fort and Harbour view Suites One Garden and Yoga Pavilion viewing Amangalle Suite One two storey private Garden House

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

Case I

This Luxury Report commenced operations in 2006 and located stunning Rathgama, Galle overlooking the amazing Indian Ocean. Hotel designed with Sri Lankan antiques including lavish amenities. To give a feeling of home away from home, high-end facilities such as private plunge pools, lap pools etc... have added to the service delivery. Following table 35 further illustrates key characteristics of this case study hotel.

Table 35: Key Characteristics of Case I

Case I	
Facilities Available	Extensive culinary spread with a master chef to fulfil any desire. Invigorating personal and intimate spa treatments. Hospitable resort staff with personal service. Spacious rooms with much more facilities. Modern gym to feel the burn. Well maintained library and movie collection. Recommended Boutique hotel facilities and amenities
Special Features	Surrounded by magnificent Indian Ocean, techno beach clubs and meditating village temples. Walking distance to well-known turtle hatcheries, Galle Fort, Hikkaduwa Coral reef and Madu River. Excursion to whale and dolphin watching facilities. Purifying yoga sessions with the sea breeze.
Room Rates	LKR 25000 upward
Types of Rooms	Private garden available six suites 10 suites with overlooking Indian Ocean.

Source: Author's work adopted from SLTDA (2019b)

3.6.2 Overview of Interviewees

To achieve the exploratory nature of the research the data collection through interviews divided into two main sections. This is to align with the suggestions by Miles and Huberman (1994), which explains the relationship between identifying the most suitable respondent for the research and obtaining high quality data. That is the interview with the senior managers or the entrepreneurs in the Boutique hotel and the guests at the Boutique hotel.

The purpose of the first interview was to collect information about the existing service delivery of the Boutique hotel, difficulties they are facing when it comes to the service delivery of the Boutique hotel, how they want to drive the hotel to the sustainability and service delivery gaps etc... Similar to the study of Rahimi and Gunlu (2016) due to the limitation to access employees and to get a deep insight the top most person only selected for this research. Furthermore, as highlighted by Chan and Hawkins (2010) structure of the hotel will be divided in to three and for this study the executive layer was selected to answer the interview questions since they are the responsible authority for the entire hotel operations in financial and non-financial aspects (Ladkin, 2002; Haktanir and Harris, 2005). Following table 36 depicts the profile of the managers who have participated for the research.

Table 36: Overview of Participants (Managers)

Case	Interviewers	Structure of the Hotel
Case A	Resident Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case B	General Manager	Single Operation
Case C	General Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case D	Resident Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case E	General Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case F	Resident Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case G	Resident Manager	Single Operation
Case H	General Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case I	Resident Manager	Single Operation

Source: Author's work

The purpose of the second interview was to learn and study about the guests' requirements from the Boutique hotel operations and service delivery. Sporadic research has been carried out to identify the guest needs in Boutique hotels (McIntosh and Siggs, 2005). Purposefully selected nine loyal guests have selected all together from all the cases for the research. All the interviewees' demographic data have collected to make sure the guest is a loyal guest to achieve the rich fullness of the findings. Tanford et al (2012) mentioned loyal guests would give rich and meaningful information that can achieve the reliability and validity of the research. Following table 37 depicts the number of visits they have made to Boutique hotels so far and number of attempts they have visited Sri Lanka excluding this visit. From the evidence, most of the guests have visited more than six hotels and guests who have visited Sri Lanka minimum of one time have been selected for the data collection.

Table 37: Overview of Participants (Guests)

	Number of Visits to Sri Lanka	Number of boutique hotel visits	Traveling Status
Case A	1	6 or more	Traveling with a partner
Case B	1	6 or more	Traveling with a partner
Case C	1	6 or more	Traveling with a partner
Case D	1	6 or more	Traveling with a partner
Case E	3	6 or more	Traveling with a friend
Case F	1	6 or more	Traveling with a partner
Case G	1	6 or more	Traveling with a partner
Case H	2	4	Traveling with a partner
Case I	1	6 or more	Traveling with a partner

Source: Author's work

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3.7 Data Collection

3.7.1 Data Collection method of this Research

As explained by Yin (1994) and Yin (2017) six sources data collection methods are applicable to any case study research, which is recognized as documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts. Validity and the reliability of the research data have been based on the data collection method of the research (Leung, 2015). When selecting the data collection methods for this research advantages and disadvantages of each data collection methods towards the achievement of the key aim and objectives of this research have been considered.

Qualitative researchers extensively rely on interviews and its in-depth data collection (Cassell et al, 2018). Walsh (2003) mentioned the qualitative interviews as the instrument that play a critical role to create potential value in the hospitality industry. In the hospitality industry many of the studies are focusing on interviews as the qualitative data collection instrument (Altinay and Paraskevas, 2009; Sandiford and Seymour, 2007). For example, Loizos and Lycourgos (2005) did an investigation to find out the guest expectations and perception regarding the service quality of the hotels in Cyprus. During the study, they have used interviews as the supporting data collection methods to know about the guest requirements to validate the questionnaire results. Adding more a recent study by Fissi et al (2020) to determine the applicability of the business model for the given context they have applied a multi case, interview based qualitative data collection method as the most applicable research instrument. Further as per the review done by Huang and Hsu (2008) about the 500 tourism research, they have identified 85% of researches are focusing on qualitative based data collection methods.

For this research, interviews are the most applicable source of data collection to gather the evidence from the respondents (Malhotra et al, 2003; Moriarty et al, 2008). Kahn and Cannell (1957) identified interviews as an informal conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Patton (2002) explored three type interview categories. They are conversational interviews, interviews through a guide, closed fixed interviews and formal interviews. Interviews have selected the study to have 1 to 1 information gathering through a predetermined set of questions. As mentioned by Chan and Hawkins (2010) a

structured set of questions may be asked by the researcher from the respondents to get an in-depth understanding about the issue. Adding to this Brotherton (2010) mentioned interviews are the ideal data collection method if the researcher wants to collect the participants ideas, attitudes, perceptions, opinions and comments regarding the given situation. This is further getting more applicable since interviewers get the chance to question the interviewee further to collect in-depth data. Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) and Ryan and Bernard (2003) mentioned in their studies about analysing qualitative data, interview data always useful to development of the models and theories. Based on the general topics the interview structure has designed to get the perspectives from how participants view the phenomenon not as how the researcher views the same phenomenon.

As per the explanation by Jansen (2010), interviews of this research were pre structured due to the diversity of the sample. Furthermore, research used semi structured / open ended in-depth interviews to gather in-depth information regarding the requirement of a business model and the elements (Chan and Hawkins, 2010; Rishi and Joshi, 2016). Further, the semi structured nature of the interviews were used since researchers personally engaged with the research. Both participant categories participated to prepare interview guides. Refer Appendix A for the interview guides for managers and guests.

Out of different ways of conducting interviews, this research used face-to-face interviews due to the practicality of the method (Opdenakker, 2006, Yin, 2003; Guest et al, 2006). Researchers personally visited all the case studies and recorded the interviews with the both participant categories. Further, face-to-face allowed researchers to raise any additional questions related to the answers given or to ignore the questions that made respondents' unwillingness to answer. At the initial stage prior to the interview, the key purpose was explained in a summarized way and obtained the approval for the interviews. So, key purposes have been explained in detail during the data collection. Ethical considerations and interviewees rights then explained and obtained the consent.

3.7.2 Requirement of the Data Set

Following table 38 depicts the requirement of the primary data which the author expected to collect from each participant category. This data successfully gathered by implementing the interviews with the senior managers and guests.

Table 38: Data requirement

Respondent	Primary data Requirement
Senior management / Entrepreneurs	Existing strategic initiatives for the long term sustainability
	Gap between the minimum standards and current offering
	Existing challenges regarding the service delivery
	Expectations from a boutique hotel performance for long term survival
Guests / Guests	Expectations from a boutique hotel to be satisfied
	Existing satisfaction level
	Ideas to improve the current offering

Source: Author's work

3.7.3 Case Study Questions

The key aim of this research is to develop a business model including performance factors for long-term survival for Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka. In order to achieve this aim eight main performance related factors have identified and nine case studies have selected. Two interview guides have prepared for two respondent categories. Appendix A depicts the semi structured open-ended interview guides which investigator used during the interviews. These were prepared in a thematic order to support the research questions of the research.

Adding more, interview guides have structured around eight main performance indicators (Konrad and Ekiem, 2011). The interview questions for this study were based on detailed discussions in the section 2.6 and 2.7, Walls et al (2011); Lu et al (2015) explanations and pilot study findings. As mentioned by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) loose structure has

been used in the interview guides to prevent the interruption to the flow of the interviews. Though these interview guides are two different interview guides, those were more or less similar to each other since the key aim was identification of the expectations from two different perspectives. Moreover, these two interviews guides helped researchers to compare and contrast the two groups to identify the sustainable elements for the proposed business model (Lu et al, 2015).

3.8 Preparation to Conduct the Research

3.8.1 Conducting Pilot Study

Yin (2003) recommended carrying out a pilot study prior to the data collection. Further, he has mentioned pilot study helps to refine the data collection procedures and plans that intend to implement. Therefore, based on that pilot study have taken place by the researcher for this research. It helped to fine-tune the interview guides and research procedures. Pilot study has taken place in the first two Boutique hotels in the sample using pre-defined participants. All the confusion or unclear questions have been sorted with the pilot study results, so that the interview has been done with error free nature. That helped investigators to re align the interview questions to have a better result with the final interview process (Yin, 2009). With the changes the interviewer proceeded with the interviews. However, as agreed with Yin (1994) this pilot study was treated as a pre-test.

3.8.2 Conducting Case Studies

Upon approval of the research proposal and completion of the chapter 2 and 3 data collection was commenced (refer Appendix H for implementation plan). Possible answers with the instructions were developed to make the interview process easy to do ahead with the interviews. Further, technical terms and jargons have been explained in a separate document. That helped to make sure that the respondent is not over-complicated with the questions.

The research had two respondent categories. Therefore, the first interview series took over with the guests and second was with entrepreneurs. For each interviewee,

researchers explained the steps that have been taken to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. Prior to each interview, rights of each interviewee was introduced. Further, for the companies it was stressed how data will be used for the purpose of this research. To each interviewee researcher explained about research aims, desired audience. Further requested the permission and consent. With permission and applicability, 18 interviews took place. Apart from that, each interview took place after explaining the ethical considerations of the interview.

Each interview is divided into three sections. That was 1. Introduction, 2. Discussion and 3. closing or the end. In the introduction stage, the key intention was to make the respondent comfortable with the investigator regarding the key purpose, aims and objective of the study. Furthermore, during the first half the researcher explained the confidentiality of the collected data and respondent's anonymity. Adding more, as Creswell and Creswell (2017) mentioned preliminary data collected from both participant categories. From senior management, type of the hotel, ownership of the hotel, number of staff members, number of operational years and number of rooms have been collected. From the guests, number of visits to Sri Lanka, number of boutique hotel stays, travelling status and home country details were collected. These helped to prevent mixing or the mistakes that can happen during the data collection.

The second stage, which is the discussion section, is the longest one that used to collect all the relevant information from the respondents. During the final section that is, the closing section investigator requested to add respondent's further opinions and recommendations.

Each interview took place at the selected hotel in the daytime. All the 18 interviews were able to complete within 2 months (April 2019 – June 2019) since all the hotels were located in Southern Province. Every interview that the investigator implemented were digitally recorded and later transcribed. Apart from that to minimize the risk of losing data, personal notes have been taken by the researcher. Transcripts of each interview were shared with respondents to measure the reliability and to check the confidentiality of the answers. However, none of the respondents requested amendments to the transcripts. An appreciation with thanks has been sent to each respondent afterward. Researcher was careful not to include any identifiable data regarding a hotel or a client

whenever communicating with the respondents again. To protect the collected data, copies of interview recordings have been sent to the researcher's second personal computer and photocopy of transcript have been kept in researchers' personal storages...

Once data collection completed, using MS Word transcribing were completed. Because transcribing the collected data is an important and crucial task in qualitative analysis (Flick, 2014). Later for the coding process, transcriptions were exported to Nvivo 12.

3.9 Data Analysis

3.9.1 Data Measurements and Interrogations

As mentioned by Hartley (2004) data analysis part needs to drive to stand around key themes, topics or the key main question. Thereafter, the findings need to closely analyse and examine how far the findings fit to the expectations. In general, data analysis means identification of patterns in a set of qualitative data (Neuman, 1997). Since the ultimate objective of the case study research is developing meaning and arriving to a conclusion for the model development it is a crucial factor to drive the research forward with the pattern identification from the raw data (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003). According to Yin (2003) to address the initial propositions of the study, data analysis for case studies consist of examining the data, categorizing the data, testing the data and recombining the data. So to analyse the case study data Yin (2003) suggested three different analytic strategies; focusing on the theoretical positions which discusses in the literature review, focusing on inter arguing explanations and developing detailed case description

Yin (1994) mentioned any of the above-mentioned strategies could be utilized with the five main techniques that he developed. Those are, pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models and cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2003). According to Yin (2003) and Almutairi et al (2014) pattern matching is a generalization of different sub groups that can identify from the empirically gathered data, further this allows research to compare the gathered data with the predicted pattern. As Yin (1994) explained, explanation building is explaining the case to analyse the case study data, which is another pattern matching method. Time series analysis is known as, statistical data analysis method for a set of observations done through a period of time regarding a

single unit. Logical model is the graphical presentation of the assumptions that developed from the data set regarding how the data set may work to achieve the results (Crane, 2010). Cruzes et al (2015) mentioned cross-case synthesis as categorizing evidence from the individual cases to themes and categorizing to broad themes for across studies.

Eisenhardt (1989) mentioned two types of case study data analysis techniques. They are within-case analysis and cross case analysis. Within-case analysis means analysing the individual cases separately to understand the single cases more in detail. Cross case analysis is known as comparison between the multiple cases using single case study reports (Flick, 2014).

For this research, within-case analysis and cross-case analysis were used as the data analysis techniques. Furthermore, explanation building was applied to explain the results of the within-case analysis and cross case analysis. Adding more as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) this research followed a process of data reduction, data display and developing conclusion and verification along with the above mentioned data analysis techniques.

3.9.2 Software Applications

Transcribing was convenient with Nvivo 12 as it had a number of advantages to carry out a qualitative data analysis. As explained by Bazeley and Jackson (2010) for a research which is engaged with more than 15 interviews and taking more than an hour to complete the interview, Nvivo is the most applicable tool to organise and manage the data set. This will further allow going ahead with a clear coding structure and identifying the themes from the data set (AlYahmady and Alabri, 2013).

To measure the qualitative data, the pattern matching analytical procedure was followed and NVivo computer software is expected to be used for the data analysis (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010; Saunders et al, 2014). 95% confidence level will maintain the study with a standard error at 5%.

3.9.3 Within-case-Analysis

As mentioned in 3.8.2, the findings that obtained from the interviews have transcribed and exported to Nvivo 12. Thereafter, transcripts have read in detail to identify the themes and patterns that are emerging. Dimensions for the research provided from the theoretical approach which was done through the literature review (Chan and Hawkins, 2010). Themes and patterns were organised to the eight performance factors that identified in section 2.7. Furthermore, in Nvivo 12, eight parent nodes were created for those themes and patterns. These parent nodes have derived from the literature review in section 2.7. Two additional parent nodes were emerged from the data set and from the reviewed literature to support the analysis, existing operational performance of the boutique hotels and requirement of a business model for boutique hotels.

After coding the data has started. As mentioned by Miles and Huberman (1994) coding can identify as inductive, deductive and coding by combining both of these. For this research, coding followed both inductive and deductive methods. The coding scheme that this study used derived from the literature review that highlights as the key elements that were applicable to development of a sustainable business model in the literature review (Chan and Hawkins, 2010). Adding more, new codes have been identified whenever applicable information is found in the interview scripts in sentences or one full explanation. So main nodes and sub nodes have been created based on the requirement to achieve the research objectives during the coding process. Number of rereading the interview transcripts and literature evidence that was used for this research further supported this.

Furthermore as explained by Miles and Huberman (1994) tree nodes have created. Tree nodes have been created for more generic level and level that is more specific. This was completed to each company that finally came up with nine separate coding.

Each case study finding read along with the themes and patterns separately to commence the within-in case analysis. Intimate familiarity for each case has been developed by the researcher regarding how the themes and patterns emerged from each case. This familiarization helped researchers to accept or refute the elements which researcher has identified from the literature review as the most suitable elements for the proposed

business model. In-depth understanding has developed for each case study by reading all the single case study reports (Mills et al, 2010). Furthermore, this in-depth on how the patterns and themes emerged from each case allowed researchers to understand the individual situational phenomenon each case study facing at that moment while operating with an existing business model or operating without deploying a business model. This helped to locate the general themes and patterns from all the single case study reports since this research is a multiple case study. All the single case study reports indicated the pre identified performance factors as the themes and patterns. Therefore, the analysis structured to each element (Mills et al, 2010). This is in other ways a data reduction, which helped the researcher to focus on most salient data in relation to the research objectives (Mills et al, 2010).

This single case study based in-depth understanding about the model development then led to implementing cross case analysis (between other single cases) (Mills, et al, 2010).

3.9.4 Cross-Case Analysis

Cross case analysis in this research involved in-depth comparison and exploration of similarities and differences of themes and patterns among the multiple cases (Ayres et al, 2003). Cross-case analysis have applied to this research to gain the confidence about the data accuracy that occurred from single case reports, to generalize the main themes emerged from the single reports, to identify the common phenomenon among all the cases and to support the key objective of this research to develop the proposed business model (Miles et al, 2010).

Single reports that were created under the within-case analysis have been extracted to this analysis. Adding more, matrix-coding queries have applied to this cross case analysis (Flick, 2014). Matrix coding queries have applied to every parent node and child node. The coding references which generated from the matrix coding queries indicated the prominent themes and patterns which emerged from the evidence. Matrix coding queries have applied for all the pre identified performance indicators to reach the objectives of the research. Cross case analysis and with-in-case analysis then applied for the coding references to answer to the research questions.

From the cross case analysis common outcomes have identified from most of all the cases in this research (Mathison, 2005). Then the themes are compared within the theme using all the management and guests' evidence. Comparison then led to build the themes and patterns toward long-term survival. Based on the relationship building, most prominent themes and patterns have been highlighted as the important elements to drive the boutique hotels for long-term survival. Based on that, proposed models have developed.

3.10 Research Ethics

Simons (2009) and Iphofen and Tolich (2018) mentioned ethics should maintain at the required level and confidentiality should maintain regarding the participants when it comes to the case study research. So prior to the interview appointments, using the telephone conversations key meaning of the research was explained to the hotel managers. Key meaning to the guests was explained on the site prior to the interview. This helped to convince that the information will be used only for the key purpose of this research and that information will not be shared with another party under any circumstances (Oliver, 2010). Adding more, in this study as confirmed to the participants personal data, confidential data and financial data was not collected.

To gather the required information confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed to the participant by explaining the research ethics. Prior to the interview, consent to participate in the research was collected from both parties. Management consent was obtained via the phone and emails. Guests' consent was obtained prior to the interview at the site. Thereafter, rights of the interviewee was explained aligning to the University regulations. As mentioned above, transcripts were sent to the hotel managers to check the accuracy of the data. Guests' comment was unable to gather since by that time they have left the properties. Hotel managers were not requested any changes for the interview transcripts. Finally when presenting the data, researchers attempted to remove all the personal data which could allow them to identify the participants.

3.11 Summary

In this chapter clear understanding about the selected methodology including the literature evidence have been given.

Qualitative research methodology has been selected as the research methodology. Based on the methodology, the case study method was chosen for this research to move ahead with understanding the situation in depth. Since the literature availability is limited when it comes to the Boutique hotel context this in depth analysis is the most applicable method to get a clear picture of the situation. There was evidence about a case study method for the tourism industry including the accommodation sector in the international academia. The data collection tool was in-depth interviews with the senior management and guests from the Boutique hotels in the sample. Furthermore, this chapter outlined the process of the research which was intended to take place.

Finally, the data analysis methods for the study have explained and justified its applicability through the research process.

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CHAPTER 04 – FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The key aim of this research is to explore the extent of possibilities to redevelop the existing business models of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka tourism as a strategic intervention for future sustainability. In order to achieve this key aim, findings of the interviews presented in this chapter. Findings of the interviews were categorized into two main sections in this chapter. First section is 4.2 which presents the level of success of the existing activities which the Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka currently deploying in relation to sustainability and business model implementation. Second section is 4.3 highlighted and demonstrated about the factors that could drive the Boutique hotel to a sustainable future that can be included in the proposed business model. Further, the importance of the identified theme and pattern was justified with the coding references proving that is an expectation to drive the Boutique hotel for long-term survival with a sustainable business model.

Eight different performance indicators were applied as the criteria (which were used by data collection in the interview guide) to determine the most applicable business model elements. Emerged themes and patterns from the research have categorized into these eight performance indicators. Nine different Boutique hotels were selected based on the case study selection strategy and from each hotel minimum of two respondents participated including one senior employee and one guest. Respondents participated in an interview guide that prepared based on above mentioned performance indicators. Further, findings have presented according to the research questions of this research to achieve the objectives. Second and third objectives addressed in this findings chapter.

Nvivo 12 computer aided data analysis tool used to analyse the findings from the interviews. Nine cases have been classified in Nvivo 12 based on their characteristics. Pre identified performance indicators emerged as parent nodes during the research. Apart from that findings allowed to identify the child nodes and those created under each of the above parent nodes.

4.1.1 Case Study Classification

Case study classification used in the research for each case study demonstrated in following table 39. Apart from that second respondent category classification criterion demonstrated in following table 40.

Table 39: Hotel Classification

	Number of Rooms	Number of Employees	Years of Operations	Ownership	Interviewers	Structure of the Hotel
Case A	12	21 < 30	5	Local Mother Company	Resident Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case B	17	21 < 30	20	Local Individual	General Manager	Single Operation
Case C	28	21 < 30	5	Local Mother Company	General Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case D	14	21 < 30	5	Local Mother Company	Resident Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case E	53	31+	8	Local Mother Company	General Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case F	18	21 < 30	8	Local Mother Company	Resident Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case G	17	21 < 30	10	Local Individual	Resident Manager	Single Operation
Case H	28	21 < 30	8	International Company	General Manager	Chain of Hotels
Case I	16	21 < 30	8	Local Individual	Resident Manager	Single Operation

Table 40: Guest Classification

	Number of Visits to Sri Lanka	Number of boutique hotel visits	Mother Country	Travelling Status
Case A	1	6 or more	Europe	With the partner
Case B	1	6 or more	UK	With the partner
Case C	1	6 or more	UK	With the partner
Case D	1	6 or more	UK	With the partner
Case E	3	6 or more	Europe	With friends
Case F	1	6 or more	Europe	With the partner
Case G	1	6 or more	Europe	With the partner
Case H	2	4	Europe	With the partner
Case I	1	6 or more	Europe	With the partner

4.2 Existing Status of the Hotel Operations

4.2.1 Requirement of a Business Model for Boutique Hotels

The requirement of a business model for Boutique hotels was identified through three child nodes. They are; no business model, need a business model (from management evidence) and expect a business model (from guest evidence). Therefore, the nodes matrix tables were developed after running the matrix coding queries for the child nodes that were created under the parent nodes for the theme of “Requirement of a Business Model”. Adding to this, Table 41 demonstrates the coding references of senior management interviews to each case carried out and Table 42 demonstrates the coding references of guest interviews to each case carried out. Those sub themes have further been discussed in this section with the interview evidence.

Table 41: Node Matrix of Coding References from Manager Interviews for Requirement of a Business Model

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Need a Business Model	3	5	3	7	8	3	4	4	3	40
No Business Model	2	1	1	1	6	3	1	1	2	18

Table 42: Node Matrix of Coding References from Guest Interviews for Expecting a Business Model

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Expecting a Business Model	2	1	4	0	5	5	5	3	2	27

Forty coding references from management interviews were identified which says that Boutique hotels are expecting a business model for their operations. All the management case studies had the evidence indicating this. Interestingly highest coding references (n=8) was from a Boutique hotel which is a theme based Boutique hotel (Case E) and second highest number of coding references (n=7) is from a location based Boutique hotel (Case D) in the sample. Adding to this 18 coding references were identified which confirmed that now the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka are operating without having a proper business model. This point was identified from all the case studies from management evidence. Adding to this, 27 coding references were identified from guest evidence from eight case studies confirming guests too are expecting a proper business model for the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka to experience the high quality level of service as they expected from Boutique hotels.

Key reason to have a business model for the formal sector of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka is to make sure the formal sector is achieving the key meaning of the Boutique hotel to retain the target guests and to remove informal sector involvement in Boutique hotels in the industry. Even guests' evidence indicated that Asian Boutique hotels were frauds due to the informal sector manipulations.

*“I do not want to see the industry getting ruined because of mushrooming boutique hotels. You know, we have carefully designed and developed everything to make sure that we are achieving the key theme of boutique hotel concept.... I want all the hotels to follow these concepts to make this industry survival. I want to chase away the boutique hotels who ruin this concept by manipulating the concept for sake boutique hotel. This is why, we need a proper model as you said to make these hotels more profitable and developing”
(Manager, Case Study A).*

*“I want to see that scams free tourism sector in Sri Lanka with the boutique hotels than other Asian countries. If boutique hotels knows the elements they should highlight to make me happy then they won't fall to scam category”
(Guest, Case Study B).*

All the Boutique hotel managers have confirmed their understanding about this need of a business model for the Boutique hotels and highlighted the importance of having a business model specifically designed for Boutique hotels. Guests confirmed this importance by indicating the expectations for standardize practices from the Boutique hotels.

“I would say it is better if I have a model with all the stuff I should consider when it comes to the modern Boutique hotel service delivery and the level of that element which I can move with my staff” (Manager, Case Study F).

“...if some of the hotels does not practice these standards, there has to be a mechanism to make aware them about these practices and all” (Guest, Case Study F).

Further, management have highlighted indicating that having a business model will develop consistency in service delivery. Guests are comparing this consistency with other Asian destinations when selecting the destinations. This indicates the importance of having a proper business model to attract target audience to Sri Lankan Boutique hotels.

“...I think it is important have such because the consistency in service quality is the key when it comes to retaining guests and winning over the competition” (Manager, Case Study G).

“Plus I believe all the hotels should have the same standards or the elements like Fortress in all the boutique hotels which I experienced in Bali and Vietnam” (Guest, Case Study E).

Because now, what is happening is internal rivalry among each other leading to less competitive status. Because guests use a level of service quality as the criteria to select the best Boutique hotel for their holiday.

“...I have to personally involve in the process to identify the important elements and how to do those. Ultimately they are leading to an unethical business since all are struggling on how to satisfy the guests” (Manager, Case Study E).

“...a proper mechanism to all Sri Lankan boutique hotels based on internal standards could have made all the hotels same in basics to win both parties” (Guest, Case Study A).

Manager from Case Study D mentioned a business model could further be applied as minimum standards for the industry to make sure the industry is sustainable with existing unethical business practices. Guests' evidence indicated that they are willing to pay a high price if those standards are there.

“I strongly believe, industry need standards and measurements. Minimum level of standards, minimum level of requirements, minimum quality levels could have introduced to this system to make all the hotels to the line” (Manager, Case Study D).

“...such defined process regarding the boutique hotels with the minimum requirements should be there. So, then guests know if the property is a registered boutique hotel the minimum characteristics are getting matched” (Manager, Case Study C).

Adding more, senior managers mentioned the proposed business model should be a unique business model which can clearly focus on Boutique hotel operations rather than adopting a business model from another accommodation sector. Case study G guest indicated this as a crucial part for the Boutique hotels to win the guests' mind set to be delightful.

“As a boutique hotel I think we need to work on a unique service delivery model” (Manager, Case Study C).

“This is a crucial part I believe” (Guest, Case Study G).

So far, most of the Boutique hotels do is they practice the best practices with the individual involvement or by identifying the gaps from the experience, the management have.

“Whenever we spot a difficulty or a gap, we take actions, this could have more easily if I have standards. We make sure we meet the international standards, so we can stand out in the competition. Otherwise we can’t win the customer over” (Manager, Case Study B).

“I pay a high amount to get these facilities and I want all the boutique hotels to be same as the international level and in same level of quality” (Guest, Case Study I).

Therefore, it is evident that management is keen on developing a business model or else an enhancement for the existing business model that can drive their Boutique hotels to long term survival. From the guests perspective it is evident that guests are so keen on reserving their next holiday in a Boutique hotel that is delivering the key meaning of Boutique hotel.

4.2.2 Level of Successfulness of Existing Business Models

The level of successfulness was measured by using five child nodes. Coding references were generated by running matrix queries for each child node (Refer Table 43). These themes were identified as the characteristics of a sustainable business model in a hotel from literature review in section 2.4.2. The existing activities were questioned from the managers to identify the successfulness in terms of these five child nodes.

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Table 43: Node Matrix of Coding References from Manager Interviews for Successfulness of Existing Activities

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Driving to Sustainability	1	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	2	11
High Market Share	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	7
Long term Survival	3	0	1	0	1	1	1	5	1	13
Satisfying the Customer	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	3	1	10
Winning the Competition	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	8

11 coding references covering eight case studies implies senior managers have identified the importance of developing a business model and its importance to drive applying Boutique hotels for long-term sustainability.

“Since we have combined all these three to the service over here, we have received a good reputation in guest mind, market place, among competitors and so on” (Manager, Case Study B).

Developing high market share was not an easy task with the existing business operations due to rising competition and other challenges (n=7) and at the same time high market share should support the revenue generation too. But Boutique hotels were confident in gaining the market share with the existing activities with a proper alignment toward a sustainable methodology.

“Winning is not enough, revenue should get secured with higher room turnover” (Manager, Case Study B).

“I can take my hotel to a better position against the other hotels in the Galle Fort” (Manager, Case Study F).

Management has realized the value of maintaining these existing practices to drive the Boutique hotels to achieve the objectives in short term and long term aspects. For that

they have aligned their existing activities to the objectives as much as they can with current capacity.

“...while hitting the performance targets. That is the sustainability. ...and I will be surviving with no operational surprises. Once all these tactics were established all the hotels can work as a collaborative approach rather than having nothing and competition on each other while driving to a blood bath” (Manager, Case Study H).

These Boutique hotels have been very careful in delighting the guests with the existing service delivery which has led them to survive in the marketplace at the moment. For that some have not compromised the service quality, some of the Boutique hotels comprised the service quality. But believe in an improvement in the service delivery to satisfy the future guests.

“I am winning my customer, what market is expecting is very important and it changes. So being aligned with those is crucial” (Manager, Case Study H).

All the Boutique hotels have made efforts to continue working with the rising competition toward a sustainable business environment, but believe in an improvement to face the competition.

“If we can explain and define all these activities then we can assure the luxury holiday than our competing hotels in the Galle Fort which is the most important requirement” (Manager, Case Study D).

Following Table 44 indicates the coding references from managers' interview evidence that indicates the status of existing business activities at their properties. Coding references were generated by running matrix query for the child node that is the management perspective of the status of existing Activities. 33 coding references were identified from the evidence that is about the existing status.

Table 44: Node matrix of coding references from manager interviews for status of existing business activities at their properties

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Set of Existing Activities	4	4	2	3	2	4	3	7	4	33

Except case study D, all other case study Boutique hotels are following standard operating procedures (SOP) as the only framework to align the business activities to their usual routine. However, managers believed SOPs were developed to align the business processes were standards only and not to drive toward long-term survival.

“We follow usual routines as a boutique hotel, but we don’t have a defined framework as to how so sometimes practices what we does go wrong and sometimes it work perfectly fine, it is not confirmed since we are addressing different audience” (Manager, Case Study G).

The Boutique hotel managers who operate without having a business model indicated their operations are based on the top layer priorities now. Adding to that, the future is not predictable since practices are not standardized.

“Successfulness drive should come from the owners and their priorities, at the moment we are good. But I do not know about future since market is so volatile” (Manager, Case Study H).

Since the SOPs are not fixed, the level service offered to guests are different from one guest to another guest which is leading to service gaps from one Boutique hotel to another Boutique hotel.

“Level of service could be different from one guest to another, but the quality and the standards should be there” (Manager, Case Study F).

All the managers are satisfied with the SOPs or their own frameworks, but indicated the importance of a long term survival method to face to the future challenges.

“But, all together what I feel is, we need a clear understanding for these activities which can make hotel as a competitive hotel in the long run not as a place which is surviving at the moment” (Manager, Case Study D).

Following Table 45 indicates the coding references for each customer regarding their expectations for having standard practices that can lead to satisfaction during their stay in the Boutique hotel. Coding references were generated by running matrix query for the child node.

Table 45: Node Matrix of Coding References from Customer Interviews for Expectations for Standard Practices

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Expecting standard practices from the hotels	4	2	5	9	4	7	10	9	2	52

This was prominent in all the case study evidence with 52 coding references. All the evidence indicated guests are expecting standard Boutique hotel practices that can lead to the key meaning of the Boutique hotel. Though they have selected the case study hotel, they still believe there is room to improve in Sri Lankan context. In the meantime, appreciate the current effort to make the existing service delivery to meet the meaning of Boutique hotel concept.

“...I would like to say that these boutique hotels has to improve their service quality in terms of all the possible aspects which would appeal the customer. It is not about being customer oriented anymore. It is amount working with the customer” (Guest, Case Study D).

The personal belief about the service tendered to the guest is that there is a gap in the best practices. Further, they believe that these best practices need to identify from the successful Boutique hotels business operations.

“I personally believe that boutique hotels should adapt the best boutique hotel practices to give an exceptional service to the customers. Some of the hotels actually missed on that” (Guest, Case Study C).

Whatever the best practices the Boutique hotels are implementing need to align more toward the key meaning of the Boutique hotel and toward the Boutique hotel guest requirement. There should be an awareness build up mechanism for the guests regarding this.

“... Boutique hotel in Sri Lanka has to align their services more towards the concept or the theme they are following. When it comes to Bali all follows the given standards so by the time we reserve the hotel we know the level of the standards and we pay accordingly, in Sri Lanka that is not the case I felt” (Guest, Case Study H).

Though the best practices are there, guests expect guidance for those practices to receive by them. This was indicated in the Case study E saying that they are expecting Boutique hotels will be delivering the key meaning what they are in the hotel for.

“But at some points I felt like they lack guidance in terms of goal orientation which need to develop all over the industry” (Guest, Case Study E).

There was evidence from Case Study F guests indicating that he has identified service gaps even by staying in Boutique hotel chains. Which is a negative comment to the Sri Lankan Boutique hotel sector.

“Proper operational standards are not established I guess in Sri Lanka. Now in this stay I stay in the same hotel chain where I have seen gaps in the service in each hotel with differences. ... I would say it has to align their elements more towards the concept or the theme they are adopting” (Guest, Case Study F).

Finally the long term survival agenda should be developed and the industry standards should be managed for the Sri Lankan Boutique hotels. As case study G evidence

indicated if standards are there, the target audience will be getting attracted as an approach to long term survival of Boutique hotels.

*“I know there are boutique hotels that does not meet these characteristics which need attention in future, because I would never go to those hotels”
(Guest, Case Study G).*

4.3 Identification of the Manager Expectations and Customer Requirements from a Boutique Hotel

Interview findings through the matrix coding queries revealed themes and patterns of how to drive the Boutique hotel based on the pre identified eight performance indicators. Most of the themes and patterns revealed from the interview data and one theme derived inductively as in in-vivo codes. All these themes and patterns presented in Table 46 in relation to pre identified performance indicators. In this section, findings presented based on matrix coding queries run in Nvivo 12.

Table 46: Performance Indicators to Drive the Boutique Hotels to Sustainable Future

Key Themes and Patterns	Sub Key Themes and Patterns
Managing the Strategic Focus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing Aims and Objectives for the Hotel 2. Developing Vision and Mission for the hotel
Design and Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing the hotel in an attractive location and favourable destination 2. Designing the Interior to a concept with unique characteristics 3. Designing the exterior to a concept with unique characteristics

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Table 46 (cont.)

Service Delivery of the Hotel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivering Personalized services 2. Delivering Luxury high end services 3. Delivering Intimate Services
Managing the Customer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the customer Requirements 2. Delivering the Promised services
Managing the Stakeholder	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the Stakeholder Requirements 2. Implementing Stakeholder Relationship Management Policy
Digital Marketing of the Hotel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification most Suitable Digital marketing methods with market and industry trends 2. Implementation and control mechanism for each digital marketing activity
Environmental concern of the business activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing Environmental sustainability as per the market and industry requirement 2. Managing and Maintaining the Environmental sustainability Policy
Financial Performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing Revenue Management system
Crisis Management Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of crisis management plan to face to the internal and external environmental challenges.

Source: Author's work adopted from Primary Data

4.3.1 Managing the Strategic Focus

As mentioned in Table 47 in above section two themes and patterns have identified under the main theme of Managing the Strategic Focus. They are Developing Aims and Objectives for the Hotel and Developing Vision and Mission for the hotel. Furthermore, these sub themes and patterns have been supported by the literature in the literature review chapter. Two matrix-coding queries have applied for two types of interview evidence (Management and Customers). Therefore, the nodes matrix tables have developed after running the matrix-coding query for the child nodes that were created under the parent nodes for the theme of "Managing Strategic Focus". Adding to this, Table 47 demonstrate the coding references of senior management interviews to each

case carried out and Table 48 demonstrate the coding references of customer interviews to each case carried out. Each sub theme and the pattern that identified under the main theme of Managing the Strategic Focus discussed in following subsections with the evidence of the interviews.

Table 47: Node Matrix of Coding References from Senior Management Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Manager - Developing Aims and Objectives Hotels		8	2	3	3	14	13	9	7	17	76
	Need Aims and Objectives	4	1	2	1	5	5	4	5	10	37
	Positioning in the Market Place	2	1	1	0	5	5	2	2	3	21
	Winning the Competition	2	0	0	1	2	3	3	1	3	15
Total		16	4	6	5	26	26	18	15	33	149
Manager - Developing Vision and Mission for the Hotel		11	4	6	7	45	19	11	13	23	139
	Aligning Activities	4	1	1	2	19	12	3	7	11	60
	Future Sustainability	1	1	3	2	11	5	3	1	3	30
	Need Vision and Mission	6	2	2	2	13	5	5	5	13	53
Total		22	8	12	13	88	41	22	26	50	282
Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival		9	6	14	7	25	13	8	14	0	96
Total		9	6	14	7	25	13	8	14	0	96

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Table 48: Node Matrix of Coding References from Customers Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Customer - Expecting Hotels to have Aims and Objectives		1	1	0	4	1	2	1	1	1	12
	Expecting activities aligning to the aims and objectives	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	37	45
Total		2	1	3	4	1	2	2	4	1	20
Customer - Expecting Hotels to Focus on the Vision and Mission		1	1	1	2	2	3	3	8	2	23
	Expecting activities aligning to the vision and mission	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	6
Total		2	1	3	2	2	3	4	10	2	29
Customer - Strategic Focus Convince to Buy Hotel Room		1	1	4	0	1	2	2	1	0	12
Total		1	1	4	0	1	2	2	1	0	12

a. Developing Aims and Objectives for the Hotel

n=76 coding references from manager evidence determined the importance of developing aims and objectives for a hotel. All the nine managers mentioned they need aims and objectives (n=37) for their hotels to have a smooth flow of work process to succeed in the long run. This smooth process is expected by the customers as well since they are expecting from hotels to align the process to the key aims and objectives of the hotel (n=45). All the managers highlighted that this is allowing them to position in the marketplace (n=21) while facing competition (n=15). Same time this importance was further confirmed with (n=12) coding references from customer interviews as they said they expect hotels to have aims and objectives.

The hotels that have set the aims and objectives are confident on their service delivery saying that they have achieved the service excellence since they have set the aims and objectives as they have fixed according to Boutique hotel definition. All the customer evidence indicating that they were happy with the aims and objectives which the Boutique hotel has fixed to make them happy. Customer evidence from case A

reconfirmed the fact that having aims and objectives make the guest convinced to buy the room or to spread the positive word of mouth about the hotel in the long term.

“You all are seeing all these elements starting from gate to pool, sky on the hotel to the soil all are in this way because we have set the objectives to be in such way, to drive the hotel to a good financial performance to good non-financial performance” (Manager – Case Study A).

“Targets or the objectives we have set for almost all the departments, in the perspective of cost, revenue, guest numbers etc... Those are getting achieved by the staff and annual performance evaluations also taking place to redesign the process” (Manager – Case Study D).

“...I had a discussion with the reservation department for my long holiday, and explained to me how they are willing to make my holiday memorable. Each and every aim was clearly explained for me and then thinking twice I booked the hotel” (Guest – Case Study A).

Managers' in the hotels that do not have specific aims and objectives believe they need to fix aims and objectives for the hotel to align the existing activities to that. From the guest perspective, having aims and objectives is a must to see in a Boutique hotel to make them happy during their stay.

“For this I believe we need to have a specific set of drivers like international hotels have. Like, aims and objectives” (Manager – Case Study I).

“All the staff were well equipped with the knowledge and the experience to serve us, I felt it from the way they react to my requests and behavior. I am happy with those practices here at Hotel” (Guest – Case Study D).

Because of the unique characteristics, Boutique hotels need their own aims and objectives rather aligning to the aims and objectives that other accommodation options practice.

“Aims and objectives too need to change for the boutique hotels. For an example, the level of intimate service delivery which we deliver over here at this hotel is totally different to other accommodation services. That is why I strongly believe we need a separate vision, mission, aims and objectives’ (General Manager – Case Study H).

Driving the Boutique hotels with this strategic focus will allow them to win this rising competition as per the managers’ comments. Management in these Boutique hotels believe that aims and objectives help them to compare the competitors in the region and to be in the top in the marketplace.

“Those helped to be the top in the region with other players” (General Manager – Case Study I).

“That is why I say, having our own vision, mission, aims and objectives allows us to win the competition” (General Manager – Case Study H).

b. Developing Vision and Mission for the hotel

The sub theme of developing vision and mission for a boutique hotel having n=139 coding references which indicated that the majority of the hotel management preferred to have their own vision and mission to drive the hotel for long term survival (n=30). All the managers have confirmed that they need a vision for the hotel with n=53 coding references. For that they have aligned their existing activities to have a clear focus on what they are doing now (n=60). Customer findings determined that customers also expect a vision and mission from these high-end properties to make them happy during their stay (n=23). This is further confirmed since n=6 coding references which determined that guests are expecting hotels to align their hotel activities to this luxurious, customized and intimate service delivery.

One of the main reasons to have a clear vision and mission for the Boutique hotels is to drive properties to the successful achievement of the strategic focus. If this process is demonstrated in a manner the guest could review and understand, it has confirmed that

was the guest expectation as well to be a repeated guest and to spread the positive word of mouth.

“It’s our major driving factor to keep us strategically focused because everything is clearly mentioned” (Manager – Case Study B).

“Once a hotel displayed their vision at the reception, I can’t remember which boutique hotel but I think that made me to feel happy since I saw what I am going to experience from the hotel” (Guest – Case Study G).

While keeping the service process strategic focus oriented, having a clear vision and mission helps them to make the process is guest oriented and to make the guest happy while being the best Boutique hotel in the level of service delivery.

“...it drives the hotel to be the best hotel as a boutique hotel and fulfil customer requirements. It gives a strategic direction and focus to operate continuously and successfully” (Manager – Case Study A).

“I was impressed actually. They have given that experience to the customers and we are feeling that uniqueness everywhere” (Guest – Case Study H).

Strategic direction further getting value additions by directing the staff on how to shape the delivery, which was highlighted in Case B. Guest evidence from Case I indicated that identification of the staff commitment for the excellent service delivery could apply to any Boutique hotel as well.

“It acts as a clear indication of what the company expects from the staff, so we can adapt the best boutique hotel practices to achieve that” (Manager – Case Study B).

“They were very understanding and knowledgeable. They were also willing to help anytime I needed their help. With their services, I felt so special...” (Guest – Case Study I).

The Boutique hotels that do not have a specific statement of these strategic elements believe, adding this strategic focus is an improvement for their existing process. Guests who have understood this gap have commented indicating that this gap needs to fill to be satisfied.

“...we don’t have our own specified vision and mission yet. But we have a rough ideas what our aim is which we think it would be better if we can get one developed and fixed for us” (Manager – Case Study B).

“So I believe they should work on aligning with their main vision and mission while adding more technological advancements to the service delivery process to make it easier” (Guest – Case Study E).

c. Needed Element for Long Term Survival

Managing the strategic focus with a clear vision, mission, aims and objectives were at average level of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. Thus customers who participated in the research clearly indicated that having such focus will make them repeat or to spread the positive word of mouth (n=12). This strategic focus in a business model would make the Boutique hotels survive in the long run. This was indicated from the n=96 coding references in management interviews.

Efforts have taken to use these elements to beat the internal rivalry they are experiencing now and to drive to long-term survival.

“It is the key to long term survival or to win the competition” (Manager – Case Study D).

“...we are on the look for opportunities and we have plans to implement in order to beat the competition and survive in long term. Since we know what our goal is, we can adjust our operations” (Manager – Case Study D).

Adding to that, managers believe to make the guests happy with the real meaning of the Boutique hotel, the drive toward it should come from the strategic focus. Because if the

Boutique hotel is successful with the service delivery only guests can be happy and spread the positive word of mouth.

“we have gained customer positive reviews in all the review sites, repeat guests, government and supplier support and international support since we have kept the attention to the vision and the drivers of the hotel” (Manager – Case Study B).

“This hotel had those only made the previous guests to write positive comments about this hotel in TripAdvisor. This made me to select the hotel to my Sri Lanka tour though it is expensive” (Guest – Case Study H).

Even though business processes operate along with the objectives of the hotel, manager from case study B mentioned future predictions and forecasting is happening as a part of the vision and mission they got which allowed them to be confident about the long term business aspects. If that confidence was developed in the guests mind, proper market share could be able to develop with the return guests.

“We know how to predict the future. Since we know our vision and mission, we have a clear idea on how to operate in any situation. It guides us towards long term survival. So we are strong enough to face any future challenge” (Manager – Case Study B).

“Fortress is a must again since from the concept itself they know what they are doing. Very clearly they have included all the deliveries to the boutique hotel concept” (Guest – Case Study E).

All the case study evidence confirmed having a strategic focus is crucial to drive the Boutique hotel to such a high market position in the marketplace. This was confirmed from the guest evidence as well indicating the wonder feeling they received by visiting a case study hotel as a boutique hotel.

“...since strategic focus I mean the understanding about the boutique hotel meaning or the meaning of the service process is a very important tool to have a

sustainable business or long term business operations with a higher performance” (Manager – Case Study E).

“I was wondering how a beach club can be a boutique hotel, clearly the meaning of the boutique hotel needs to be in the process to make all happy” (Guest – Case Study G).

4.3.2 Design and Development

The created parent node was Designing and Developing the Boutique hotels. Three sub themes and patterns have been identified as how to design and develop the Boutique hotel from the interview evidence. The sub themes and patterns are; establishing the hotel in an attractive location and favourable destination, designing the Interior to a concept with unique characteristics and designing the exterior to a concept with unique characteristics. Furthermore, these sub themes and patterns have been supported by the reviewed literature in the literature review chapter. Two matrix-coding queries have applied for the two types of interview evidence. Therefore, the nodes matrix tables have developed after running the matrix-coding query for the child nodes that were created under the main parent node of “Design and Development” and to identify sub themes and patterns. Adding to this, Table 49 demonstrates the coding references of senior management interviews to each case carried out and Table 50 demonstrates the coding references of customer interviews to each case carried out. Each sub theme and the pattern that identified under the main theme of Design and Development discussed in following subsections with the evidence of the interviews.

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Table 49: Node Matrix of Coding References from Senior Management Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total	
Establishing the hotel in an attractive location and favourable destination		13	5	8	6	18	13	4	4	21	37	
	Location Advantages	3	2	4	4	6	4	1	5	5	34	
	Location Familiarity	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	10	
	Location Favourability	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	5	17	
	Long Term Survival	4	1	3	0	9	8	2	3	11	41	
	Maintaining Destination Standards	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	6	
Total		26	10	16	12	36	28	10	16	46	145	
Designing the Interior to a concept with unique characteristics		15	9	7	5	16	25	7	19	14	117	
	Needed for Long term Survival	12	7	7	5	14	19	7	17	11	99	
		Competitive Advantages	1	2	2	0	2	4	0	7	4	22
		Winning the competitors	4	0	2	1	2	4	2	6	1	22
		Winning the customers	3	3	2	1	3	6	2	7	4	31
	Theme of the Hotel	3	2	0	1	2	6	0	6	6	26	
Total		38	23	20	13	39	64	18	62	40	282	

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Table 49 (cont.)

Designing the exterior to a concept with unique characteristics		21	5	14	3	32	10	8	10	6	109
	Needed for Long Term Survival	15	3	12	3	25	9	7	9	6	89
	Competitive Advantages	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	2	3	13
	Winning the competitors	5	0	2	1	8	1	1	1	1	20
	Winning the customers	5	1	3	0	7	2	2	2	2	24
	Theme of the Hotel	6	2	2	1	8	1	1	4	1	26
Total		53	12	35	8	82	24	20	28	19	281

Table 50: Node Matrix of Coding References from customer Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Customer - Expecting hotel to be in a Tourist Destination		5	4	6	7	6	2	7	13	6	56
	Convenient Location	1	0	3	4	3	0	1	3	3	18
	Famous Location	1	0	2	1	1	0	2	1	3	11
Total		7	4	11	12	10	2	10	17	12	85
Customer - Expecting a theme based interior design		7	5	8	4	7	4	10	8	10	63
Customer - Expecting a theme based exterior design		7	8	10	5	5	6	12	8	11	96
Customer - Design and Development Convince to Buy a Room		6	5	12	3	6	12	9	7	0	60

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a. Developing the hotel in a Tourist Destination

There were 37 coding references for the importance of having the hotel in an attractive and favorable location from the management interview evidence. Location advantages (n=34) is a beneficial factor for the Boutique hotels. Adding more, destination standards need to be maintained throughout the Boutique hotel operational process to get the advantages of the destination towards the Boutique hotel (n=6). Location favorability (n=17) and location familiarity (n=10) adding further benefits for a hotel if the Boutique hotel is established in such a destination. Guests believe that locating the hotel in a convenient (n=18) and famous (n=11) destination will be a reason to select the hotel (n=56) for their stay.

The Boutique hotels which established in an attractive, well known destination with unique location characteristics will be increasing the competitiveness of the Boutique hotels. This is reconfirmed by all the guest evidence as guests are attracted to the Boutique hotels because of the location which it is established.

“Probably the most important thing. Because it gives us an advantage of attracting more guests and to establish a unique experience. Through that we are able to beat the competitors and in long term it helps to have a specific theme for a hotel and increase the attractiveness” (Manager – Case Study B).

“Personally I look into the location when I plan my holidays. I think it plays a major part in my decision making” (Guest – Case Study G).

All the managers strongly believe that they have built the brand name for the hotel with the destination and location benefits which they have received in terms of location and destination awareness. Location favorability and location familiarity adding further benefits for a hotel if a hotel is established in such a destination. For this Boutique hotels should have the capacity to grab the opportunity. Guests expect hotels to be located in such attractive locations. Because based on the location awareness the guests search the Boutique hotels and then they go ahead with the evaluations to pick the best property.

“We won’t be here without it. That resort feeling, that dream location is Galle Fort. People love this part of Sri Lanka and that is the biggest reason for someone to book a hotel from Galle Fort” (Manager – Case Study I).

“... I always make sure to compare different places in the close proximity to get the best selection. Among many places, this particular hotel stood out and it attracted me” (Guest – Case Study C).

When it comes to the designing part of the hotel, most of the Boutique hotel management mentioned that adding location and destination characteristics to the Boutique hotel is effective in guest satisfaction as it attracts the guests. This theme is prominent in all the guest evidence too as a guest requirement to see Boutique hotels having the location based themes.

“A to Z all the concepts in the hotel and room occupancy to other incremental revenue all having a clear relationship the Galle Fort and related heritage value” (Manager – Case Study A).

“Of course the theme affects it and the layout is also very important” (Guest – Case Study B).

However, all the Boutique hotel managers confirmed the establishment of the hotel needs to be in a center of all other attractions rather than establishing in a faraway location. Managers' need this feature since guests prefer to do excursions while staying in their hotel. Guests expect indicating that all the tourist attractions should be easily accessible from the hotel without having an extra effort and cost.

“Some guests love to explore around and do surfing, swimming, whale watching and all. So many famous destinations like Hikkaduwa, Mirissa, Weligama, and Unawatuna are easily accessible through here.” (Manager – Case Study F).

“The hotel was so close to the locations I wanted to go” (Guest – Case Study F).

Even the Boutique hotel located in a famous and attractive location the convenience in accessing through the infrastructure facilities should be flexible. Because guests prefer not to pay any additional cost by staying in an extra unique location.

“..I think this location can be easily accessed through highway and it’s a plus point too” (Manager – Case Study C).

“I would never purchase a boutique hotel which is located in an isolated destination which can create me additional cost” (Guest – Case Study G).

b. Theme Based Interior

n=117 coding references from manager interview evidence have found that indicated the importance of having a unique interior which is suitable for the Boutique hotel key theme to have a long term survival. n=26 management coding references were reconfirmed this saying a clear relationship should establish between Boutique hotel theme and these interior characteristics. Coding references from managers were identified that said the need of such unique interior design for a Boutique hotel to win guests toward the hotel (n=31). n=22 management coding references were mentioned; this interior design helps to compete among the competitors and another n=22 coding reference was identified that further confirmed that this unique theme will add more competitive advantages. This unique interior which is related to the theme of the Boutique hotel is an expected factor by the guests who visit the hotel which is confirmed by all the customer evidence (n=63).

This theme is prominent in most of all the case studies and highlighted significantly in case study F. The key reason to have such interior is to add a value to the guest with the locational features and Boutique hotel characteristics.

“The purpose of our designing is, we want to offer the Galle values mixed with our core values. That luxury, personalized service which makes the guest feel free” (Manager – Case Study F).

*“Location and architecture would definitely make me feel happy and satisfied because they can experience the concept up to 100% for the money I pay”
(Guest – Case Study H).*

All the Boutique hotels have aligned the interior of the hotel to the key theme of the hotel rather making different themes against the key theme of the hotel. These features allowed beating the competition. Because guests do the comparisons based on the themes of hotels prior to the reservations.

“This hotel is not a new building. It is 400 years old. The concept was to restore and maintain that Dutch Colonial design. Each and every element having a meaning to the theme of this hotel. We have not changed anything in the main structure and all remain as it is” (Manager – Case Study H).

“We want the guest to feel that ancient feel. It should be a unique experience which make us stand out from the competition” (Manager – Case Study H).

*“When I choose a hotel, I did not forget to check out all the available platforms to get an idea about the key theme, exterior and interior of the boutique hotels”
(Guest – Case Study G).*

This confirmed interior design has been able to assist to achieve the predicted revenue targets by achieving the guest arrivals.

“Main reason to sell AMAN is the heritage value I have in the property. Even in an off season or in a peak season we are able to hit the given revenue targets with these elements” (Manager – Case Study H).

*“I can undoubtedly say that this hotel has done extra to make the guest happy in terms of the physical appearance. I am so happy that I came to this hotel”
(Guest – Case Study B).*

Case A interior designing was handled by an architect to make sure the layout planning of the hotel adding values to the service delivery of the hotel.

“We hired her at the beginning and so all of us we did not have any idea about architecture. She show us the concept like in especially down south Walawwa concept that is gone in this way ” (Manager – Case Study H).

The layout plan, interior and exterior architecture has to match each other equally. Then only the experience would be unique and spectacular which would make me feel good” (Guest – Case Study C).

c. Theme Based Exterior

The concept of having a unique exterior was mentioned as an important factor for a Boutique hotel with 109 coding references from management evidence. This helps to generate competitive advantage (n=13). Furthermore, having a unique exterior as a theme (n=26) allows you to win the competition (n=20) and win the customer (n=24) as a Boutique hotel. According to guest evidence, unique exterior is a key element for guests to select the hotel (n=96) for their stay.

There have been many instances that managers have designed the hotel exterior aligning to the key characteristics of the location or the destination. This is a constraint that emerged from guest evidence as well. Guest evidence indicated they are expecting location based exterior characteristics from the Boutique hotel they select.

“If I talk about the exterior, which is also same as the interior. Done in a way to add a value to the delivery...all were designed in to a theme of Dutch period” (Manager – Case Study H).

“The exact 100% Dutch cultural things and the way they have preserved it has always taken my interest to stay in the particular hotel. I’d say of course the theme is very important” (Guest – Case Study H).

Senior managers believe that this type of exterior development helps them to achieve the operational aims and objectives in short term to long term. Guests’ evidence indicated they are willing to stay in such focused hotels.

“I believe developing a concept and designing the rooms accordingly is very important to success with the operations and targets” (Manager – Case Study G).

“I was looking forward for this as a boutique hotel since I am not paying for just building like Hotel J Unawatuna which I have stayed” (Guest – Case Study H).

To be in the competition and to position as a top preferred Boutique hotel in the region most of the Boutique hotels have rebuilt this exterior as to the concepts of the location. Which is a factor which guests are considering to select the Boutique hotel for their stay.

“I am not saying all the stuff what you’re seeing in the exterior are from that era. Most were rebuilt to meet the theme. Otherwise, there is a high probability, and it was, and it will continue too that a competitor will take our place or grab our guests. So I do not want to fall in to that level” (Manager – Case Study F).

These hotels have developed these unique exterior designs up to this level trusting that the guests will be getting attracted and a value will be delivered to the guests. At all-time guests too expect this value creation from the unique exterior as well.

“We want to give that unique fortress hotel feeling. Then only we can pitch for good customer reviews in all the social media platforms, offline platforms, high room occupancy and good spending per room or guest” (Manager – Case Study E).

“Yes I do have special interest toward the hotel in those. It always add a vibes to my stay. Now this is heritage hotel...” (Guest – Case Study D).

Adding to this, managers and the guests from all the case studies confirmed that guests expecting that the Boutique hotel will be having unique exterior design which can deliver them a personalized, luxurious and intimate service delivery as the value propositions along with the location characteristics.

“I cannot say we are operating according to our own way other than these factors, because this is what the guests expect from us and these are the bases

the guests use to compare us with or any other boutique hotel in the Galle Fort ” (Manager – Case Study D).

Personally I am very concerned about the interior and exterior of the hotel which goes with a defined theme. I always check what the interesting aspects are when it comes to the design of the hotel. Modern facilities has to blend with the interior and exterior. I would check how the layout has been designed as well” (Guest– Case Study B).

d. Needed Element for Long Term Survival

All the case study evidence (except case study D) from managers' perspective agreed that the theme based design and development will lead the hotel to a long-term objective achievement with 41 coding references. All the hotel managers confirmed developing the hotel for a theme based interior is an important element for a Boutique hotel to drive to long-term survival (n=99). Surprisingly managers confirmed the importance of the theme based exterior for the long-term survival of the Boutique hotel with 89 coding references. From guest evidence, it was evident guests got convinced to reserve the room after viewing the unique design and development of the hotel (n=60).

Designing the hotel to a unique theme, especially the interior, is believed to be a key selling point of all the case study hotels. Adding to that, guests were considering the characteristics of the interior to select their stay in Sri Lanka.

“...It’s our motive for long term survival” (Manager – Case Study C).

“I believe, the photos in the website and the TripAdvisor about the room interior and exterior encouraged to reserve three days at this hotel” (Guest – Case Study E).

Exterior of the Boutique hotels in this study had their location based on unique characteristics. These unique characteristics such as heritage values are the key drives to the Boutique hotels to stand along in the long journey.

“This design and development is our key drive. This will make us survive in long run” (Manager – Case Study A).

“For this holiday, I wanted to spend some quality time exploring the outdoors and relax in indoors while experiencing the cultural heritage of ancient times. So basically the theme attracted me” (Guest – Case Study D).

All the case study hotels established in locations that are well established with the target audience awareness and infrastructure development focusing on long-term survival. Adding to that, they are driving to high room occupancy using that factor.

“...we totally have that favorability of the location and it directs us towards long term survival through increasing customer base” (Manager – Case Study F).

“I think location is really important when it comes to a hotel, revenue wise, attraction wise, competition wise and sales and marketing” (Manager – Case Study E).

“Since hotel having this breathtaking view and location of Benthota only we have selected them forgetting the cost of it” (Guest – Case Study B).

4.3.3 Service Delivery of the Hotel

Three sub themes and patterns that are Delivering Personalized services, Delivering Luxury high-end services and Delivering Intimate Services emerged from the case study evidence. These sub themes and patterns have been identified from literature evidence with supporting literature. The matrix query adopted for the parent node of “Service Delivery of the Hotel” and coding references were identified from both senior management and customer interviews. Table 51 and Table 52 demonstrate the coding references. Following sub sections discussed the themes and patterns with the evidence of the interviews.

Table 51: Node Matrix of Coding References from Senior Management Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Intimate Service Delivery		2	2	3	1	3	3	2	5	16	34
	Long Term Survival	1	1	2	0	0	1	2	4	6	17
Total		3	3	5	1	3	4	4	9	22	51
Luxury Service Delivery		3	2	3	1	7	2	2	5	16	34
	Long Term Survival	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	4	7	18
Total		4	3	5	1	8	3	4	9	23	60
Personalized Service Delivery		2	2	3	1	7	4	2	5	17	36
	Long term Survival	1	1	2	0	0	1	2	4	7	18
Total		3	3	5	1	7	5	4	9	24	61
Crisis Management Plan		0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	5
Needed Element for Long Term Survival		14	8	17	15	17	28	12	17	31	159
	Win the Competitor	2	1	4	3	2	5	0	4	0	19
	Win the Customer	5	4	4	6	5	8	4	4	0	35
Total		21	13	25	24	24	41	16	25	31	220

Table 52: Node Matrix of Coding References from Customer Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Excellent Level Service Delivery Convince me to Buy the Room		4	2	1	2	2	4	3	6	0	24
Expecting Intimate Service		3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	7	33
Expecting Luxury Services and Facilities		3	12	6	5	3	6	7	4	12	58
Expecting Personalized Service		5	7	3	5	5	6	6	5	9	51

a. Delivering Intimate Service Delivery

The intimate service delivery is implemented in all case studies which is an indication for the importance (n=51) for guest satisfaction. Out of this coding reference, 17 coding references are indicating that this element is needed for long-term survival of the hotel while retaining in the marketplace. The highest number of coding references is from case study I that is 22. Adding to this total of 33 coding references were identified from all the customer interviews which indicates that all the guests who visited Boutique hotel are expecting the intimate service delivery from the Boutique hotels. Highest coding reference was from case I which is the same as manager evidence (n=7).

All the Boutique hotels are directly concerned about the intimate service delivery where they have given their attention since the development stage. Because this feature is one of the main expectations of guests from Boutique hotels.

“Intimate facilities were created from the developing part of the hotel, for an example, see our pool. It is a close circuit pool and only the in-house guests visit the pool and not a single outsider can view the pool” (Manager – Case Study A).

“When it comes to this hotel, I would say that this is the best I have been to so far. I can’t really come up with any gap because everything was perfectly organized and planned. I am so happy that I picked this hotel because it is worth my money” (Manager – Case Study B).

Believing intimacy is a key expectation by the guests so the surroundings of the hotels have developed in an intimate manner by all the case study hotels.

“Intimate surrounding is very important is because guests selecting us as their host due to this characteristic, if this is not getting delivered they will never return to us or never select Sri Lankan boutique hotels” (Manager – Case Study B).

“This intimate touch is the one to come down to this hotel with her. I was expecting this” (Guest– Case Study G).

While paying attention to the development, Boutique hotels have paid a clear attention to the process of reengineering to make sure the intimate service is getting delivered to the guests with the actual service delivery.

“Intimate service delivery cannot achieve if I have not made the process intimate in this way. Otherwise this will be another star class hotel which will not have any difference” (Manager – Case Study C).

“They have given their maximum attention to detail when creating that service oriented culture for the intimacy, example they accepted my request for pool side dining” (Guest – Case Study H).

These processes need to be unique to other accommodation types and need to differentiate from other Boutique hotels to be exclusive because guests do the comparisons before they select the Boutique hotel to stay.

“Intimate activities are unique to us comparing to other accommodation types, see these are the differences we have in the service process” (Manager – Case Study D).

“They know how to handle customers and make them happy in very intimate manner” (Guest – Case Study E).

b. Delivering Luxury High End Services and Facilities

All eight Boutique hotels are implementing the luxury service delivery (n=34). Seven Boutique hotel managers mentioned that they believe luxury service delivery is driving them to long-term survival (n=18). All the guests who were in the Boutique hotels were expecting the defined luxury services from the hotels (n=58). In addition to that, more than 10 coding references have been identified from both case B and I.

Luxury facilities are available in all the case study hotels, as managers believe that is a key characteristic of a Boutique hotel to make the guests happy. Adding to that the guests

believe a reputed brand will deliver a high-end luxury service toward them during their stay.

“Luxury facilities is costly, but it is a must since the guests who comes here are high-end and to make them happy and to stay number of days we need to invest and deliver such service” (Manager – Case Study G).

“Service is impeccable and top-notch, as you would expect from a resort managed by one of Sri Lanka’s most exclusive hotel brands” (Guest – Case Study A).

However, management from all the Boutique hotels wanted to make these luxury facilities unique to them to stand out from the existing rivalry among Boutique hotels. Guests compare the availability of facilities among the Boutique hotels to select the best Boutique hotels for their holiday in Sri Lanka.

“The process is unique to us, since we are a boutique hotel. Our level of luxury facilities starting from the room facilities to other outdoor facilities are to make the guest happy and process is aligning to that” (Manager – Case Study C).

“I think they have gone beyond the traditional ways to satisfy the guest needs and wants. It truly attracted me to their brand name and made me feel like home. That luxury service was all worth it” (Guest – Case Study B).

All the evidence indicated managers are expecting to make their luxury facilities a key selling factor to differentiate them compared to other accommodation types. This level of differentiation is expected by the guests to be delightful from their stay and act as a justification for the amount they have paid to that particular Boutique hotel.

“Luxury facilities in the room, the design of the room are totally different to other accommodation types since the guest is needed such” (Manager – Case Study D).

“...luxury service to their boutique hotel customers where they ensure they address all our needs this is the key reason why I have selected the Boutique hotel other than another accommodation type” (Manager – Case Study H).

Moreover, continuous rising of expectations from the guests need the latest high-end luxury facilities to make them satisfied. For this, continuous development in the process is a needed element. Adding to this, guests are expecting the high-end characteristics that will make them extend their stay in the same hotel while valuing the amount they have paid.

“...we have adopted latest technical developments to make the guests happy with the luxury facilities. By adopting technology in this way we expect to attract the potential guests more and more in a long lasting way” (Manager – Case Study C).

“I think I don't need to go in length of how exceptional our stay was with this hotel. I can simply say that we were truly taken up our experience after a two nights that we decided to extend our stay at the hotel” (Guest – Case Study C).

All the managers are expecting this process as a key expectation to have a high level of room occupancy to survive in the long run. For this they are aligning the existing and potential activities to the process to encourage guests to return to the Boutique hotel.

“We have made our luxury facility availability and its usage in a way to maximize the guest satisfaction and to exceed the guest satisfaction, because guests who visit us having high end expectations, so I want them to be delighted, then only they return back to us, or when they do the review search part they see previous guests' comment about the level of delightfulness, then only I can have higher room occupancy” (Manager – Case Study A).

“...yes everything in the service was perfect as they have promised and I think we have made the correct decision by selecting Asia Leisure property and looking forward to visit other properties too” (Guest – Case Study C).

c. Delivering Personalized Service Deliveries

n=36 coding references from all the case studies directly indicated that personalized service is a part of their process and an important element. Meantime, 18 coding references from six Boutique hotels have indicated that this element is an important element for long-term survival of a hotel. From customer interview evidence, 51 coding references were identified that were supporting this theme saying that this personalized service delivery is an expected part of the Boutique hotel service delivery.

Concerning all the Boutique hotel managers, they have made the service to the guests personalized because they believe that is a key characteristic that they should have to generate revenue from reservations. Even the guests believe they have visited Boutique hotels because of this characteristic.

“Personalized service is the reason to visit us by the guests and then only we generate money” (Manager – Case Study G).

“Customer actions are important in the delivery of the service, because what we do is to fulfil the requirements. What they ask for, we have to do...” (Manager – Case Study E).

“I am so happy that I picked this hotel because it is worth my money. Even though the rate looks a bit higher, when I was there, I realized that it was actually worth it” (Guest – Case Study B).

Boutique hotels have considerable commitment to make this personalized service differentiate from other accommodation types to justify why a guest should pay an extra amount.

“If we take the differences, the way we treat the guest to make their stay personalized is different to other large accommodation types” (Manager – Case Study D).

All the managers aligned their processes to deliver a professional and personalized service because that is a key requirement to make the guests happy during their stay in the property. Guests from all the Boutique hotels confirmed this indicating that they have observed this commitment in each and every step of the process and finally they are happy with the Boutique hotel service delivery process.

“Delivering the professional service at a customized way need to deliver in a specific way as a guest expect than another accommodation type” (Manager – Case Study C).

“...and I can say that is the highest level of customer service for me. Each staff member works towards delivering personalized, and high end services to the guest” (Guest – Case Study B).

This alignment starts from check in to check out from the Boutique hotel, as that is how they can achieve the objectives from the operations of the hotel. The guests recognized this since that is a requirement of the guests.

“When it comes to the customizing process we have customize the process starting from the check in to check out as guests need which we have enabled through the technology ” (Manager – Case Study C).

“They knew how to deliver a personalize service and delight me” (Guest – Case Study E).

d. Needed Element for Long Term Survival

All together 220 coding references from all the cases have been identified saying that shaping up the service delivery for the guest requirement is an important tool to drive the Boutique hotel to long term survival. Apart from that 35 coding references from seven Boutique hotels were identified which says perfect Boutique hotel service delivery will be able to win the guests to drive the Boutique hotel for long-term survival. Six Boutique hotels were identified with 19 coding references that said perfect Boutique hotel service delivery would win the competitor to make the Boutique hotel survive in the long-run.

Confirming this, 24 coding references appeared in seven guest interview evidences indicating that perfect Boutique hotel service delivery encouraged them to book that particular hotel.

For the long-term survival, all the managers from the case studies have confirmed that this is a needed element to hit the financial and non-financial targets. This theme has been confirmed by the guests' evidence from all the cases indicating they have visited the hotel due these key characteristics of the hotel.

“...to generate high cash flow and finally to hit the financial and non-financial targets” (Manager – Case Study F).

“...yes everything in the service was perfect as they have promised and I think we have made the correct decision by selecting Asia Leisure property and looking forward to visit other properties too” (Guest – Case Study C).

A properly structured framework is the requirement by most of the managers to implement these key characteristics aligning to the Boutique hotel concept. Because this service gap was identified by the guests too.

“This is what I am saying a well-controlled and created framework is needed to all the aspects in this hotel. So client is happy...” (Manager – Case Study H).

“But I cannot say exactly that I am happy with all the stays I have been to in Sri Lanka. Because some of the hotels I stayed had different service levels, which was not worth for my stay” (Guest – Case Study H).

Adding more, one theme was identified from in-vivo coding. That is crisis management. This is prominent in five case studies highlighting the importance of having a disaster management plan or crisis management plan for the financial and non-financial aspects for the long term survival.

“As a developing industry and a dynamic business world, companies should be ready to face unexpected issues. So having a crisis management or a

contingency framework can help this industry a lot. I think all of the boutique hotels need that...” (Manager – Case Study F).

4.3.4 Managing Guests

Two sub themes and patterns have been created under the parent node of “Managing the Customer”. Identified two sub themes are, a. understanding the customer requirement and b. delivering the promised service delivery”. These emerging sub themes were pre identified from the literature review as the most important successful factors to manage the customers to have a long-term survival for a Boutique hotel. From the interview evidences two matrix-coding queries have been carried out and coding references have demonstrated in Table 53 (for management interview evidences) and Table 54 (Customer interview evidences). In the following section both identified sub themes and patterns have been discussed.

Table 53: Node Matrix of Coding References from Senior Management Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Delivering the Promised Service	3	3	5	13	4	11	2	3	21	65
Understanding the Customer Requirement	4	4	4	6	7	11	5	5	15	61
Needed Element for Long Term Survival	6	8	8	10	14	18	8	6	18	96

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Table 54: Node Matrix of Coding References from Customer Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Expecting key characteristics to repeat to the hotel or to talk about the hotel	3	2	5	1	1	0	8	4	6	30
Expecting the promised level of service from the hotel	11	15	9	9	7	11	11	12	8	93
Expecting to understand the guest requirements	3	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	3	31
Intimate, Luxury and Personalized Service Convince to Buy the Room	5	1	4	2	3	1	3	0	0	19

a. Delivering the Promised Service

All the case studies have been able to confirm that to manage the guests in the hotel, delivering the promised service delivery is an important element (n=65). Case I had the highest coding reference who believed that perfect service delivery is important to satisfy the guest (n=21). n=93 coding references were identified from customer evidence from all the cases saying they are expecting the promised service by the hotel to make them delighted during their stay at the hotel.

All the Boutique hotel managers made their effort to make sure the guests are receiving the Boutique hotel experience during their stay at the property. All Boutique hotels proved this factor particularly explaining this requirement. That is, the importance of delivering the promised Boutique hotel service. Guests are happy with the services they have received as Boutique hotels, but they still expect Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka to have a uniform process rather than having different levels of services.

“Customers are our main concern. We want them to be happy. So we handle them very carefully with love and respect. Then we deliver the pure boutique hotel experience for them which is the one they expect and which is the one we promised for them” (Manager – Case Study A).

“To be honest when talking about this particular property there wasn’t anything bad I experienced. It is may be because of the delightful service I received from the hotel as per my requests, as they have advertised, as they have promised etc... But in general I saw that some of the boutique hotels I’ve been to do not have this uniform theme all over the property” (Guest – Case Study I).

Further, managers want to maintain a good relationship with the guests to deliver them a satisfactory level service to stand among the competition. The perception of the guests’ is they believe to have a positive communication with the hotel staff as a part of expected services to receive this level of service.

“...they come here with high expectations where they get to spend the vacation in that calm and quiet atmosphere. So as in general a boutique hotel is a high end accommodation type which requires personalized attention when handling guests. The standards are high and customers always compare prices with other places” (Manager – Case Study C).

“I was very well satisfied with the communication as they were so clear in explaining their services to me and it was easy communicating with them. I think they are well trained up to a very professional level” (Guest – Case Study H).

However, it can be seen that the majority of the Boutique hotels are referring to this relationship as understanding the guest requirement to improve the service delivery even if the current standards are not meeting current requirements. This theme is further highlighted from the guests’ evidence since they believe this understanding is much needed to be delighted as a guest in a Boutique hotel.

“Aligning the service to the guest requirements are very essential to a boutique hotel which can done only by identifying the rapidly changing guest requirements (Manager – Case Study D).

“The personal attention was given to all my needs and wants throughout the stay. Especially during the meal times and while enjoying a swim they would

come and check up on me if I am getting everything I want (Guest – Case Study F).

When it comes to delivering the promised service delivery these Boutique hotels are not willing to accept any risk of failing to meet the guest requirements. So they have developed their own systems to go ahead with this which is the perception of the guests as well.

“Our own way of handling guests, meeting their needs and customizing the dining and relaxation allow us to make them happy. Our own way means that is what the guests expect from a boutique hotel” (Manager – Case Study E).

“...Major standards has to be maintained well” (Guest – Case Study D).

b. Understanding the Customer Requirement

In order to deliver this promised service delivery, understanding the guest was believed as a crucial criteria by all the eight cases' managers (n=61). Furthermore, guests believe that hotels will understand them to deliver the expected level of service (n=31).

This is a theme evident from most of all the managers. With the large number of arrivals from different markets, they were finding difficulty in understanding the requirements of the guests, but still they believe this is important to make the guests happy and to receive more occupancy. Further, it found that guests are having such expectations from the Boutique hotels as well.

“So we try to understand the customer starting from the reservation to checking out from the hotel. More we going to understand the customer requirements, more we going to know about the level of satisfaction they have got with the level of service they have received, more to shape the delivery” (Manager – Case Study F).

“I definitely got that personalized attention from every hotel where all my needs and wants were prioritized” (Guest – Case Study A).

This level of understanding about guest requirements to the bottom of their expectations should start from the initial reservation for the Boutique hotel. To make sure Boutique hotel is delivering the most personalized service to the guests. This is a guest expectation which they are willing to see from the check in to check out to be unique during their stay.

“Usually when the guest make a reservation, they state special requirements if there are any. That’s one way to know. And during the checking in process, while we give a brief introduction, we also talk with them and get to know them a bit” (Manager – Case Study C).

“I want them to guide me through the whole process so I can feel comfortable being there and I would feel welcomed” (Guest – Case Study F).

Apart from that, understanding the guest requirement during the service delivery is helpful to Boutique hotels to serve the guests in satisfactory level. As evident from guests this needs to be done in a way which is not disturbing the guest.

“Additional personalized requirements are understood through their behaviors and we talk to them while we can during the stay” (Manager – Case Study G).

“...because I go to a boutique hotel to spend a good time on my own and I don’t like when people come and talk to me all the time” (Guest – Case Study B).

Further, this understanding of the guest requirements can be done even with the post purchase behavior as well to improve the level of service. So for that, a satisfaction level survey is carried out by most of the Boutique hotels to measure the level of satisfaction.

“...at the end of the stay, customer will get a feedback form to fill and there is a guest book which helps us to get more feedback. Also on platforms such as Trip Advisor, Booking.com we get a lot of feedback” (Manager – Case Study H).

So over all, the process of the Boutique hotel is kept getting amended as per the guests requirements which will ultimately drive Boutique hotels to long term survival which is also expected by the guests.

“Through that direct communication, we try to understand the customer requirements and what needs to be changed in the current procedures” (Manager – Case Study D).

“More customized, creating a unique and very personal one to one experience which is a key of boutique hotels that makes the guests happy” (Guest – Case Study A). “A boutique hotel should cater their needs and wants to earn money. It is about working with the customer” (Guest – Case Study B).

c. Needed Element for Long Term Survival

All the managers from eight cases confirmed that managing the guests by understanding guests and delivering the promised service is a key tool to make the hotel long term survive (n=96). This way of managing the guest convinced six case study guests (n=19) to move ahead with the booking. Adding more this way of managing guests makes them return to the hotel and to spread the positive word of mouth (n=30).

All the managers are aware about the importance of managing the guests for the long-term survival of the Boutique hotels that is evident from all the hotels with coding references. This is getting justified from all the guests’ evidence as well.

“I think it the most critical part when it comes to the long term survival as without satisfying the customers, we cannot think about our future or about increasing our market share” (Manager – Case Study I).

“Basically, I have selected this hotel because it was able to deliver the personalized and intimate service to the previous guests. That I have seen. So I put my reservation” (Guest – Case Study G).

They all believe that, this is an important task in their service delivery.

“Understanding this type of customers are very hard, but we have to do it. Because that is one of most essential part of our delivery process” (Manager – Case Study H).

The level of the brand name getting compared by the guest prior to the reservation as a selection factor. So on top of above factors, to win the guests against the competition and to create a good brand name in the target audience this way of maintaining the guests always makes the Boutique hotels survive in the long term.

“Then only we can stand out in the competition and survive even in the off peak. Because no references are coming from guests, no repeat guest means it is hard to survive with new guests always” (Manager – Case Study E).

“Its importance is undeniable actually and this special level of service only making us to book the rooms in Boutique hotel than other accommodations units though they are less expensive” (Guest – Case Study C).

Excellent level of managing the guests were given a good loyal guest base with award winning brand names for the Boutique hotels. As managers believe this as an important and crucial factor for long term business operations.

“We are a recognized boutique hotel with the customer satisfaction and we have been awarded. This ensure global traveler an assurance of the highest quality with the excellence and the innovation which is a competitive advantage for us to survive in the long term business environment” (Manager – Case Study D).

This theme is further getting evident from the manager's evidence because all of them are believing that this element will allow them to develop a competitive advantage against the players in the market place and to attract more guests in the long run. This has been further found from the guest evidence indicating that they will return to any property if this is the way of managing guests taking place during their stay.

“I strongly believe this process is very important to all the hospitality service providers since this is a part of the boutique hotel operations and if this is not getting implemented in a way we does, then any particular hotel process will be losing its competitive status in the market place” (Manager – Case Study B).

“If these are getting achieved mean we both has spent has spent a superb holiday and amazingly happy. Definitely coming back again. I would recommend everyone to have an experience by staying there” (Guest – Case Study C).

4.3.5 Managing the Stakeholder

From the Literature evidence, one main theme and two sub themes have been identified on this performance indicator. Furthermore, after exploring the interview evidence “Understanding the Stakeholder Requirement” and “Strong Stakeholder Relationship Management” have been identified as the two sub themes and patterns under the parent node of “Managing the stakeholder”. Two matrix coding queries were applied for both customer and senior management interview evidence. Therefore, the nodes matrix tables have developed after running the matrix-coding queries for the child nodes that were created under the sub themes and patterns aligning to the main theme of “Managing the stakeholder”. Adding to this, Table 55 demonstrate the coding references of senior management interviews to each case carried out and Table 56 demonstrate the coding references of customer interviews to each case carried out. Each sub theme and the pattern that identified under the main theme of managing the stakeholders discussed in following subsections with the evidence of the interviews.

Table 55: Node Matrix of Coding References from Senior Management Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Understanding the Stakeholder Requirement		2	1	2	1	6	1	2	3	11	29
	Understanding Stakeholder Objectives	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	3	9	16
Total		2	1	2	1	8	2	3	6	20	45

table 55 (cont.)

Stakeholder Relationship Management		9	1	6	5	7	11	1	10	24	74
	Positive and Open Relationship	4	0	0	0	3	3	1	5	11	27
	Staff Development	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total		14	1	6	5	10	14	3	15	35	103
Needed for Long Term Survival		7	3	5	6	9	18	3	7	24	82

Table 56: Node Matrix of Coding References from Customer Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Buying Behaviour Getting affected from sustainable practices	2	3	1	3	3	2	4	3	7	28
Expecting Stakeholder Management	6	1	5	3	3	2	4	3	8	35

a. Stakeholder Management

According to Table 55, managers from all the cases confirmed that stakeholder management is a part of their existing work while serving the guests (n=103). However, this stakeholder management is an expected activity from a hotel as per the 35 coding references from all the customer evidence. At the moment six senior management evidences confirmed they are trying their level best to maintain a positive and open stakeholder management relationship to run the Boutique hotel (n=27).

Because of delivering a satisfactory level service, stakeholder management was recognized by the all case study managers as a key element.

“Well, a business is not a single unit. We can’t get things done alone. There are procedures when doing a business. So we try to maintain positive relationships

with every stakeholder. Even the competitors. With the government, the bond is very official. And with employees, we are very open and close” (Manager – Case Study G).

Further, managers believe this long term service process is secured with the level of relationship which they have maintained with the stakeholders.

“...suppliers and investors have been with us for a long term and they are a part of this. I think it’s one of the reasons for us to maintain smooth work flows and keep the consistency of the service quality and all” (Manager – Case Study B).

From the guests’ perspective, Boutique hotel guests are expecting a smooth stay during their stay in the Boutique hotel by expecting everything in order. In other way, this is an indication of expectations about the close stakeholder relationship from the guests mind set.

“I would say I need to get a most accurate and the perfect place everywhere I go. Because calm and quiet holiday is what I look forward to. Since I pay a higher amount, I want all these information in a very perfect level” (Guest – Case Study H).

Managers are maintaining a clear communication process and good bond to achieve the above mentioned relationship to achieve the process objectives.

“Especially with employees we maintain close strong positive bonds to keep them happy and motivated.... we are open for communication” (Manager – Case Study F).

b. Maintaining Ethical Business Practices

To maintain an ethical and long lasting relationship with the stakeholders, Boutique hotels trying to understand the expectations of the stakeholders. This was emerged from all the cases with 45 coding references. Nine case study evidence from senior managers confirmed that hotel operations through identifying the stakeholder objectives is a

practice that they are implementing to have a sustainable stakeholder management (n=16).

All the evidence proved Boutique hotels are following a process in establishing ethical business practices for a long-term relationship with the stakeholders. For that, identification of the Boutique hotel requirement and meeting stakeholders' requirement identified as the first step in this process.

"We identify our requirement, and we identify the potential stakeholders"
(Manager – Case Study F).

In order to move ahead with the relationship, objectives are setting up to meet the Boutique hotel targets.

"Setting the objectives, and then achieving to hit the hotel over all targets"
(Manager – Case Study G).

Within the act of working together extensive research about the stakeholders were taking place and making sure a professional relationship was established.

"It all requires extensive research and effective decision making" (Manager – Case Study I).

To have an ethical business relationship a proper mechanism has been established by some of the Boutique hotels to monitor the stakeholders' business behaviour.

"We need to have close and strong relationships where we guide and monitor them in order to control service standards or to motivate them to provide high quality services to customers" (Manager – Case Study A).

From the guest perspective, all the guests are expecting ethical business practices from Boutique hotels since they believe that they are responsible tourists.

"...I don't want to be a part of something unethical in general, General ethical practices should also be there" (Guest – Case Study I).

Further guests believe being ethical in business activities is a part of the service delivery when it comes to service delivery at Boutique hotels.

“... I believe a boutique hotel who takes a responsibility of a guest to give intimate and luxury holiday must pay close attention to those to make sure I am happy” (Guest – Case Study I).

c. Needed Element for Long Term Survival

Managing the stakeholders with an ethical business relationship is a needed element for long-term business operations for a Boutique hotel as mentioned by the managers (n=82). As senior managers believed guests who visited the Boutique hotels also expected this sustainable and ethical stakeholder management principles to get them convinced to book a room in the hotel (n=28).

As above coding references proved, all the managers believe that they need a strong stakeholder network to achieve the key characteristics of the Boutique hotel.

“...we cannot offer that unique service, luxury service, personalized service to our customers if we don't have our current supplier network, I think that has been the major reason for our long term survival” (Manager – Case Study I).

Adding to that, financial elements will be able to gain up to the targets with the help of the strong stakeholder management relationship as most of the Boutique hotels have done.

“...higher per guest spending rate or higher room occupancy will be able to gain if I combine all these to the smooth process” (Manager – Case Study F).

Other than winning the guests, all the hotels are facing internal rivalry by developing competitive advantages including this strong stakeholder relationship method. As believed by the managers this is a drive for Boutique hotels for long term survival.

“...Through that we can stand out in the competition and win it” (Manager – Case Study A).

By aligning the business environment to the stakeholder management of the hotel this competitive advantage was able to gain by the hotels.

“All these bonds are very important because even though we do our internal operation almost by ourselves, we need to be aligned with the business environment and fulfil every stakeholder’s basic requirements” (Manager – Case Study B).

Some of the properties are seeking proper mechanisms on this though some of the case study Boutique hotels knows how to implement this and how to integrate this to the existing process to drive toward long-term survival.

“We identify the potential set of parties based the framework and categorize. This is a very crucial process since this will be affecting to our three major characteristics of the hotel...” (Manager – Case Study E).

“...most of the boutique hotels, even the hotels which I have worked have not properly formalize this process and in that case it is very hard to meet the standards” (Manager – Case Study E).

“How to do or know how process is not documented with us. We do it with the experience and the level of knowledge we have gained from the experience. I do feel this could have documented with a proper flow to make sure the delivery is smooth” (Manager – Case Study B).

Finally, this element was recognized from the guests’ evidence as well. All the guests were confirmed that they are so keen on finding about the ethical business process or business activities which the hotel is maintaining. Furthermore they are searching about the supplies of the hotel to make sure that their stay is perfect and less harmful to the society.

“Of course yes. It affects. I consider myself as a premium paying customer. It is normal that I expect everything to be in their perfect levels. So I always check every single point of that. It can be the registration, ethical human resource

practices, the environmental practices and all these external parties, I would consider if it has been published by reliable sources” (Guest – Case Study H).

4.3.6 Digital Marketing of the Hotel

The main theme is “Implementing Digital Marketing Activities” and parent nodes have been created accordingly. From the literature review two sub themes and patterns were identified which were further applied as the sub themes and patterns for the main theme in the findings chapter. They were “Identification most suitable digital marketing methods” and “Implementation and control mechanism for digital marketing activities”. Therefore, two nodes matrix tables have developed after running the two matrix coding queries for the child nodes that were created under the main theme and sub themes and patterns. Table 57 demonstrates the coding references of senior management interviews to each case carried out and Table 58 demonstrates the coding references of customer interviews to each case carried out. Each sub theme and the pattern that identified under the main theme of Digital Marketing of the hotel discussed in following subsections with the evidence of the interviews.

Table 57: Node Matrix of Coding References from Senior Management Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Identifying the Updated Digital Marketing Activities	1	2	2	2	2	8	1	5	4	27
Implementation and Control Mechanism	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	4	10	23
Needed Element for Long Term Survival	6	4	4	4	7	14	2	10	16	67
Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Implementing offline marketing activities	2	2	3	1	2	0	3	0	0	13

Table 58: Node Matrix of Coding References from Customer Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Expecting Digital Presence	2	2	2	2	6	3	3	4	3	27
Digital Marketing Convincing to buy the Room	3	2	5	5	4	3	5	6	2	35

a. Identification Most Suitable Digital Marketing Methods

All the Boutique hotels are trying to understand the most updated digital marketing activities that will be able to promote the number of bookings. This was evident from n=27 coding references. Since the target audience for the Boutique hotels are the high end, luxurious travellers 27 coding references from customer case study evidence supported this indicating that guests are expecting the digital presence from the Boutique hotel they intend to stay.

Senior managers in a hotel mentioned their offline marketing activities getting negatively performed and they are so keen on identifying the digital marketing tools. This initiative has been recognized by the other hotels as evidence indicates, but some are still willing to continue with the offline marketing activities as a plan of their annual plans. Though some of the evidence says guests are still into offline marketing activities, a good balance between offline and online marketing activities need to be maintained.

“I would say within next couple years we will be totally digitalize the sales and marketing activities since even now the respond we receive from the offline marketing activities getting negative” (Manager – Case Study E).

“Well, in terms of how much we spend on marketing, 40% of the budget goes for offline marketing and 60% goes for online marketing” (Manager – Case Study B).

“My main method of searching information is online. It is pretty much the easiest way these days with the internet. I also read newspapers and magazines sometimes. But the main source of information is online” (Guest – Case Study F).

To identify the most important digital marketing initiatives identifying new trends in the market place is important. Furthermore, with the suitable strategy development the most suitable digital marketing activity can take place. Because evidence from guests indicated that they have used digital platforms to go ahead with their purchase decision.

“What we does is, we identify the trends in the market place as in which platform suits well in that market and how to control it” (Manager – Case Study B).

“...I believe there should be a good level of online presence, where you have a lot of good reviews and good star ratings for the selected property” (Guest – Case Study E).

Adding to this senior managers believe this is a trend in the market place among the rivals and a clear identification of the competitor behavior and adopting the practices is one of practice they do in this competitive context. Because guests do the online comparisons among Boutique hotels in the same destination prior to their purchase decision.

“Have you seen the heavy spending by the competitors on digital media? That is huge. This hotel cannot deviate from the trend or the modern development for the sake of policies or rules. We need to move forward with the trends and concepts to be in the market place with a higher positioning” (Manager – Case Study H).

“The first thing I do is comparing sites and deals. I start with sites like booking.com, Trip Advisor and all to get an overview of hotels in your desired area” (Guest – Case Study A).

Further, some of the hotels implement this with their own framework to capture the best method in implementing digital marketing activities.

“Identification of these tactics need to be done with IT people in a proper frame to avoid wasting money here and there (Manager– Case Study I).

b. Implementation and Control Mechanism for Digital Marketing Activities

Though all hotel managers are fully aware about the importance of having digital marketing activities for the Boutique hotels, 23 coding references from the entire manager interviews were supported that implementation of the digital marketing activities should be implemented with a proper implementation and control mechanism. However, six Boutique hotels are implementing offline marketing activities along with the digital marketing activities (n=13).

From the revenue perspective, managers believe digital marketing is a cost effective mechanism to grab the highest response. Therefore, this response needs to measure to implement the most applicable digital marketing activities to achieve target audience attraction. Guest evidence indicating the Boutique hotels digital marketing activities grab the attention of the target audience by social media posts as well, which is very cost effective.

“...digital marketing or online marketing is really cost-effective therefore we can earn more revenue. So with a proper mechanism to measure the performance a higher response can expect” (Manager – Case Study E).

“...I can undoubtedly say that it’s online marketing which caught my eyes. Actually when I came across the video ad on Instagram I clicked through it directed me to their corporate web site where I got to know about the hotel better through photos and written content” (Guest– Case Study D).

Due to the interactive status of the digital marketing activities protecting the brand name and the competitive status of the Boutique hotel is crucial. So a proper mechanism needs to be established to have control over the digital marketing activities.

“...clear mechanism is needed to control the social media, I mean digital world status. Because in a second everything can be destroyed” (Manager – Case Study C).

“If there is a hotel without having all those social media accounts and frequent chat option, I will not select that hotel” (Guest – Case Study G).

Even maintaining the content in the digital marketing activities is a critical success factor. Because most of the Boutique hotel guests are relying on their decision from the reviews which are available on the digital platforms.

“Not a single guest visit us without reading the reviews which are available in the travel sites and blogs. So it is very important us to maintain those in a way which can save our brand name and the revenue” (Manager – Case Study D).

“...Based on the comments only I planned my tour” (Guest – Case Study E).

Case study F indicated that their main selling channel is digital marketing so they are so keen on having a proper control method to control the current digital marketing activities. Because this proper control over the digital marketing tools are expected by the guests since they know that their decision is relying on digital marketing.

“...we consider this as the main selling channel. Having a proper control mechanism and know how mechanism is needed and important to get higher room occupancy for a boutique hotel like us” (Manager – Case Study F).

“I mean if the website is not accurate, less attractive, not updated I may get a negative feeling about the hotel (Guest – Case Study F).

c. Needed Element for Long Term Survival

All the Boutique hotels have made efforts to identify and implement the digital marketing activities as their key promotional activities. It can be seen from the coding references from the senior managers (n=67) that implementation of the digital marketing activities is one of the most important elements to promote and to attract the target audience for the Boutique hotel operation while driving the hotel for long-term survival. Same time, 35 coding references from all the customer interview evidence supported this identification indicating that they were convinced and encouraged to book the room by digital marketing activities of the hotel.

Most of the Boutique hotels in the sample are very dependent on the digital marketing tool since they have identified this as the trend with the behavioural pattern of the competitors. So compelled to implement the digital marketing practices.

“...we are now moving more toward the online or digital marketing activities. Because, we are now experiencing bookings from online travel agents, direct bookings from social media accounts, direct bookings from the website which indicated us that our online presence is the most important than anything” (Manager – Case Study A).

“...and if the competitors are doing such practices we have to do the same since industry is moving to such direction (Manager – Case Study A).

The consequence of implementing offline marketing activities is the high cost as believed by the senior managers.

“...offline marketing is expensive. For example we pay to publish articles in magazines targeting the foreign countries. So it costs more. Online marketing is cost effective and easy for that task. Bookings are done online most of the times, so we need to reach more people effectively” (Manager – Case Study B).

Most of the Boutique hotels are aware about the behavioral changes in the guest booking behavior which is shifting toward the digital marketing activities from offline marketing activities. So the hotel managers are trusting that this shift is a needed shift.

“But with the behavioral patterns of the guests and the market, I felt that we are moving more toward a digital world. Means, we need to focus more toward the digital marketing activities” (Manager – Case Study C).

“...I believe that information is very important in their decision making process” (Manager – Case Study D).

“...So for my decision, I was mostly convinced through online marketing tools they have adapted” (Guest – Case Study G).

There have been certain instances where some of the informal sector accommodation establishments are performing well by answering to Boutique hotels target audience in the digital world. To avoid this threat and to answer the target audience for long-term survival is a needed element, since guests know how to avoid fakes.

“...unregistered boutique hotel has opened in Ahangama called Angel Beach Club. Not a single offline marketing or sale technique was used or using to generate the revenue. We are moving more toward the digital marketing activities since the youth and the selected target audience we cater are now more in to mobile phones and social media” (Manager – Case Study E).

“I don’t bother looking at reviews because the amount I am going to spend isn’t worth the time put in to reading the reviews and figuring out which are worthwhile and which are likely fake. I also compare locations and their reviews in a strategic way so I can understand the quality and value better” (Guest– Case Study D).

Adding to this, online travel agents are playing an important role in the room reservation. Their virtual experience about the Boutique hotels and the influence to the purchase decision is high. To align this, Boutique hotels need a creative, innovative and updated digital status to work together with the online travel agents and to drive to long-term survival.

“...more room reservations come through direct bookings from the social media channels and online travel agents. They search about us in digital world, they read about us in the digital world, they get the virtual experience from all these activities before they do the purchase” (Manager – Case Study F).

“So I mainly go through their corporate websites and other booking platforms such as trip advisor, booking.com and all. They have a lot of reviews posted by customer regarding different aspects of the hotel. So it is easier for me to make the decision based on my interest” (Guest – Case Study F).

Further found, support toward the revenue generation is more effective when it comes to the digital marketing activities. This situation is supportive to achieve the long-term objectives of the Boutique hotel.

“If I can represent all the digital selling channels based on the revenue generation, means the revenue target is getting achieved from different forms selling channels which are the trendiest selling channels at the moment in the market place. See how important all these to the long term objective achievement in this hotel operations” (Manager – Case Study H).

“We got inspired from social media, so yes from social media activities. More, we have seen the friends’ photos in their social media accounts about the photos Sri Lanka. That also inspired us to go to Sri Lanka” (Guest – Case Study C).

4.3.7 Environmental Concern of the Business Activities

Two sub themes and patterns have been identified based on the main theme of Environmental concerns of the business activities. They were “implementing environmental policy” and “managing and maintaining the environmental policy”. These themes and patterns were pre identified from the literature review in chapter 2.0. Child nodes have identified these two sub themes patterns to run two matrix-coding queries. Based on the matrix coding queries two nodes matrix tables were developed to demonstrate the coding references for each senior management interview evidence (Table 59) and customer interview evidence (Table 60). Those identified sub themes and patterns discussed in the following sections along with the evidence from the interviews.

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Table 59: Node Matrix of Coding References from Senior Management Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Implementing Environmental Policy		1	1	2	1	2	5	3	5	6	26
Managing and Maintaining the Policy		2	2	1	2	5	2	2	4	10	29
	Sustainable Environmental Practices	2	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	4	16
Total		4	3	1	2	7	4	3	5	14	45
Needed Element for Long Term Survival		4	4	3	2	8	12	4	5	15	57

Table 60: Node Matrix of Coding References from Customer Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns		Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Environmental Practices Convince to Buy the Room		1	1	3	1	2	2	1	1	0	12
Expecting Hotels to be More Environmental Friendly		1	2	3	1	1	3	1	3	3	18
	Environmental Practices	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	5
Total		1	2	3	1	2	3	1	5	5	23
Expecting to pay more for Environmental Friendly Hotels		1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	12

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a. Implementing Environmental Policy

This theme was prominent in all the case studies. n=26 coding references were indicated in evidence from manager interviews saying Boutique hotels are already implementing environmental management activities. This theme has been further supported by the customer interviews by having 23 coding references. All the eight customer interviews confirmed that they are expecting environmental management policies from the Boutique hotels they stay.

This theme emerged from all the Boutique hotel evidence because of their existing activities to protect the environment. Irrespective of whether these Boutique hotels have a policy or not they are obliged to protect the environment. Which all the guests believe as well.

*“As a group of hotels, we are committed to serve the environment. We do not have a specifically developed policy explaining about what we are doing and all”
(Manager– Case Study F).*

“And I would say as a responsible citizen we need to think about the environment also” (Guest – Case Study H).

At the moment Boutique hotels are learning from the industry about the best practices to be implemented in their existing business process.

*“...we need to learn about how to implement a successful environmental management policies from the business environment as the first initiative
(Manager– Case Study H).*

As a part of this implementation, evidence shows that they are implementing a range of environmental friendly practices to drive to environmental sustainability. Among them, waste management systems, energy management systems and water management systems were highlighted from all the case studies. These expectations are there in the guest mindset as well which got identified from all the case study evidence.

“We save energy by using natural lightings in certain areas of our property. We make sure we take the maximum use of the items we use and reduce waste as much as possible. We also have a waste water management system...”
(Manager– Case Study B).

“The environmental practices are one of my biggest concerns. I like being a part of sustainable businesses. It makes me feel good. As a responsible consumer... I want to see all the boutique hotels having less carbon foot print on all the activities getting engaged with me during my stay” (Guest– Case Study I).

However, some of the Boutique hotels who have identified the importance of this element were able to develop a policy document that will be helping them to implement these practices in a sustainable way.

“It is a well-defined policy which is well aware by the staff members. ...we identify the most important sustainable business practices and we manage them in a most cost effective way to achieve the given financial and non-financial targets” (Manager– Case Study B).

b. Managing and Maintaining the Policy

The implementation of the environmental management policies need to have a clear management system on “what and how” as identified from the manager interviews with 45 coding references. Out of these coding references, 16 coding references are from seven manager interviews indicating that sustainable environmental practices need to be identified rather than just implementing practices. Further, 29 coding references from all the manager interviews were identified which supported this theme specifically. Coding references appeared in all the customer interviews (n=12) confirmed that they are willing to pay more if the hotel is practicing sustainable environmental management practices.

Irrespective of what kind of a practice they implement, evidence from the senior management from all the Boutique hotels indicates they are trying to identify the most cost effective and sustainable way of implementing these practices to be survived in the long term.

“We in a process of identifying the most suitable practices for future implementation and how to control those for a better performance” (Manager– Case Study A).

Further, this implementation needs to be cost effective to drive the Boutique hotels to long-term survival. Further, guests willing to pay an extra amount if the hotel has environmental friendly business practices.

“...this implementing has to be in a way which is accepted by the hotel and society. I mean I cannot implement an environmental policy which is making my cost of operation high or I can operate an environmental policy which makes my guests interpret what we do” (Manager– Case Study C).

“So I would definitely pay more for such hotels rather than encouraging just profit making machines” (Guest– Case Study F).

There is a substantial cost involved in implementing these environmental practices so the usage of cost needs to deliver a competitive advantage to the hotel, which is an expectation of some managers from case study evidence.

“...then we need to manage them to a long term competitive advantages” (Manager– Case Study H).

Case E indicated they maintain the practices in accepted ways aligning to a list of standards.

“All the standards were given by the international firms and we are not implementing these for a sake of having those. We are operating those in a way which is most accepted way by controlling and measuring to the given standards” (Manager– Case Study E).

However, though the standards are there some of the hotels have used the employee support to manage and control these practices.

“We have an energy team where we appoint each member of our staff every day to monitor our energy consumption and take actions towards energy saving...” (Manager– Case Study E).

C. Needed Element for Long Term Survival

Managers in the Boutique hotels confirmed that this theme is one of prominent themes to drive the hotel to long-term sustainability (n=57). Out of all the cases, case F and I respectively 12 and 15 coding references are the highest coding references to support this theme from managers’ perspective. This theme further supported the customer evidence that had 12 coding references from seven case studies saying they got convinced by these existing environmental practices.

The result of implementing environmental policies can help to reduce the cost of operations as believed by most of the Boutique hotel managers.

“...cost can reduce by having such policies in various terms, brand identity can be redevelop in different aspect in the customer mind set, there will be another reason to stay motivated to work in the hotel and I am sure finally this hotel will be able to have a strong financial and non-financial stability in long term” (Manager– Case Study H).

A lack of government involvement to standardise this environmental engagement already led to a less competitive status similar to other competing destinations. So senior managers highly indicate the importance of standardising process to retain the competitive status of the destination.

“I strongly believe this environmental policy development need to happen in all the boutique hotels in Galle to develop the brand along with the Sri Lanka tourism to stand against international competition especially from Maldives and Bali” (Manager– Case Study A).

To drive to this long term survival objective some of the Boutique hotels have integrated the environmental policy practices to the business process to make sure the continuous implementation which is an expectation of the guests too.

“We have well defined policies to guide us towards a sustainable brand as it a part of our vision and mission. So to meet the operational objectives and the guest requirements we have to implement such policy as a thumb rule” (Manager– Case Study C).

“I check whether they have an environmental policy not with a very close attention, but I do check. I check if they have a well-established waste management system...” (Guest – Case Study C).

All the managers now believe satisfying the modern guest is not enough to have a long-term survival and ethical business practices while making the guest happy is the path to long term survival.

“Earning a profit through satisfying the customer needs is not enough to be an outstanding player in the market. To survive in the long term, we need to be more ethical. We need to be more responsible. Customers are looking into what’s the brand is up to and they are concerned about the impact on the environment” (Manager– Case Study B).

“If the hotel is more in to environmental practices means they are willing to consider us as well. Clear indication for the attention they have taken for the sustainability. I would simply take my decision if other factors and environmental factors are there when I am booking the hotel...” (Guest– Case Study F).

Even to stand out from the competition manager from Case A mentioned that they implement the environmental policies to make their process unique. Which is even used by the guests to compare the hotels.

“...we are in an intense level of competition. So we are trying to make each of us unique comparing to each hotel. So obviously environmental practices making us unique to stand alone in the competition to make sure we attracting the guests to have higher room occupancy” (Manager– Case Study A).

“I would compare even such hotels” (Guest – Case Study G).

Finally, all the managers emphasised the importance of implementing the environmental practices to drive the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka for long-term survival.

“Otherwise we can’t survive this long or to aim for long term survival. But I think we need to come up with a policy in future to make things more professional” (Manager– Case Study B).

4.3.8 Financial Performance

Financial Performance has been identified from the literature evidence as the main indicator. Further literature evidence evident one major sub element to categorize all the evidence. That is implementation of revenue management system. Two matrix-coding queries have developed for senior management and customer interview evidence. Table 61 and Table 62 demonstrate the coding references respectively. Sub theme and the pattern that identified under the main theme of financial performance discussed in following subsections with the evidence of the interviews.

Table 61: Node Matrix of Coding References from Senior Management Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Revenue Management System	3	1	4	3	3	8	2	17	14	55
Needed Element for Long Term Survival	4	3	2	5	9	8	2	12	14	59

Table 62: Node Matrix of Coding References from Customer Interviews

Child Node/ Sub Themes and Patterns	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F	Case G	Case H	Case I	Total
Expecting Proper Revenue Management System	3	3	6	2	5	3	5	4	3	34
Expecting Transparent Pricing System	3	3	5	4	3	4	4	4	2	32

a. Revenue Management System

Having a proper revenue management system was able to drive the Boutique hotels to a survival stage with the existing activities. n=55 coding references implies the theme that are from all eight manager interview evidenced reports. Supporting this customer evidence was identified from all the sources with 34 coding references.

All the managers’ pointed out that revenue of the Boutique hotels have divided into two major parts. Furthermore, financial aspects are getting calculated using common industry standards. Evidence from the guests indicated the pricing of the Boutique hotels are fair and worth to the service that they experienced, but gaps have been identified. In the meantime, expecting a fair pricing strategy from the industry.

“Apartment revenue and food and beverage are our main streams of revenue. We calculate using common standards and with some special unique methods” (Manager– Case Study C).

“I absolutely think that the money I paid was worth it. These factors satisfied my expectations at a greater level. Because of their exceptional service I was so amazed” (Guest– Case Study I).

“I mean maintaining standard pricing for standard practices could have develop our confidence more toward the Sri Lanka hospitality” (Guest– Case Study H).

This revenue generation is differentiated compared to other accommodation types with the pricing and costing. This revenue generation is coming with a significant investment as

well. Therefore, the pricing needs to motivate the guests with the facilities the Boutique hotel intends to provide.

“The room prices are expensive because it comes with the intimate service delivery and the personalized service. So the revenue per room is high, same time number of rooms are less comparing to another accommodation type. ...we have differentiated revenue generation mechanisms” (Manager– Case Study H).

“So I think they have invested a considerable amount of money and time into and I am very happy how they have managed to pull it out in every area of the property” (Guest – Case Study G).

Unique financial management system is critical in an effective financial management solution which case study B is implementing to build up a strong confidence about the financial performance. This unique system for the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka will make the pricing more standardized to avoid the guest confusion. Case B guest indicated the manipulation in Boutique hotels pricing which they consider as a negative point for Boutique hotels long term survival.

“...we are really confident about our performance as we have been carefully planning and investing money. I believe that our unique financial performance evaluation system is a plus point here. We have been able to maintain better standards” (Manager– Case Study B).

“Asian hotels have a bad word of mouth for this. Sometimes they do manipulations, and I am expecting a proper pricing from boutique hotels” (Manager– Case Study B).

With the fluctuations in the external market, all the Boutique hotels are trying to maintain a low cost operational structure though it is not defined as industry standards. The lack of standards on this element made the guests confused with the pricing. This was evident from the results from both categories.

“...we have closed 3 rooms after the Easter Sunday attack to avoid unnecessary cost generation. We always try to maintain a low cost structure so we have possibilities to earn more profit and aim for long term survival” (Manager– Case Study D).

“We don’t have a unique framework which is specifically developed targeting hotel, because in Sri Lanka we do not have such” (Manager– Case Study E).

“...some hotels just have price changes which is hard to predict and understand. I mean it is all over the place, regardless of seasons. Hotels should manage their costs to maintain a fair price level” (Guest– Case Study D).

Case study F is using their own revenue management mechanism to compare the performance with the competitors. Some of the financial calculations are unique to them to differentiate them as a Boutique hotel. This is a comparison used by the guests to select a Boutique hotel for their holiday and mentioned that there is a confusion in pricing between two players since there is no standards.

“We use industry related financial calculations to compare with the competitors as well, a proper mechanism sometimes getting applied to make the financial calculations are unique since we are a Boutique Hotel (Manager– Case Study F).

“...when comparing the same level of services of two different hotels, have huge differences in prices. It makes the consumer feel confused. Comparing to the other hotels I stayed in Sri Lanka, some of the services are overpriced or less expensive” (Guest – Case Study C).

Senior managers from all the case studies believe having a unique financial system is crucial to differentiate the Boutique hotel operations and to identify the characteristics in the performance. Guests too are getting attracted if the unique features are there in the pricing.

“But in the future we are planning to create our own system, because I think it will be a lot easier to understand and keep track. Because after all we are all

different hotels. We do our operations differently. It is the reason why we have been able to survive in the long run, even if the situations got bad sometimes” (Manager– Case Study G).

“If I come across valuable deals like off season deals, I would definably go with it. But I do my research like any other day. Who doesn’t love when you get to experience the same service level at a lower price” (Guest– Case Study B).

b. Needed Element for Long Term Survival

n=59 coding references were identified that directly supported from manager interview evidence that having a proper revenue management system will be supported to drive the Boutique hotels to long-term survival. This revenue management system should be transparent since guests are expecting this revenue management system to be transparent to book the property after doing the comparisons with the competitors (n=32).

Case study A management identified the threat that is rising from the informal sector competitors who are manipulating the key terms and key meaning of the financial management. This has already led to a less competitive status to the formal Boutique hotel sector. Adding more this is an expectation from the guests as well.

“...these new places are not following any of these standards which I told to go ahead as a boutique hotels. Ultimately they are struggling to survive, since they have manipulated all the financial terms which they have to follow at the basic level” (Manager– Case Study A).

“...But when thinking about the whole Sri Lankan boutique hotel experiences, I feel Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka does not have standards when it comes pricing. I have heard some of the guests discussing this too” (Guests– Case Study C).

All the management evidence highlighted the importance of having a separate financial management system to evaluate the Boutique hotel performance due to the unique

characteristics they have in their operations. Guests are willing to see this unique pricing system in the delivery.

“...yes I believe a separate cost elements could help this process more easy, because annual auditing and interpretations are not delivering the expected level of financial forecasts and predictions as I want. Because we have unique revenue streams and cost centers which we need to analyses at special case than other accommodation units” (Manager– Case Study C).

“The luxuriousness, personalized service, modern facilities, friendly staff, delicious food and each and everything was there just the way I expected. So yeah! It was definitely worth it. Because value is visible, see how happy I am.” (Guest– Case Study A).

Case study D who got a company developed financial management system indicated the importance of having his own financial system to take the decisions for long-term survival. Because guests are expecting a fair investment as the return for the amount they willing to pay.

“...we have our own system to follow which have incorporated industry related financial calculations, we know what information is important and how to use them in decision making for long term survival” (Manager– Case Study D).

“They have invested a considerable amount of money in to it and I personally think that they have done a good job in designing this place in a way that would attract customers and make them happy. I am very happy about it. The simplicity, and luxuriousness has been combined well” (Guest– Case Study C).

Most of all the senior managers believe that this proper calculation of the financial aspects will be able to measure the company performance in terms of the competition which they experience from the market for long-term survival.

“A proper understanding is pretty much important for a successful operations especially in an intense competitive environment like us” (Manager– Case Study E).

“Because I am able to compare this hotel performance with the industry standards and with the competitors' performance” (Manager– Case Study H).

All senior managers believe that they expect this financial management system for the long-term survival of the operation and this was evident in all the case study evidence. This can lead to high room occupancy by convincing the guests in the long run.

“But I believe it would be much better if we had our own revenue management system. It would give us a better understanding of our performances and would aid long term survival” (Manager– Case Study I).

“But I think there should be proper standards which should be maintained when changing prices as well. Because it helps us to make better decisions” (Manager– Case Study I).

4.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the key findings of this research in relation to the pre identified performance indicators. Pre identified eight performance indicators are the criteria that applied to identify the themes and patterns that emerged from the empirical data. All the pre identified performance factors were evident from the management empirical data as most applicable elements for the proposed business model. Management evidence identified these elements as most suitable elements to be employed for the long term survival of Boutique hotels. Adding to that, these elements appeared in the guests' evidence as well indicating they would like to see those elements in Boutique hotels which they would like to stay in future.

Furthermore, these emerged main and sub themes and patterns were discussed along with the themes and patterns using the interview evidence.

CHAPTER 05 – DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

Focus of the chapter has paid to the fourth research objective achievement. Therefore, chapter discussed the key findings that demonstrated in the previous chapter in relation to the literature that discussed in chapter 02 and with new literature evidence. Additional literature applied to discuss the new themes that identified from the evidence.

Furthermore, this discussion was grouped to the key themes and sub themes identified in the findings chapter.

In section 5.2 characteristics of those proposed elements have reviewed in relation to the characteristics and challenges of economic sustainability (refer section 2.3) and concluded explaining how the elements would help to achieve the long-term sustainability through a business model (refer section 2.4). Thereafter, the most applicable elements for a business model for Sri Lankan Boutique hotels have been identified and proposed models have demonstrated in 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 sections.

The discussion of proposed model capacity to face the existing issues and its suitability for sustainability have grouped into two major sections. 5.3.3 is the section that explains the capacity to answer the issues in the existing business models of the Sri Lankan Boutique hotel sector as identified in section 2.6.9. Secondly, the suitability of the proposed model to overcome the constraints (section 2.7.12) of the Business Model Canvas have been answered in section 5.3.4.

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5.2 Proposed Elements for the Business Model

5.2.1 Managing the Strategic Focus

Research found that having a clear strategic focus toward the Boutique hotel key meaning allows the Boutique hotel to drive to a long-term survival. Adding more data indicated this focus need to have specific strategic elements that should be implemented by the Boutique hotel. These elements are now further discussed with the academic literature along with the chapter 2.

a. Developing Boutique hotel oriented Aims and Objectives

Developing Boutique hotels oriented aims and objectives is a key characteristic of a long-term oriented strategic plan. Furthermore, as mentioned by (Cvelbar and Dwyer, 2013) implementing specific aims and objectives effectively leading to long-term survival of a hotel. All the managers who participated for the study confirmed their identification of the importance of having aims and objectives that have specifically developed for the Boutique hotels in Sri Lankan context. Guests from various backgrounds have confirmed their expectation is Boutique hotels to be more focused. Guests further believe to experience the level of service they are expecting to be focused from the Boutique hotels.

Importance of having their existing aims and objectives is prominent in all the Boutique hotels. It was evident senior managers were able to drive the Boutique hotel to the challenges they are facing now with the existing strategic focus they have now. Still, they highlighted the importance of specific focus with the aims and objectives to face the changing micro and macro environment in future (Dermartini, 2013). However, the guest evidences are indicating, guests are so concerned about the key characteristics of Boutique hotels and the level of service they experience. The gap between the perception and actual experience will be the reason for positive word of mouth or revisit to the same Boutique hotel. Adding more, Jonsson and Devonish (2009) found if strategic focus can fill this gap it will be a key factor for long-term survival of a Boutique hotel.

b. Developing Boutique hotel Vision and Mission

Two types of Boutique hotels participated in this study. Some belong to chain hotels and some are independent hotels. Boutique hotels who follow their group vision and mission highlighted the importance of having more strategic focus for them and Boutique hotels that do not have this focus indicated the importance of such to drive the Boutique hotels for long-term survival. This was applicable to the independent hotels as well.

Clear and specifically developed vision and a mission tend to lead the hotels to long-term survival (Dermartini, 2013). This process is a course of action that should combine with the aims and objectives of the hotel. Results from managers did show they have achieved the strategic focus by understanding the guest requirements (Mwamisha and Gichinga, 2016) which is evident from the guest evidence as well. Guest evidence indicated that guests are seeking this focus from the Boutique hotels they tend to stay. Acknowledging Wattanasantikul (2018) Boutique hotels should focus on guest requirements and SOPs should be adopted for requirements to make the guests happy. As mentioned by Wattanasantikul (2018) this focus needs to align with resource allocation, structure of the hotel, Human resource system and revenue management system to drive the hotel to long-term survival.

Although the importance of having strategic focus has been identified in the literature, lack of this feature is a key factor that Boutique hotel sector in Sri Lanka cause to lead to less competitive status (Jayawardhana et al, 2013).

5.2.2 Design and Development of the Hotel

Clear focus about a theme based interior and exterior of the hotel design and establishing the hotel in a competitive level location are the sub elements found from the research in relation to design and development. These sub elements are mainly focusing on how to design and develop the hotel in the most competitive way while satisfying the guests' expectations on design and development. Following is the academic theoretical underpinning for those elements.

a. Developing Boutique hotel for a Theme Based Interior

Only six hotels are having specific themes that are embedded to the service delivery process. However, including them, all the Boutique hotels managers highlighted their awareness regarding the importance of having theme-based interiors that should combine with the service delivery process. This has been identified as a factor for long-term survival of Boutique hotels (Wang et al, 2015).

This theme based hotel design should combine with the location characteristics as well. Furthermore, aligning the interior layout for the theme will be an added advantage to attract the target audience toward the Boutique hotels. Even though some of the Boutique hotels partially implement the themes, they are using the theme concepts in their marketing activities. Now, when it comes to actual service delivery guests' evidences are confirming their expectations on these themes from the Boutique hotel they tend to stay. There is a gap between the actual theme and promised theme in Boutique hotels. That is leading to less competitive status. Though the understanding is there among the managers about a theme based Boutique hotel, lack of awareness on how to do is the key reason for lacking behind this (Jones et al, 2013). Therefore, it is very clear that Boutique hotels need to include theme based interiors for guests' satisfaction to drive the hotel to long-term survival (Shantha, 2018).

b. Developing Boutique hotel for a Theme Based Exterior

Theme based exterior is not evident in all the Boutique hotels which participated in the study. Some of the Boutique hotels have developed their Boutique hotels to a unique theme to grab the competitive advantage as a Boutique hotel. As per the findings, managers from the Boutique hotels are aware about the importance of this feature. Boutique hotels that developed their properties to a theme have chosen their themes because of combining the locational characteristics, their target audience requirements and financial and non-financial characteristics. Each Boutique hotel needs a unique exterior theme aligning to the external locational characteristics, which is in another guest expectation as well. Guests use the uniqueness of the theme of the hotel as a factor to evaluate the Boutique hotels which they tend to stay and to write good comments in social media platforms to spread positive word of mouth.

This characteristic should be used to differentiate the different Boutique hotels by creating reasons to visit the Boutique hotels for the target audience (Rogerson, 2010). Boutique hotels can work toward marketing themselves with a competitive advantage among the rivals because of these unique themes (Haftkhani et al, 2011). As some of the managers are worried about the capital requirement of the theme based on hotel, previous studies introduced how to integrate the theme while reconstructing the Boutique hotel with less capital to gain the competitive advantage in less cost (Jysma, 2012). So agreeing with Chang (2017) and (Shantha, 2018) for long-term survival developing the Boutique hotels based on an exterior theme is recommended.

c. Establishing the Hotel in a Competitive Location

All the Boutique hotels that participated for the study have established themselves in competitive locations, as in famous and attractive. Establishing the Boutique hotels in competitive locations will be allowing Boutique hotels to attract the target audience and to beat the competition (Khosravi et al, 2014; Estevao et al, 2009). However, lack of understanding of some Boutique hotels who have established in less competitive locations has led the entire industry to less competitive status. Because from the guests perspective, guests are expecting a convenient, attractive and unique location as their holiday destination when they are selecting a Boutique hotel. Convenience means the ease of reaching the hotel and getting all other support services without an additional cost. Attractiveness means, hotel should be established in an attractive destination that is well known. Finally, uniqueness is the one guests are expecting mostly, which is to get a unique view of the location for the amount they pay compared to other accommodation options. Therefore, the Boutique hotels that were established in competitive locations already received the target audience preference for future visits and positive word of mouth as well. Adding to that they are confident enough about their future due to the brand anchoring they have done in the target audience using the locational characteristics. However, this factor is a key factor for a hotel that should be considered as a key selling factor for long-term survival (Rubén and Castro, 2019; Zhihong, 2012).

5.2.3 Service Delivery

Case study hotel managers and guests have indicated delivering intimate Service, delivering high-end luxury service and delivering personalized level service are the sub elements as the required sub elements for a successful long-term survival in service delivery. All these elements are interrelated and should combine to the final service delivery. Following is the academic underpinning for those sub elements.

a. Delivering Intimate Service.

All the Boutique hotels are thoroughly aware about the importance of delivering intimate service for the guests' satisfaction (Bobelj, 2019). Managers believe this can add a value to the long-term survival of the Boutique hotel. Because these Boutique hotels will be developing the capacity to drive the property to guest satisfaction and high market share among the competitors (Dinçer et al, 2016).

Delivering intimate level service means a combination of emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical intimacy with the actual service delivery (Aggett, 2007). To achieve this requirement Boutique hotels are working to align the existing processes to guests' intimate requirements and trying to achieve the key characteristics of the meaning of the Boutique hotel. Staff engagement to understand the guests, developing the layout in an intimate manner, maintaining the atmosphere to add an intimacy and promoting such culture are some of the existing strategies Boutique hotels are implementing to achieve these objectives.

However, making the process intimate to the guests' requirements is having service delivery gaps that are evident from the guests' evidence. Adding more, the competitor practices who are not following the meaning of this feature making the industry less competitive in the short run and long run. Therefore, managers believe a proper framework in defining the meaning of the intimate service with evolving guests' requirements could drive the Boutique hotel to long-term survival (Malcheva, 2018). This can be largely influenced by the fluctuating demand patterns of the guests with the external environmental challenges.

b. Delivering High End Luxury Service.

It was found that the guests' one of key reasons to select Boutique hotels other than other accommodation units is the high-end luxury facilities in the Boutique hotels (Tidtichumrernporn, 2014). All the Boutique hotels are aligning their existing capacities to create this luxury environment for the guests and looking forward to serving them by understanding the guests more in advance. Adding to this, implementing annual refurbishment plans to add luxury features to service delivery, competitor hotel surveys and annual training programs for the staff are some of the strategies that case study hotels are implementing to improve the luxury service to the guests.

As evidence indicated, high-end luxury service in the Boutique hotel sector should cover luxury room features to guest services (Tavares and Brea, 2018). Managers are fully aware about the importance of this feature to engage with the continuous effort on improving these luxury facilities in the current service delivery and working toward the future delivery improvements as well. Guests' perception is that they will be experiencing luxury features not only in technology but in intangible aspects as well.

However, they are more likely to have a proper framework to deliver a high-end luxury service to the guests in future. Adding more, evidence indicated that this is a key feature to drive the Boutique hotels to long-term survival since the level of luxury service will lead to guest satisfaction to create a good brand image among the target audience (Ng et al, 2012).

c. Delivering Personalized Service.

Personalized service was identified as tailor made service delivery to the guests' needs and expectations. Furthermore, this is allowing the guests to speak up regarding their requirements (Rogerson, 2010). Regardless of the type of guests, the Boutique hotels are experiencing management evidence that shows that Boutique hotels are trying their level best to allow guests to talk about their needs to personalize the service delivery. This indicates the level of understanding in the managers' mind set regarding the importance of having this element in the service delivery process in Boutique hotels (Khosravi et al, 2014). Starting from room selections to food preference selection, all the elements in the

guest serving process are personalized in most of the Boutique hotels and some of the hotels have limited personalization options due to operational capacity limits.

When it comes to the guest mind-set, this is the third key major reason to select a Boutique hotel as the accommodation partner (Mcintosh and Siggs, 2005). Therefore, now this existing service delivery process ensures guests are receiving the personalized service that they were expecting within the promised standards. However, at the same time other two major features should be maintained along with this (Jones et al, 2013). This feature works with other two features to great extent to make the guest delightful with the service they have experienced. Because satisfied guests are the path to long-term survival of a Boutique hotel while creating a good brand reputation and facing competition (Richard, 2017; Malcheva, 2018).

d. Crisis Management Plan

Crisis management plan was identified as an essential element from in-vivo coding. This is an essential element to improve the hotel capacity of facing the internal and external challenges (Israeli et al, 2011; Campiranon and Scott, 2014). This will improve the firm's capacity to survive in the long-term (De Sausmarez, 2007). For example, though this theme was prominent in one case study in 2019, by the time the discussion is taking place Sri Lankan boutique hotels have faced a post era of low tourists arrival due to Easter Sunday terrorist attack and COVID-19 health crisis. With these challenges, most of all the case study boutique hotels have shut down the operations indefinitely. This could have been balanced by implementing a crisis management plan rather shutting down and putting all the stakeholders at risk.

5.2.4 Managing the Guests

Further, research found that managing the Boutique hotel guests by understanding what they are expecting from the Boutique hotel at different levels and delivering that promised level of service would be able to drive the Boutique hotel to long-term survival. This has been confirmed by the data set and the following discussion is about how those can be underpinned by the academic literature.

a. Understanding the Guests' Requirements at Each Service Level.

All the Boutique hotels are carrying out their service delivery based on the understanding they have developed about the guests. Starting from feedback forms to verbal chats are implemented by the Boutique hotels as customer feedback collection systems to understand guests (Panchal et al, 2018). This has resulted in serving the guests in a way that is more delightful and managing the guests' up to satisfactory level. Furthermore, understanding the guests developed the confidence about the service delivery in the guests and managers' mindsets.

However, managers are finding difficulties when understanding the guests in proper manner as data shows. They believe a defined system on understanding the guest requirements to align the service to the requirement could have developed more than the current setting to assist them. Adding to this, guests are expecting that Boutique hotels will fulfil their specific needs during their stay (Treejakhajohn, 2012). However, evidence indicated that some of the guests are not happy with the way the hotels are trying to collect the requirements that they consider that as a disturbance (Torres and Kline, 2013). Therefore, the strategies to understand the guests should select carefully to make sure the Boutique hotels understand the guests accurately to perform without a delay.

Dinçera et al (2014) identified maintaining a good understanding about the guests' expectations will allow the Boutique hotels to align their services to drive them to long-term sustainability.

b. Delivering the Promised Level of Service.

Boutique hotels that participated were able to deliver the promised service to their guests up to a certain level that was evident from managers and guests' evidence. These hotels have carried out multi strategies to make sure guests are receiving personalized, intimate and luxury service as they were expected. Such as, to make the service level personalized managers tend to ask from the guests how do they want to customize the food that is serving or excursions they wish to go, to make the service is intimate they have developed the property layout in a way the guests are having 100% intimacy during

their stay and to offer the luxury service most of the hotels have annual refurbishment plans to upgrade their existing facilities.

However, the Boutique hotels were able to deliver this promised service, service gaps have been identified from the guest evidence. Adding to that, managers' evidence have confirmed their awareness about a requirement of proper mechanism to ensure that the Boutique hotels are delivering a consistent level promised service. Because guests are using this as an evaluation technique to compare with the competitors and other accommodation types too (Lu et al, 2015).

Delivering the promised level of service can be considered an essential element to manage the guests that can lead the Boutique hotels for long-term survival (Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007). Delivering what has been promised does not cost additional effort since that would be the reason why the guests are selecting that particular hotel as a Boutique hotel and in addition to that, that is the key to the meaning of that particular Boutique hotel to exist.

5.2.5 Managing the Stakeholder

Data set confirmed a positive relationship with stakeholders leading to long-term survival of the Boutique hotel. In order to maintain that relationship a transparent stakeholder management policy is required and maintaining ethical business practices should be established. Those identified as the sub themes for this main theme. Following is the academic theoretical underpinning for those elements.

a. Establishing Stakeholder Management Policy.

None of the participating Boutique hotels is implementing a stakeholder management policy (SMP), but to make sure the business process is smooth hotels are managing the stakeholders. Peric et al (2014) mentioned SMP as a strategic planning framework to satisfy the related groups to have a smooth business process. This meaning is aware by the management in the Boutique hotels and they have highlighted this as an important feature for the business process (Das et al, 2017).

Therefore, absence of this feature led to less competitive status especially when it comes to registering the properties, appointing reliable service suppliers etc... to the property (Enz, 2011). This lacking part is a key element that guests are considering to evaluate the Boutique hotels to select the most reliable Boutique hotel for their next stay (Prud'homme and Raymond, 2013). Because they believe that a reliable property can only give them a holiday without disturbances.

Identification of the key requirement of the process and searching the best interest group for the requirement is the main mode of initiative used by the Boutique hotels. Further, with the experience and knowledge, hotels are aware about the capacity of the selected groups and their ability to deliver the benefits (Jones et al, 2014). However, management suggests a proper framework for the stakeholder management. Stranjancevic and Bulatovic (2015) and Wang and Ritchie (2011) discussed the benefits of such a framework to a hotel to drive the property to long-term survival. Furthermore, the target audience for the Boutique hotels are expecting this defined framework from the hotel to have a quality stay (Jones et al, 2014).

b. Maintaining Ethical Business Practices.

Wang (2014) explains business ethics as a set of code of conduct which hotels could follow to decide what is the right and wrong path for the upliftment of the societal and stakeholder values. These ethical business practices are expected by the Boutique hotel guests since they believe that they are responsible guests. The lack of proper code of conduct making the Boutique hotels less competitive against the target audience. Moreover, management is fully aware about the ethical business practices and aligning the current process for the ethical business practices with the knowledge and experience they have. For example, evidence shows that in order to survive with the rising competition among the Boutique hotels, some of the Boutique hotels are moving toward the unethical business practices to secure the revenue expectations (Reynolds, 2000). Management further emphasised the importance of this feature in a proper framework to the entire industry to make the Boutique hotel industry an ethical industry by adding value to the society and stakeholders (Thomas and Kumar, 2016).

Adding more, role of stakeholder management and aligning that to the ethical business practices will enhance the brand equity and will be leading to higher guest satisfaction (Xu and Gursoy, 2015). Management further believes that this is an important element for long-term survival of the industry which the entire Boutique hotels should implement (Thomas and Kumar, 2016). Adding more, Nicolaides (2018) also discussed ethical business practices that can drive the hospitality industry toward the long-term survival.

5.2.6 Digital Marketing of the Hotel

Research found that having a digital marketing strategy would be driving the Boutique hotel to a long-term survival. As data set confirmed this digital marketing strategy, should have sub elements of a mechanism on identifying the most suitable digital marketing strategies to implement and a control mechanism to control those identified digital marketing strategies. These elements are now further discussed with the academic literature along with the chapter 2.

a. Identification of the Most Suitable Digital Marketing Strategies.

Development of digital marketing influenced in great extent to the marketing activities of the Boutique hotels (Charlesworth, 2014). Working with a mix of offline and online marketing activities has helped some of the hotels to succeed in marketing activities, but the majority of the Boutique hotels are implementing only the digital marketing activities and deviating away from the offline marketing activities. This has supported to build a strong awareness, familiarity and favourability about the Boutique hotels in the target audience mind set and to create ethical business competition among the competing Boutique hotels. Evidence from the management indicates that they are fully aware about the importance of implementing digital marketing activities. Further they have highlighted that identification of the most suitable digital marketing to cater the target audience is crucial rather implementing all the digital marketing activities which are available in the media (Pereira, 2017; Maheshwari et al, 2019). Adding to this most of the guests attracted to the Boutique hotels with the attractiveness which created by the online review sites, travel agents, social media and other e marketing activities (Malcheva, 2019a). Furthermore, guests believe that online reviews are more accurate to get a real time understanding about the experience that they can expect from the

selected hotel. This is another factor to convince the booking behaviour of the guests (Parolin and Boeing, 2019).

Therefore, the nature of the digital marketing activities will be helpful to drive the Boutique hotels to long-term survival by creating a positive brand image in the target audience and maintaining an ethical business with competitors (Malcheva, 2019b).

b. Implementing Control Mechanism for Digital Marketing Strategies.

All the Boutique hotels have mentioned implementation of a proper control mechanism for the digital marketing activities are essential to make the best of those strategies (Lwin and Phau, 2013). The existing control mechanisms have become worth now to check the outcome of those, but management has raised their concern about a proper mechanism to go ahead with these activities in future since future target audience will be basically located in the digital world (Cojocea and Coroş, 2014).

In the perspective of guests, evidence indicates guests rely on reviews about the Boutique hotels in the digital world and get convinced from social media activities etc... This finding indicates that a proper message should communicate to the guests to drive this demand toward a long-term survival of Boutique hotels (Malcheva, 2018).

Meaning of the control mechanisms in this context is ensuring the digital marketing activities are directed toward the long-term survival plan of the Boutique hotels through strategic directions (Dodson, 2016). This will support in reaching the correct target audience, checking its reach, monitoring the revenue impact of the techniques and checking the success of those implemented digital marketing activities (Charlesworth, 2014). Finally, these will provide a better assurance on the digital marketing activities to drive to long-term survival (Kang, 2011; Richard, 2017).

5.2.7 Environmental Sustainable Practices

There was an indication from the guests' evidence regarding the environmental sustainable practices from the hotels. Adding to this by combining the data set two sub elements were identified which can drive the Boutique hotels toward long-term survival.

Identified sub elements are implementing an environmental policy that suits Boutique hotels and Managing and maintaining the policy in a way that it can deliver a competitive advantage to the Boutique hotels. Following section will underpin the academic validation for those elements.

a. Implementing an Environmental Policy.

Environmental sustainability in the accommodation sector means protecting the environmental resources and driving those resources to sustain to use by the future generation (Zhang et al, 2012). Boutique hotels are working toward environmental sustainability by implementing a range of strategies. Such as using renewable energy sources, maintaining wastewater treatment facilities, reducing the plastic usage etc... (Walsh and Dodds, 2017). Because the management of Boutique hotels are aware about the importance of having those strategies as a responsible business entity toward the environment and toward the guests (Chan, 2012). The condition of the guests who visit these Boutique hotels are mostly considered about the practices which Boutique hotels are implementing to work toward environmental sustainability (Sewwandi, 2017). There is an additional cost element in these environmental sustainability practices. However, guest evidence indicates that guests are willing to pay an additional amount if the Boutique hotels are working toward environmental sustainability (Fuentes-Moraleda et al, 2019). Adding more, some of the Boutique hotels are not implementing these practices and focusing only about the key characteristics of the Boutique hotels to make the guest happy. Since guests' evidence indicates that this feature will be used to evaluate the Boutique hotels to select the most suitable Boutique hotel for their stay, incorporating this element for the business operations of the Boutique hotel is crucial and important (Hall et al, 2016).

Management of the Boutique hotels are willing to implement this initiative as a policy that can guide them toward long-term survival (Abokhamis Mousavi et al, 2017). With this initiative, Boutique hotels will be able to attract the future guests who are concerned about the environment by having this element and environment too will accept the Boutique hotels due its sustainable practices (Bruns-Smith, 2015; Berezan et al, 2013).

b. Managing and Maintaining the Policy for Competitive Advantage.

Irrespective of what strategy Boutique hotels are implementing now, as environmental sustainable strategies those will be directing to competitive advantages (Kapiki, 2012). However, management evidence indicates their awareness about the importance of having a proper mechanism to manage and maintain those strategies to lead the Boutique hotels to a higher competitive advantage and toward the long-term survival in future (Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2016). Because now some of the selected Boutique hotels only have control practices to get the best output to achieve those long-term objectives. Among those control practices cost of investments and cost savings that generated from these strategies are implemented by the Boutique hotels.

Oines and Assenov (2006) suggest that environmental sustainable strategies should manage and maintain in a way that hotels can lead to long-term survival by gaining competitive advantage. This has confirmed from the guests' evidence indicating that a proper framework should be implemented to get the best output of those strategies rather than having a list of strategies to attract them. Therefore, this is an important element for Boutique hotels to make sure that every strategy is managed and maintained in a way that is having the capacity to generate cost benefits, target audience attraction, higher market position etc... (Hassan, 2000; Chan, 2011).

5.2.8 Financial Management

From both data sets, the importance of managing the finance identified as an important element for long-term survival of a Boutique hotel. To achieve this, implementation of an applicable revenue management system identified as the strategy. Following section will justify the academic underpinning for this relationship.

a. Implementation of a Revenue Management System.

The awareness of the importance of having a revenue management system for the Boutique hotels among the management is average (El Haddad, 2015). But management believes having a uniquely designed revenue management system is important since Boutique hotels are managing a limited inventory to generate the required revenue and

at the same time cost which is engaged with this limited inventory is high (Arapa, 2019). So managing the revenue and cost with specific features is required compared to other accommodation options. From the guests perspective this is an expectation that they prefer to have from Boutique hotels.

In all the case study Boutique hotels, they are implementing their own revenue management system to achieve a smooth business process (Korz and Onyshchuk, 2018). However, gaps have been identified in the system that can lead to guest dissatisfaction and to less competitive status (Aras et al, 2018). Such as unethical pricing to beat the competition, high marketing budgets with less return on revenue, negative growth in revenue per room etc... (Sanghavi, 2005). There is clear evidence from guests' evidence mentioning the price differences, price manipulations and hidden cost involvement of the stays they were in during the study. Lack of a uniform system has led to confuse the guests and to make them reasons to deviate away from the Boutique hotel sector to other accommodation sectors.

Altin et al (2017) and Nair (2019) identified specific revenue management systems associated with the features that can drive the applied hotels to competitive advantages in the long run. Further, Rodríguez-Algeciras and Talón-Ballesterro (2017) mentioned if applied as a frame to the industry, industry would be able to achieve long-term survival with customer favourability and with good financial security.

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5.3 Summary

This chapter has given the focus to the findings in relation to the literature from past studies.

In terms of identifying the most applicable elements for the proposed business model, management from all the case studies confirmed the importance of having the pre identified performance indicators as the elements in the business model. Further, management and guests identified service gaps in these elements in relation to the current service since Boutique hotels do not have service standards or proper frameworks to be followed. Therefore based on the evidence, implementation techniques have been identified and confirmed along with the literature sources that could fill these identified gaps. Adding more these implementation techniques have recommended in the literature evidence that will be able to drive Boutique hotels to long-term survival.

This study therefore provided new knowledge of how Boutique hotels can implement the business model elements to achieve long-term survival by providing implementation techniques under every element.

Finally, the implications toward the theoretical establishments have been discussed with the findings. Corporate implications are the most important part of this research. The corporate implications have been identified as the end part of the chapter.

CHAPTER 06 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Development of the Proposed Business Model

Proposed model and its operational aspects is covered in this chapter. Based on the findings in chapter 4.0 and discussion in section 5.2 following elements were identified and finalized as the proposed elements for the proposed business model (Table 63).

Table 63: Proposed Business Model Elements

Managing the Strategic Focus for Competitive Advantage Developing & maintaining the Vision and Mission Developing & maintaining Aims and Objectives	Managing Guests			
	Understanding the Guest Requirement		Delivering the Promised Service Delivery	
	Service Delivery			
	Delivering the Intimate Service	Delivering High End Luxury Service		Delivering Personalized Service
	Design and Development for Competitive Advantage	Digital Marketing for Competitive Advantage	Managing the Stakeholders for Competitive Advantage	Environmental Sustainability for Competitive Advantage
	Developing & maintaining Theme Based Interior	Identification of the Digital Marketing Strategies Implementing Control Mechanism and Maintaining the strategies	Establishing a Stakeholder Management Policy Maintaining Ethical Business Practices	Implementing Environmental Sustainability Policy Managing and Maintaining the Policy
	Developing & maintaining Theme Based Exterior Establishing the Hotel in a Competitive Location			
Revenue Management				
Implementing and Maintaining a Revenue Management Policy				

Source: Author's work adopted from primary data discussion

6.2 Operationalization of the Proposed Model

Following (Figure 28 – refer next page) is the operationalization plan of the proposed model. This demonstrates the interconnection between the proposed elements. Interconnection being explained in terms of resource flow, communication flow, operational priority and decision making flow. Furthermore, each element implementation aspects have been introduced as operationalization mechanisms.

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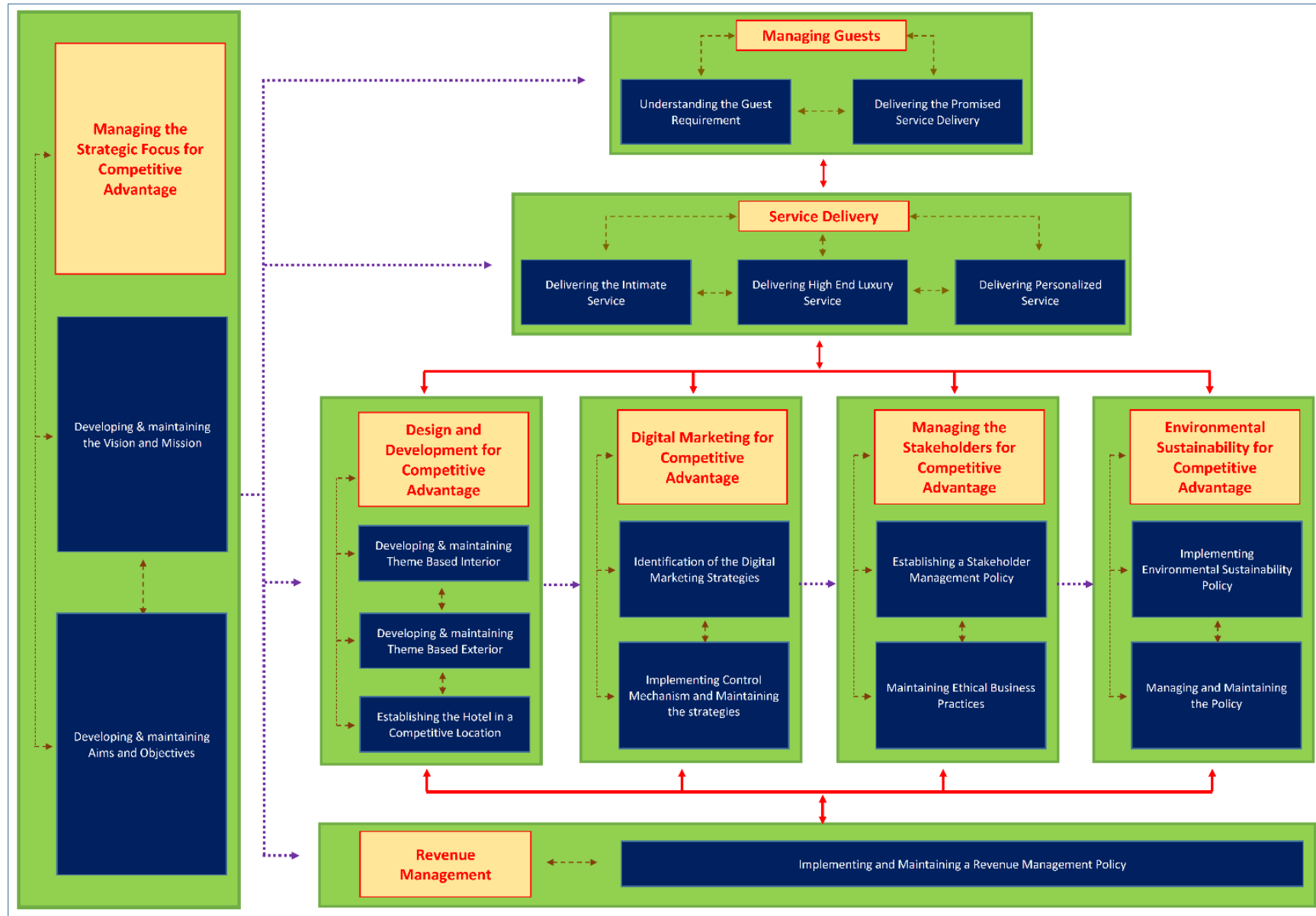


Figure 28: Operationalization plan of the proposed model

Source: Author's work

In the business model, elements are placed according to the priority of the elements toward long-term survival. Since knowing the guest is the most important element, top priority has been given to that element and placed in the first layer. To shape the service delivery based on the understanding about the guests, service delivery element placed as the second most important element in the second layer. Service delivery supported by the four major internal factors. Therefore, those four major internal factors have placed the same in direction connecting each element as the third layer. To support the achievement of the financial feasibility of each element, revenue management was placed as the fourth layer of the business model that is the last layer. Final element was placed as an element in the fifth layer covering all the elements simultaneously since strategic focus should highlight each element.

Each major element of the business model highlighted in eight green boxes. These green boxes have been placed in the business model according to the level of priority in implementation. Adding more, each green box included with red and blue sub boxes. Red box is the meaning of each major element. Blue boxes are the sub elements of the major element. The operationalization, or else how to implement each major element depicts in the blue boxes which is in the green box.

To depict the resource flow, communication flow, operational priority, crisis management initiatives and decision-making flow red arrows have used among elements. Each element is interconnecting to both ways to support all the flows between elements. However, strategic focus is giving directions to all elements simultaneously. Therefore, it is a one-way direction as shown in purple arrows. Apart from that, the brown arrows connect internal elements within the green boxes for operational mechanism.

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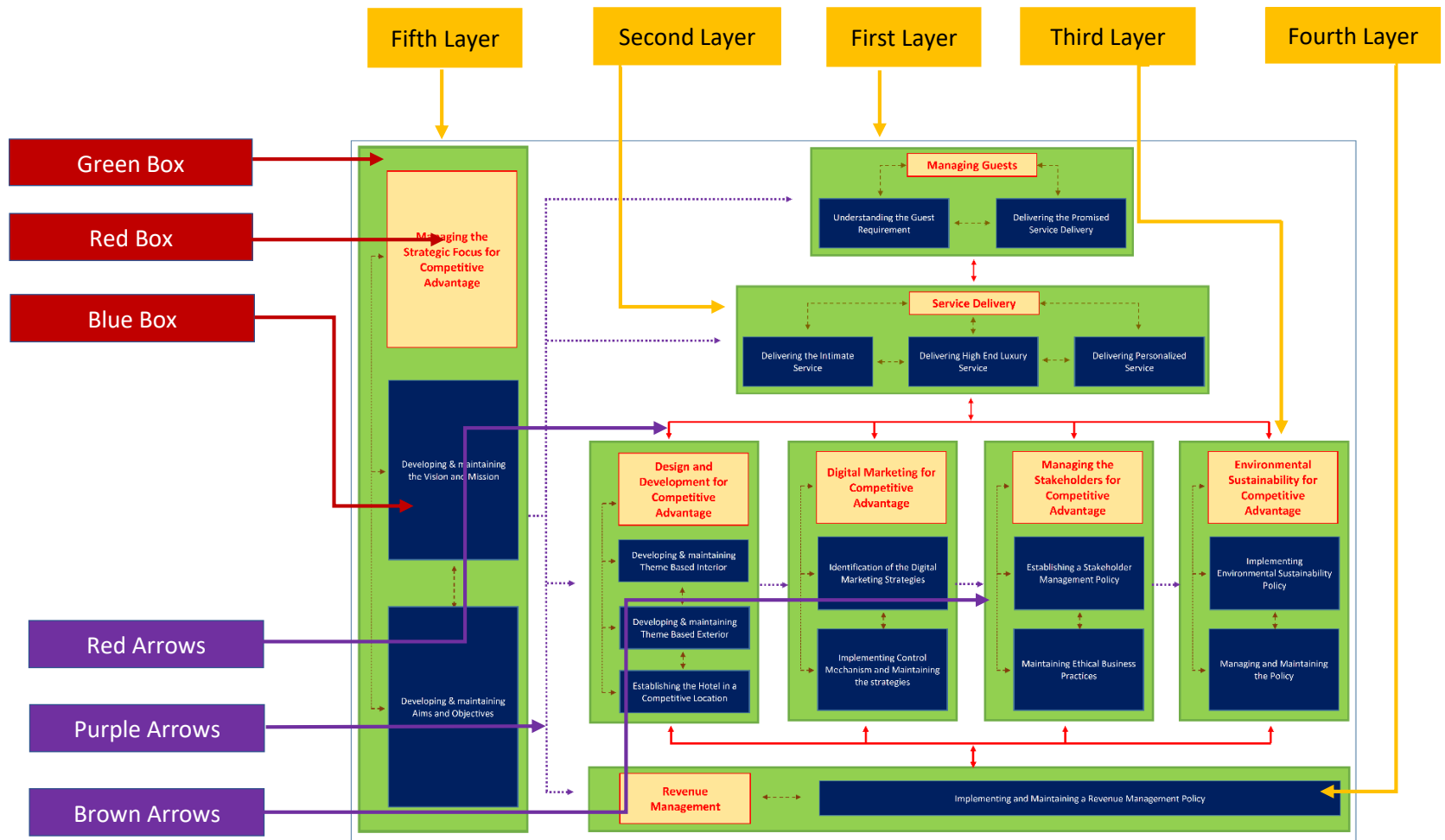


Figure 29: Proposed Model Element Explanation
 Source: Author's work

6.3 Capacity of the model to face to existing challenges in the Sri Lankan Boutique hotel sector

This section is about the capacity of the proposed model to answer the issues in the existing business models of the Sri Lankan Boutique hotel sector as identified in section 2.6.9.

6.3.1 Threat of Rising Home Stay Units

Model suggesting establishing service standards by achieving the three major service delivery elements to achieve the guests' requirement. This will be earning the existing guests and potential guests' confidence and trust toward the hotel to eliminate the existing and future threats from rivals and substitutes. Adding more models encourages ethical business relationships with the competitors to avoid price inflation and positioning related issues. Therefore, through the proposed model Boutique hotels will be able to differentiate their services in potential guests' mind sets compared to the competitors (Mola and Jusoh, 2011).

6.3.2 Deteriorating Quality of the Hotels

The three major service delivery standards in the proposed managing services element will be meeting up SLTDA standards. However, the model suggests adding international standards as well for the service delivery to improve the service delivery with standardization of practices. By implementing these standards, a minimum level of quality will be able to be maintained throughout the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka to spread the positive word of mouth for the potential target audience (Rao and Sahu, 2013). Adding more, standards will be minimizing the cost of operations to have an effective level of revenue management policy (Alonso-Almeida et al, 2012).

6.3.3 Lack of Innovation

Proposed model allowed innovation through all the elements. Innovation will attract potential guests to the property and will be creating competitive advantages for property (Enz and 2003). Apart from that, it will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the

operational process. However, most important innovation will be taking place while understanding the guest requirements and service delivery customization. Operational framework of the particular Boutique hotel, under the managing service delivery will be assisting this to make the service delivery innovative while adhering to the standards. Adding more, the design and development stage will be another applicable innovation which the particular Boutique hotel can take place to make the Boutique hotel sustainable. That is establishing the property with unique and innovative characteristics. Furthermore, innovative stakeholder relationships, marketing activities and environmental practices etc... have been recommended as sustainable business practices that can be innovative for the Boutique hotels.

6.3.4 Aging Rules and Regulations

As the model suggests, service standards will align to the guests requirements and industry requirements under each element while adhering to the SLTDA standards. Starting from design and development to the revenue management all the proposed elements in the business model will be adhering to the rules and regulations. The level of operational customization in each element is supporting this. Ultimately, operating to the given minimum and maximum standards will be improving the environmental sustainability, guest satisfaction, ethical business relationships and competitiveness of the applying firm (Rezaee and Choi, 2017; Chhabra, 2010).

6.3.5 Arrival of Less Spending Tourists

Most recommended marketing activity for the Boutique hotels is implementing the digital marketing activities to increase the awareness about the property, to increase the favourability toward the property and to convince for the reservations. Through having proper controlling mechanisms and by profiling the client base the digital marketing aspects will be targeted to the potential clientele. This process will be minimising the threat of arrivals of less spending guests toward the destination as an industry and to the property as a Boutique hotel (Kurtulay et al, 2015; Malcheva, 2019a).

6.3.6 Less Customer Satisfaction

“Managing the guests” is the major element which will be addressing the guests’ requirements and which will be giving clear operational instructions to the service deliveries to make the guests satisfied. Apart from that other expectations such as ethical business relationships and environmental friendly practices have been introduced to the model to make the potential Boutique hotel guest highly satisfied. Therefore, with those initiatives all the guests who experience the applying Boutique hotel will be at the delightful status (Herstein et al, 2018; Das et al, 2017).

6.3.7 Lack of Human Resources

All the stakeholder related relationships will be answering with the “Managing stakeholders” element. Key requirements of both parties will be addressed through this element to make the operational process smooth. This element has identified in terms all the stakeholders to maintain ethical business relationships to drive the Boutique hotel with win situations. As a part of the stakeholder relationships, lack of human resources will be answered by identifying the gap of the service process and giving them proper training through the model as suggested (Gannon et al, 2015).

6.3.8 Price Inflation

Innovation, customer satisfaction and unique service delivery will be allowing each Boutique hotel to go ahead with their own pricing which can reflect the real meaning of the Boutique hotels rather having price inflation (Pohland and Kesgin, 2018).

Furthermore, the proposed revenue management frame will streamline this pricing mechanism in a way where guests and hotels get fair benefits rather than manipulating the key meaning of the pricing.

6.3.8 Less Competitiveness

Regardless of the type of guests or type of hotel, competitiveness will be gaining from all the elements, starting from having unique design and development, unique service delivery standards, efficient stakeholder management, managing the guests, revenue

management process, environmental sustainable practices and digital marketing practices (Luján et al, 2019). This ensures that high competitiveness gains toward the Boutique hotels compared to the rivals and other accommodation options in the region to move to a higher market position in all the dimensions (Burns, 2006; Sánchez et al, 2012).

6.3.9 Confused Positioning

Proposed model will be improving the ability to connect the unique characteristics of the Boutique hotel to the marketing activities (Firat et al, 2014). Also sound positioning will be created in the target audience mind set. Since the guests' reservation decisions are highly dependent on the online reviews, this will be convincing more toward the purchase behaviour of the guests. Furthermore, as mentioned above control mechanisms could be used to position the property as a Boutique hotel in the potential client base against the competitors highlighting the value propositions (Hui-Min and Min, 2016).

6.3.10 Less Occupancy

Above all the key elements will be allowing the guests to be delightful (Goh, 2015). Delightful guests will be sharing the reviews among the potential target audience as the positive word of mouth to become potential clients to the hotel (Goh, 2015). Along with them, they will be becoming repeat guests due to the level of satisfaction (Das et al, 2017). Adding more, clear marketing communication and ethical business relationships will be improving the brand equity among the industry stakeholders. All these expected business behaviours will be driving the Boutique hotel to have a higher occupancy percentage compared to the rivals and substitutes (Abdullah and Haan, 2012).

6.3.11 Lack of Strategic Focus and out dated Initiatives

Strategic focus is a broader concept. To answer this broader concept, models suggest having specific strategic focus for the Boutique hotels. These proposed elements will be driving the Boutique hotel to the key meaning of the concept to achieve all the sustainable objectives. Moreover, having clear vision, mission and objectives will be streamlining all the operational activities to drive the property for long-term survival

while facing all the internal and external environmental challenges (Kaliappen et al, 2019; Avci et al, 2011).

6.4 Discussion of Implementation mechanisms to overcome the Business model Canvas criticism

There was criticism regarding the operational gaps in the Business model Canvas as identified in section 2.7.12. This section discussed the operational capacity of the proposed business model to overcome those identified gaps. However, in this section attention has been given to remaining gaps in the Business model Canvas that have not been discussed in section 5.3.3.

6.4.1 Performance Measurements Are Missing

Model proposing to have measurement tools to every element in the proposed business model along with the operational framework of strategic focus. Apart from that, the proposed revenue management element will be overlooking all the measurements in terms of the cost and revenue aspects.

6.4.2 Service Customization Is Missing as Problem Solutions

Service delivery element in the proposed model is included with the customization as key characteristic. Therefore, the service customization will be a part of the business model. The level of customization would depend on the Boutique hotel operational capacity and guests requirements.

6.4.3 Low Level of Prioritization of the Elements

The elements in the proposed business model aligned according to the priority of the operations. Previous studies and evidence of this research indicated managing the guests is the key factor that can cause the long-term sustainability of the Boutique hotels, therefore highest priority has been given to manage the guests. Furthermore, research has found guests visit the Boutique hotel for the key characteristics of the Boutique hotel, therefore managing the service delivery will be the second most important element in the

proposed business model. Once the requirements of the guests have been identified, services of the Boutique hotel can be implemented to make the guest satisfied. To support this service delivery, other identified elements have aligned to this service delivery. Finally, the implementation of the business model should have the revenue focus along with the cost elements. Therefore, to support this requirement revenue management elements have aligned as the last element in the business model to control all the elements.

6.4.4 Human Interaction Is Not Included

Human interaction has been identified in this proposed business model under the stakeholder management element. This has highlighted in the proposed business model because Boutique hotel is a service organization and the importance of the human resources have identified. Required levels of human interaction have been identified and then the required level of training and development need to develop to gain the competitive advantage through this element.

6.4.5 Missing of Attention to the Social and Intellectual Value

Proposed business model suggested maintaining ethical business practices throughout all the elements. By maintaining the ethical business practices, expected to respect the societal values and to protect the cultural establishments in the society. Ethical business practices will be depending on the operational aspects as defined by the managing the service element, digital marketing element and managing the stakeholder element. Other than that, he proposed to implement the standard practices as defined by the SLTDA to respect those values throughout all the elements.

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6.5 Contribution and Implications

Implication of the findings of this research have been discussed in terms of academic implications and corporate implications.

6.5.1 Theoretical contribution

Business model Canvas has been found as the influencing model to develop the proposed business model. Apart from that, all the previously discussed Business model related theories have been confirmed in the research. Therefore, elements in the Business model canvas have to be reviewed in order to identify the most applicable elements for the proposed business model. Furthermore, some other influencing factors have been found that could influence for the long-term survival of Boutique hotels. Despite an extensive number of previous studies confirming that Business model Canvas is the most applicable business model as the framework to drive to achieve the financial and non-financial objectives findings of this research indicated the specific elements that should include a Business model to focus on long-term survival in Boutique hotels. As implied by the RBV, research found eight major elements as influencing factors for the operations of the Boutique hotels. Furthermore, data analysis indicated the interrelationship between those elements for long- survival. However, these elements were missing being specifically Boutique hotel focused. Therefore, as RBV implies effective and efficient use of those elements were discussed in the research.

However, some of the proposed elements have been discussed in other existing business models as well. Such as target market identification, value creation, value proposition, value delivery etc... However, agreeing with theory of business research identified rather having a general business model for Boutique hotel industry, a specific business model is essential to achieve the long-term objectives. Research identified sustainability of the Boutique hotel was unable to reach since the firm failed to link all the characteristics to utilise the key meaning. The combination of all the elements is essential to maximize the return on investment; otherwise, the investment will be unrealistic. Further suggested, a proper framework needs to develop for further implementation to avoid being trapped at non-value adding internal and external environmental situations. Adding more, theory of business mentioned framework would be guiding the elements for significant impact by

defining the ability to implement. The proposed model developed with a clear strategic focus as theory of business suggested fitting to the Boutique hotel sector by incorporating strategic aspects. Adding more, clear monitoring mechanisms have suggested to each element to measure the performance of those elements to drive toward the long- survival aligning with the theory of business.

However, as a point of view of resource advantage theory, lack of understanding from the existing knowledge about achieving these sustainable objectives losing the competitive advantage of the Boutique hotel sector. Especially when it comes to the Asian context, the informal sector is rising up and creating sustainable issues. This informal sector has led the formal sector to a risk in achieving long-term objectives. To deliver the benefits of this rising formal sector to the society and toward the firm, new knowledge regarding a business model operationalization have developed from this study. As resource advance theory suggests this will be the point to gain competitive advantage within the market segment. In addition to that, understanding the suitability of each element is worth in the view of resource advantage theory to lead to long-term survival.

Shareholder theory implied the importance of stakeholder to drive the firms toward long-term survival. Finding of this research suggested that understanding the guests as the most significant factor in the business model. Furthermore, the study confirmed that when it comes to driving Boutique hotels to long-term survival management should focus on the target market that they are serving along with the proposed business model elements. In fact, guests are aware about why they should select a Boutique hotel for their next holiday and purchase behaviour is depending on this awareness about the Boutique hotels. More interestingly, it appeared to be the key element as the selling factor for Boutique hotels that should follow by other related factors. Such as design and development, business relationships, marketing activities, revenue management etc...This made important information to link the stakeholders of the Boutique hotels to the service delivery as shareholder theory suggests. Therefore, the proposed business model included with the stakeholder management element to a successful implementation for long-term survival.

6.5.2 Contribution to management practice

In addition to the theoretical contribution, this study provides significant benefits for the corporate implementations.

This study revealed that the Boutique hotels should clearly focus on its key meaning, which is delivering high-end intimate luxury level service with personalisation. Further, research found that the focus to this key meaning is deviating away due to the external and internal pressure from the environment. Therefore, it implies that even the pressure groups are active; Boutique hotels should focus on the key meaning of their delivery to achieve long-term survival. To achieve those eight major elements included a business model suggesting the driving path that Boutique hotels should follow to achieve the economic feasibility. As findings indicating, elements could customize as per the capacity of the applying hotel. However, implementing these elements at the minimum proposed level is crucial.

Another practical implication is that effort to implement for those identified elements should be equal to achieve the long-term objectives with the service delivery. However, existing survival strategies that are focusing about the competition should reengineer with the proposed elements and implementation recommendations. Therefore, firms should consider implementing the proposed elements as it is positioned in the proposed business model to go ahead with faster decision making which then drives toward the economic feasibility.

Another practical implementation is that most of the Boutique hotels are aware about the importance of economic sustainability and gradually moving toward economic sustainability. Currently, most of the Boutique hotels are implementing these initiatives without having a proper guidance or a focus. However, the proposed model included the importance of the strategic focus with the measurement tools to fill this gap. Therefore, the findings of this research will be assisting this shift.

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6.6 Summary

This chapter has given the focus to the development of the proposed business model using the discussed elements. Further, operational aspects of the model were discussed along with the capacity to face the challenges in the current market place with the existing business models.

Finally, the contribution and implications toward the theoretical establishments have been discussed with the findings. Corporate implications are the most important part of this research. The corporate implications have been identified as the end part of the chapter.

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CHAPTER 07 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

This research intends to develop a strategic intervention for the Boutique hotels in Sri Lankan context by redeveloping the existing business models. By introducing this intervention, research is targeting to drive them to long-term survival. Previous studies were mainly focusing about the existing survival of the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. No studies have found that explored the possibility of developing a business model for Boutique hotels in Sri Lankan context to drive long-term survival. This research intends to fill this research gap. To achieve this aim of the research, a qualitative case study method has been applied as the research methodology. Nine Boutique hotels from Galle District in Sri Lanka have been selected as the cases for the research. Nine senior managers and nine guests representing all the cases were participated as participants to go ahead with in-depth interviews.

Findings of this research expands the existing knowledge about the Boutique hotels in Sri Lankan context. This will be providing opportunities to develop suitable strategies to sustain its competitive status and to gain financial and non-financial objectives. Furthermore, this business model will be giving guidelines to reshape the existing business models to drive the Boutique hotels to long-term survival. The fact that most of the Boutique hotels already integrated the identified elements for the business model, but the level of attention they have given were not adequate enough. However, in contrast with the research that took place has been able to identify the most suitable strategic elements for a business model that can drive to long-term survival of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka.

This chapter will be summarizing the main results to highlight the achievement of the aims and objectives of this study. Further, in the chapter, recommendations for the future research perspectives have been discussed. Finally, limitations of the research have highlighted.

7.2 Overall Achievement of the Objectives

Key findings of this research is not limited to the Sri Lankan context. Also applicable to other destinations as well. Because the key elements that have been discovered can apply to any Boutique hotel in any region to drive toward long-term survival. Following is the overall summary of findings for the second objective, third objective and fourth objective. Achievement of the first objective explained in section 2.8 and section 6.5 explained the achievement of the fifth objective.

7.2.1 Objective 2: Existing Status of Boutique hotels Performance

Factors to determine the performance of the Boutique hotels have identified from the literature review. Adding more, this research studied the performance of the Boutique hotels based on these factors by collecting empirical evidence. All together five factors were applied to determine the existing level of performance. Those factors were; capacity to drive sustainability, achieving high market share, capacity to long term survival, level of guests' satisfaction and winning the competition. While many of those factors have been found in most of the cases, some of the Boutique hotels are not even aware about such performance related factors. Existing status of the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka is less competitive as management and guests' data indicates.

However, empirical data indicated rising competition from the formal and informal sector creating a threat toward the Boutique hotels. Retaining the market share with the competition becoming a challenge even with a high brand equity due to informal sector practices, behaviour of online travel agents, lack of regulations and price inflation. Moreover, managing the guests and making them satisfied is identified as a challenge to the Boutique hotels at the moment due to lack of capacity to deliver the key meaning of the Boutique hotels. This was identified as a weakness among all the Boutique hotels. The fact that most of the activities or the strategies that they are implementing at the moment need a proper framework or proper standard. The lack of drive or the focus to implement these set of practices believed to be a needed element to improve the performance of the Boutique hotels by the managers. Guests have considerations when selecting a Boutique hotel from Sri Lanka due to unethical practices as well. Due to this

factor, arrival of potential high spending tourists getting less and arrival of less spending backpackers being increased.

Due to above mentioned factors the return on investment of the Boutique hotels is getting low. Adding more, new investments are lacking behind due to the unprecedented events in the industry. However, Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka could survive if they have a business model that has elements to drive to long-term survival.

7.2.2 Objective 3: Entrepreneurs’ and Guests’ Expectations

The entrepreneurs and guests’ expectations have identified in relation to the eight performance indicators. These performance indicators were pre identified from the literature sources. Several different expectations have been found from entrepreneurs and guests’ evidence. However, these expectations are interrelated. Therefore, seventeen different expectations have been found pointing out as the expectations of entrepreneurs and guests from Boutique hotel performance (Table 64).

Table 64: Entrepreneurs’ and Guests Expectations

Key performance indicators	Entrepreneurs’ and Guests Expectations
Managing the Strategic Focus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing Aims and Objectives for the Hotel 2. Developing Vision and Mission for the hotel
Design and Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Establishing the hotel in an attractive location and favourable destination 4. Designing the Interior to a concept with unique characteristics 5. Designing the exterior to a concept with unique characteristics
Service Delivery of the Hotel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Delivering personalized services 7. Delivering luxury high end services 8. Delivering intimate services
Managing the Customer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Understanding the customer requirements 10. Delivering the promised services

table 64 (cont.)

Managing the Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Understanding the stakeholder requirements 12. Implementing stakeholder relationship management policy
Digital Marketing of the Hotel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Identification most suitable digital marketing methods with market and industry trends 14. Implementation and control mechanism for each digital marketing activity
Environmental concern of the business activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Implementing environmental sustainability as per the market and industry requirement 16. Managing and maintaining the environmental sustainability policy
Financial Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Developing revenue management system

Source: Author's work

Key expectation from the guests' perspective is the successful delivery of the key meaning of the Boutique hotels. Such as delivering a high-end luxury intimate level service with the combination of personalized service. This key meaning of the Boutique hotels should derive from the strategic focus of the Boutique hotels as they expect. Adding more they believe these three service delivery elements should facilitate from the theme of the hotel that used to design and develop the hotel. The ability to combine the destination or the location characteristics is necessary for the Boutique hotels since guests are seeking Boutique hotels in unique but convenient locations. Further, the guests believe they are responsible guests who represent the tourism industry and expect Boutique hotels to be ethical business entities. Most of all the guests in Sri Lankan Boutique hotels are digital platform users and depend on the digital platforms to make the best decisions regarding their next holiday. Therefore, the valid and reliable information from the Boutique hotels is a key expectation that can be an evaluation factor for the decision-making. All above data have been collected by having in depth interviews with nine guests representing each case study.

In order to identify the entrepreneurs' expectations; data was collected from nine senior managers. It is evident that senior manager expectations are similar to the guests' expectations. They have expectations to achieve the guests' satisfaction by delivering the key meaning of the Boutique hotel that is personalized and intimate high-end luxury service. These elements were expecting to deliver by understanding the expected level of service of guests. Furthermore, they are expecting to facilitate this by having an ethical

business relationship with all the stakeholders. Since offline marketing activities engaged with high cost and less engagement, evidence proved that management prefers to have digital marketing aspects as their main marketing element. However, digital marketing aspects need to have a proper mechanism and control. Moreover, all the managers are aware about how responsible their guests are. So to help them to be responsible they are willing to go ahead with sustainable environmental practices as well. These practices are expecting to be more validated by implementing an environmental management policy. To make the Boutique hotels competitive in a market situation that exists with formal and informal accommodation units maintaining a revenue management policy is identified as an essential tool. Furthermore, it is expected to support the return on investment by implementing this revenue management policy.

It is also evident that management has these expectations to drive the Boutique hotels to long-term survival by having competitive advantages and high market share. Guests' evidence indicated that they have all above expectations to get the premium level service for the amount they pay as Boutique hotel guests.

7.2.3 Objective 4: Development of the Business Model

To develop the most applicable business model, empirical data and the key performance indicators from the literature review have combined. The empirical evidence is further supported to identify entrepreneurs and guests' expectations. Therefore, most applicable business models for the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka have developed based on the performance indicators and expectations. The proposed elements have identified as the most suitable elements for the business model that is specifically targeting the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. Proposed business model had eight major elements. Adding more each element included with seventeen sub elements that are considered sub strategies to support the major element to drive to long-term survival. All the elements were connected to each other for the communication flow, resource flow, and decision making flow.

The literature evidence is justifying each elements' capacity to drive the Boutique hotels for long-term survival. However, key implementation techniques or the sub strategies under each element need to be implemented by the management with the combination

of capacity of the hotel, knowledge and the experiences that they have mentioned by the time of interviews of this research. If implementation is taking place with the knowledge and the experiences, guests will be delightful and in other ways, it will be driving the Boutique hotel for long-term survival.

The absence of these elements have exposed Sri Lankan Boutique hotels for less competitive status, brand equity loss, loss of market share, threat from informal sector competition, target market deviation to other international destinations, rise of cost of operations, revenue loss etc... However, they have made their effort to minimise these threats by implementing elements individually for the long-term survival that is not adequate enough since that effort is not a combination of all the elements that can support the Boutique hotel to drive toward the long-term survival.

However, it is arguable about the capacity of these elements to face the unforeseen future challenges. However, the literature review supports that argument indicating a combination of experience and the knowledge to manage these elements will be allowing the Boutique hotels to face those unforeseen challenges as well.

7.3 Future Research Recommendations

Findings of this research led to further investigations. First is to test the successfulness of this proposed model with the long-term survival of the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. Adding to this, there is no empirical investigation that has taken place to measure this relationship and the available knowledge is limited. This research can be seen as a pilot study on this domain for further studies. Moreover, future research can be conducted to test the opportunities that can be open for a Boutique hotel by implementing a long-term focused business model. Research in this context will broadly apply all the macro and micro level factors specifically the influence of those factors toward the successfulness of the business models.

Since other accommodation types in Sri Lanka are also in the same status of losing competitive status and having risks toward long-term survival, future research can take place to develop a generalized business model for other accommodation sectors as well by using the elements of this business model. Therefore, this study will pay the way to

study about the domain more in detail by applying to different research settings in other accommodation settings. A logical comparison between suitability of those elements and other accommodation sector expectations can study. Further to this, consideration can be given to understand the challenges faced by other accommodation sectors which lead to risk in survival.

Further work needs to be done empirically to determine the level of implementation that every element that is proposed in this business model should go to achieve long-term survival. In this context, further research could investigate the level of capacity a Boutique hotel could operate with the limitations they have.

This research is only focused on the economic sustainability of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. Further research can also take place in relation to societal values and environmental aspects of sustainability in Boutique hotels and other accommodation sectors. Therefore based on those elements a specific sustainable methodology can develop to achieve sustainability in Boutique hotels.

7.4 Limitations

The focus of this research was mainly toward the economic aspects of sustainability. Adding more, research was intended to identify the methodology to achieve the economic sustainability of Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the two remaining elements that are social and environmental aspects have been ignored in this research.

This research was limited to Boutique hotels that have registered under SLTDA. This means researchers have ignored the Boutique hotels that have not registered in SLTDA. Districts have used as the criteria to divide the Boutique hotels and Galle district Boutique hotels (nine) were selected as the sample case studies for this research. Due to the social, cultural and behavioural characteristics of the participants, this research selected nine senior managers and nine guests from the sample as participants. Participants' concern about revealing company information and personal information made the participant selection more complicated. However a clear explanation about the aim of the research to them facilitated the selection of the participants for the research. A repo was

established with the senior managers to get the approval for the data collection prior to the study and then interviews were taken place.

Findings of this research is limited to identify the most important elements for economic feasibility and to develop the business model for long-term survival. Previous studies that have carried for the hospitality industry, accommodation sector and Boutique hotels in Sri Lankan context and international context have been considered as the literature sources. Previous studies have further narrowed to identify performance factors and its success in relation to the accommodation sector.

Qualitative methodology was selected to understand the participants in depth with interviews. However, identification of the most suitable variables to be included was a challenge to the author that he expected to overcome with the data analysis. Aligning the research findings and developing a new strategy for sustainability was a challenging task since barriers occurred due to the arguments about the existing elements. However, guests' expectations of the Boutique hotels have matched with those barriers. Changing the entrepreneur's mind-set to adopt the proposed solutions for the existing delivery will be an implementation barrier in future research context.

Time barrier was set for one year and six months to finalize the final report starting from the approval for the ethical form. Time limitation and resource limitation prevent researchers from conducting the data collection in other districts but all the required information to identify the most suitable elements have successfully collected from the sample.

7.5 Summary

This is the final chapter of the thesis. This chapter concluded the findings of the research in relation to the research objectives of the research. It can mention that the eight elements included proposed business model will be beneficial to the Boutique hotels in Sri Lanka that can contribute to a higher competitive status while driving to the long-term survival in terms of economic feasibility as the concluding statement.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Guide for Management

Thank you very much for taking your valuable time to attend to this interview and agreeing to participate in my research. My name is Madura Thivanka Pathirana. This study aim to develop a sustainable business model for the boutique hotels in Sri Lankan setting. No previous research has been implemented to find out the most applicable business model as the sustainable solution for the boutique hotels in Sri Lanka for long-term survival.

The key reason behind carrying out this research is to give a survival solution for the boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. Growth rate of the Sri Lankan hospitality and tourism industry is high and boutique hotels are getting established in all over the island creating a higher competition among the players. Due to high number of rivals the boutique hotels are losing its competitive advantage as you know. Therefore, insights from this research are crucial and important to make the firms sustainable.

The data which may collect from this interview is for the research undertaking by Madura Thivanka at University of Wales Trinity St David, UK for a doctoral research. Data will be handled in respected manner and will be protected. You have been selected for this interview because you are a senior manager in a registered boutique hotel in Sri Lanka. This interview will be recording and I hope this interview will be a pleasant one for you. Furthermore, participating to this interview is voluntary and you can withdraw your explanations which 14 days of participating to this interview.

There are no direct benefit for you or for the firm by participating to this research. However, your insights are valuable and enable to identify the most important factors to build the business model for the boutique hotels. Adding to this, there are no disadvantages or risks associated with participating to this research. However, if you experience any dissatisfaction or distress you can avoid answering any question.

What is the name of your hotel?	
What is your position in the company?	
Number of years employed.	
Let us start this interview.	
How do you define this hotel as a Boutique hotel?	
Can you please describe the most important deliverables to guests by your hotel that you consider as critical success factors to succeed as a boutique hotel in long term?	
Do you have a specified business model to be followed?	
If yes,	How does the model work?
	What are the difficulties you have faced while you are implementing it?
Just for your information, this interview guide prepared based on pre identified eight performance indicators that will be highly applicable to boutique hotels.	
What type of tactics you are implementing for your hotel long-term profitability?	
<p>Design and Development of the hotel</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How it affect the location of your hotel to over attraction of your hotel? 2. Do you have special architectural characteristics in your hotel? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, why do you have such special characteristics? 3. Do you have a special layout plan for the hotel and rooms? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, why do you have such special layout plan? 4. Do you feel that the hotel design and key Boutique hotel characteristics are interlinked? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you design your hotel as per the Boutique hotel concept in following? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Housekeeping facilities ii. Kitchen, restaurant and bar iii. Sanitary and safety requirements iv. Swimming pool and other facilities v. Common areas 	

Service Delivery of the hotel

1. How do you ensure the quality of the service you deliver to the guests?
 - a. Do you have an established process to deliver the service?
 - b. If so how do you implement it?
 - c. Have you developed special system comparing to other accommodation types to satisfy your guests?
 - d. If so what are they and how do you implement those?
2. Do you believe customer actions are important to shape the delivery process?
3. Can you describe the physical evidences of your hotel?
 - a. Why do you implement those?

Digital Marketing of the Hotel

1. Is your sale based on offline marketing or online marketing?
 - a. If your sales are based on offline marketing only;
 - i. Why do not implement online?
 - b. If your sales based on a combination of offline and online marketing;
 - i. Why do you think this combination is important?
2. Do you implement following? And why / why not?
 - a. Social Media Marketing
 - b. Search Engine Marketing and Search Engine Optimization
 - c. Affiliate marketing
 - d. Content marketing
 - e. Email marketing
 - f. Pay per click
 - g. Mobile phone marketing
 - h. Maintenance of the website

Managing the customer

1. Can you describe the type of customers you experienced?
2. Can you explain to me how does your hotel perform in terms of handling customers?
 - a. How do you measure the customer satisfaction?
 - b. How do you identify your customer requirement?
 - c. How do you handle the customer complains?
3. What are the major differences in handling customers in your hotel comparing to other accommodation types?
 - a. If so, why you have differentiation in initiatives taken to manage customers comparing to other accommodation types?

Managing the Stakeholders of the hotel

1. How do you explain the relationship you have with your investors, employees, suppliers, government authorities, customers and competitors?
 - a. How you identify your potential customers, suppliers and employees?
 - b. Were they able to keep the promise they make?
 - c. Were you able to keep the promise you made for them?
 - d. How important the relationship you have with them in terms of the benefits you receive from them?
 - e. How do you addressed the issues occurred in achieving their objectives?

Financial Performance of the hotel	Do you believe managing finance and efficient financial performance is crucial for long term survival of your hotel?	
	What are the major difficulties you face with financial management?	
	How do you differentiate the financial planning in your hotel comparing to other accommodation providers?	What are the initiatives you are implementing to increase the sales?
		How do you reduce the operational cost?
		What are the measurements have you taken to manage the financial elements?
		Do you think that managing revenue and generating profits in a boutique hotel is unique to the category and why?
	What are the difficulties you have faced in implementing those practices?	
	What are the gaps of the current practices comparing to the core meaning of the Boutique hotel concept?	
	If so, do you have any recommendation to implement to fill the gap?	

Environmental Concern of the Business Activities

1. How do you ensure the environmental sustainability of the hotel?
2. Do you implement following
 - a. Energy efficiency practices
 - b. Practices to manage Water consumption
 - c. Practices to manage the greenhouse gas
 - d. Practices to manage waste
 - e. Initiatives to achieve resource efficacy
 - f. Measurement tools to check the accuracy of above
3. Have you developed any special environmental management system?
4. If so what is it and how do you implement it?

Strategic Focus of the hotel

1. What can you say about your strategic aspects?
 - a. Do you have vision, mission, aim and objectives?
 - b. Do you think staying focused for above is important for the long term survival of the hotel?
2. What can you say about the existing position of the hotel against the aim of your hotel comparing to the competitors?
 - a. How effectively you have aligned your existing activities to the key aim?
 - b. Have you taken any actions to reinforce or interlink the existing and potential activities to achieve the key aim?
 - c. How do you optimize you existing activities to achieve your key aim?
3. How do you ensure your long term survival of the hotel with the current market situation?
 - a. Have you compared your hotel strategies with a competitors' performance?
 - b. How do you attempt to respond to industry and company failures?
4. What can you say about your capacity to face to the future?
 - a. What is the approach you follow to predict the future?
5. What are the difficulties you have faced in implementing those practices?
6. What are the gaps of the current practices comparing to the core meaning of the Boutique hotel concept?
7. If so, do you have any recommendation to implement to fill the gap?

Have you ever found any situation that your property is struggling due to lack of standards and protocols for the above practices to run as a one business model for long term survival?

Are there any special factors that are not falling to above elements, which you still consider as important elements for the long term survival of the hotel?

This will be the end of the interview. Once again, thank you for your participation and contribution for this research.

Interview Guide for Customers

Thank you very much for taking your valuable time to attend to this interview and agreeing to participate in my research. My name is Madura Thivanka Pathirana. This study aim to develop a sustainable business model for the boutique hotels in Sri Lankan setting. No previous research has been implemented to find out the most applicable business model as the sustainable solution for the boutique hotels in Sri Lanka for long-term survival.

The key reason behind carrying out this research is to give a survival solution for the boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. Growth rate of the Sri Lankan hospitality and tourism industry is high and boutique hotels are being established in all over the island creating a higher competition among the players. Due to high number of rivals the boutique hotels are losing its competitive advantage as you know. Therefore, insights from this research are crucial and important to make the firms sustainable.

The data that may collect from this interview is for the research undertaking by Madura Thivanka at University of Wales Trinity St David, UK for a doctoral research. Data will be handled in respected manner and will be protected. You have been selected for this interview because you are a guest for this boutique hotel in Sri Lanka. This interview will be recording and I hope this interview will be a pleasant one for you. Furthermore, participating to this interview is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw your explanations which 14 days of participating to this interview.

There are no direct benefit for you or for the firm by participating to this research. However, your insights are valuable and enable to identify the most important factors to build the business model for the boutique hotels. Adding to this, there are no disadvantages or risks associated with participating to this research. However, if you experience any dissatisfaction or distress you can avoid answering any question.

Let us start this interview.		
Is it your first visit to a boutique hotel? If NO, how may boutique hotels you have visited so far?		
Why do you select Boutique hotels as your accommodation type?		
In your opinion what is a Boutique Hotel?		
As a Boutique hotel customer what is needed to be satisfied?		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unique Design and Development of the hotel 2. Satisfactory level Personalized and Intimate level service 3. High level of online presence of the hotel 4. Delightful service to address client needs 5. Managing stakeholders for a long lasting relationship 6. Satisfactory level pricing 7. Attention to the environmental sustainability 8. Promised service delivery to meet the concept of the hotel 		
Just for your information, this interview guide prepared based on pre identified eight performance indicators that will be highly applicable to boutique hotels.		
Design and Development of the hotel	Do you select the Boutique Hotels based on the design and development of the hotel?	
	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the design and development of this hotel?	
	What are the key differences you experiencing in this property comparing to the rest of the boutique hotels or hotels you have stayed?	Design?
		Interior and Exterior of the rooms and hotel?
		Front desk?
		Value added services?
	Maintenance?	
Do you believe this hotel need an improvement when it comes to design and development to meet your expectations as a guest to a Boutique Hotel?		
	If so, what are your recommendations?	

Service Delivery of the hotel	Do you select the Boutique Hotels based on the level of the service delivery you experienced in Boutique hotels?	
	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service delivery of this hotel?	
	If so, what to do you expect from;	Food and Beverages?
		Room service?
		Housekeeping?
		Front office and Reservations?
		Maintenance?
Security?		
Do you believe this hotel need an improvement when it comes to design and development to meet your expectations as a guest to a Boutique Hotel?		
Online presence of the hotel	Do you believe that the online presence of the hotel is important to convince you to select the accommodation option?	
	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the online presence of this hotel?	
	How did you select your accommodation types?	Offline marketing activities?
		Online marketing activities?
	How do you differentiate this hotel online activity with other accommodation types you have stayed so far?	
Do you believe this hotel need an improvement when it comes to implementing activities to mark their online presence?		
Managing the Customers of the hotel	Do you select the Boutique Hotels based on the level of the delightful service you experienced in Boutique hotels?	
	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way of handling customers of this hotel?	
	What are the main expectations?	Design?
		Room service?
Front desk?		
Value added services?		

		Maintenance?
	Tell me about your level of satisfaction regarding this boutique hotel when it comes to above elements?	
	In your opinion, what the aspects should be improved or corrected?	
Managing the Stakeholders of the hotel	How well was the employment reaction to you during your stay?	
	Have you noticed this hotel is a registered hotel under the law comparing to other unregistered properties in the island?	
	How it affect the type of service suppliers to this hotel for your purchase decision?	
	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way of managing stakeholder of this hotel?	
	Do you believe this hotel need an improvement when it comes to managing these relationships?	
Financial Performance of the hotel	Do you select the Boutique Hotels based on the price level?	
	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the pricing of this hotel?	
	Price of the room	Could you please tell me the value you have received in relation to the price you have paid for this stay?
		Do you think this hotel is overpriced, if so how do you think they can add more value to the price?
	Do you believe this hotel need an improvement when it comes to pricing?	
Environmental Concern of the hotel	Do you select the Boutique Hotels based on the level of concern to the environmental sustainability?	
	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the environmental sustainable initiatives of this hotel?	
	Do you have any opinions or suggestions on this manner?	
Strategic Focus of the hotel	Do you select the Boutique Hotels based on the concept they promised?	
	Did you experienced the promised concept of the hotel?	
	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service delivery and promised concept of this hotel?	

	If satisfied, what were the unique characteristics you noticed to meet the concept during your stay?
	If dissatisfied, what are your suggestions to improve the focus?

This will be the end of the interview. Once again, thank you for your participation and contribution for this research.

Appendix B

Guidelines & Standards for Boutique Hotels

GUIDELINES & STANDARDS FOR BOUTIQUE HOTELS

SRI LANKA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Definition

"A Boutique Hotel is an establishment providing unique facilities and highly personalized services to guests in a luxurious, private and intimate Environment"

1. Location

- 1.1 The hotel should portray a sense of spaciousness in the building to land ratio. Adequate space must be available for guests to rest and relax. Suitable furniture of superior quality must be available.
- 1.2 The Approach, entrance, vicinity and the environment should befit a deluxe hotel.
- 1.3 Desired background sound level at the location should be less than 50 dBA during the day and 45 dBA at night
- 1.4 The architecture should blend with the environment and landscape. Landscaped and green area should enhance the general ambience of the property.

2. Hotel Building

- 2.1 The Boutique Hotel should have a minimum of 10 bed rooms with attached bath rooms.
- 2.2 Boutique Hotel / building should not have more than two floors including the ground floor.
- 2.3 A generator capable of providing 100% back up power supply should be available in case of failure of main power supply.
- 2.4 A mechanized laundry with dry cleaning facilities capable of processing all hotel linen and guest linen or a facility to handle such items using suitable outside sources shall be available. A well ventilated linen room with adequate storage facilities for new linen and linen in use must be available.
- 2.5 A separate dedicated receiving area with adequate facilities having finishes conducive for easy cleaning and maintaining a high standard of hygiene shall be available. Area for cleaning of fish, meat, fruits and vegetables shall be available to maintain high hygienic standards
- 2.6 Effective insect and vermin protection should be carried out throughout the building and the immediate environment. Every possible steps must be taken to keep the surrounding clean and prevent breeding of flies and mosquitoes,
- 2.7 Detergents and chemicals used should be Bio-degradable

- 2.8 When designing the Hotel, internationally accepted safety standards should be adhered to.
- 2.9 Hotel should ensure adequate safety and security of the guests and their belongings. Necessary surveillance measures to achieve the above must be in place.
- 2.10 There should be adequate toilet facilities for non residents.

3. Main Services

- 3.1 There should be adequate supply of good quality water. Water used for all guest purposes and human consumption should conform to government of Sri Lanka standards for Potable Water.
- 3.2 All gas and electrical equipment and installations should be safe and conform to safety regulations

4. Bed Rooms

- 4.1 The size of the bed room (excluding attached balcony and toilet) should be minimum of 30.0 sq.m- in the absence of separate dedicated sitting and dressing areas. The width of the room should not be less than 3.0 m.
- 4.2 Adequate supply of very good quality bed linen with a high percentage of cotton, blankets and mattress covers. A selection of pillows including anti-allergy pillow should be available on request. Adequate supply of good quality and absorbent bath, face and hand towels, preferably white, and bath mats should be available. Bed linen and towels should be changed daily or as requested by guests. Bath robes and slippers of good quality should be available.
- 4.3 The main entrance door must lock automatically, when pulled shut.
- 4.4 Internationally accepted comfort range of temperature must be maintained in all guest rooms. In the case of air-conditioned bed rooms there should be a variable, speed air circulation arrangement and a thermostat control which will facilitate the adjustment of temperatures in the range of 24°C + 4°C. There should be provision to allow sufficient fresh air in to the room.
- 4.5 In the case of establishments where the average temperature in any month falls below 20°C, Thermostat controlled heating system capable of adjusting the room temperature up to 24°C should be available. Refer ASHRAE (American Society for Heating, Refrigeration and Air conditioning Engineers) Guidelines.
- 4.6 A keyless safe deposit locker must be available in the room
- 4.7 Access to communication facilities such as Internet/ E:mail must be available if required by the guests
- 4.8 A plan of the building indicating the emergency exit path / s must be prominently displayed on the inner surface of the entrance door.
- 4.9 The main door lock must be on a master key / card system and should have a double locking facility from within, which should open from outside only with an emergency master key/card

5. Bathrooms

- 5.1. The bathroom of every guest room should be a minimum of 4.5 sq.m in area.
- 5.2. Natural or mechanical means to remove stale air effectively from bathrooms must be provided.
It is recommended that water saving type fixtures and fittings are used in all bathrooms. Hot and cold water with suitable mixing facility should be available for the bath, shower and the wash basin.
- 5.3. Bathrooms should have good level of general illumination and effective on-the-face lighting for the mirrors. The lighting levels to be as follows: bathroom (general lighting) 120 Lux, On-the-faces lighting (minor) 300 Lux. The light switch should be located outside the bathroom.
- 5.4. Quality, functionality and maintenance of all sanitary installations should be of a very high standard. Strict standards should be imposed governing sanitation, cleanliness and hygiene throughout the hotel building and its environs

6. House Keeping

- 6.1 Adequate number of spacious housekeeping pantries with running hot and cold water must be provided for smooth and efficient guest service.

7. Restaurant & Bar

- 7.1 Dining facilities for residents and their guests must be available. Food and Beverage services provided should be of the highest standards with highly personalized service and with the variety meeting the guests' individual needs.
- 7.2 Very high quality Cutlery, crockery, glassware, other tableware and table linen in adequate quantities
- 7.3 Where a bar is in operation, suitable glass washing facilities with running hot and cold water with a mixer tap should be available. The bar should have all types of glassware necessary for serving wines, spirits and all other beverages.
- 7.4 An ice cube-making machine connected to a sterilized potable water supply should be available in the bar

8. Kitchen

- 8.1 Provision of a dish washing machine is recommended and where not available, three sinks with hot & cold water with mixer taps must be available exclusively to be used for dish washing purposes.
- 8.2 Kitchen Staff must be well trained and knowledgeable to provide excellent and personalized service.
- 8.3 A well planned and equipped Kitchen must be available. Segregation of different activities within the kitchen is recommended as far as practically possible.
- 8.4 There should be adequate provisions for ventilation and removal of hot air and odours from the kitchen. There should be a separate dedicated area, located away from the cooking area, preferably with a stainless steel sink, with running hot and cold water

- with a mixer tap for the washing of pots and pans. A separate facility for washing hands with soap and disposable paper tissues/roller towels or hot air hand dryer should be provided at the staff entrance to the kitchen.
- 8.5 Kitchen tabletops and shelves should be of stainless steel or other impervious non metallic materials and maintained in good condition. Kitchen utensils should be of very good quality, clean and adequate.
 - 8.6 The kitchen should consist of a range of equipment required for production of international cuisine.
 - 8.7 All cooked and uncooked food must be covered and well protected at all times
 - 8.8 A very high standard of hygiene must be maintained in the preparation and storage of food.
 - 8.9 There should be sufficient number waste bins with covers. Each different type of waste material should have a separate bin

 - 8.10 All deep freezers and cold rooms must be maintained at correct temperatures. Dairy products and processed foods shall be stored separately from meat and sea food. Food stores must be physically separated from other storage areas. Perishables must be stored at controlled temperatures. Grocery and Dry foods should be stored in a manner so as to avoid cross contamination of smells and flavours.
 - 8.11 All shelving used inside freezer and cold storage shall be made of stainless steel or suitable non metallic materials. A cellar or facility for storage of liquors and wines with correct storage temperatures must be available. Different materials such as stationery, engineering items should be stored in physically separated areas. Paints and volatile substances shall be stored in a separate well ventilated area of the building Chemicals stores must be separated.
 - 8.12 Kitchen area should be free of insects and rodents. Fly screens must be fitted to all kitchen doors and windows as necessary.
 - 8.13 Electrical insectocuters must be provided at strategic locations.
 - 8.14 All drain outlets in and around the kitchen should be trapped and connected to a sealed pipe network leading to a fat separator. Adequate and proper cleaning facilities should be available for the wastewater piping network. No open drains should be present inside the kitchen.
 - 8.15 Functional arrangements should be made for separation of fat from kitchen waste water. Separated kitchen wastewater, sewage, and laundry wastewater should be treated in accordance with the environmental regulations

9. Stores

- 9.1 Adequate good quality racks should be provided for storage (Timber shall not be used for racks).

10. Sanitary and safety requirements

- 10.1 For sanitary requirements dry garbage should be stored in a covered and ventilated condition until disposed. Re-cycleable garbage must be sorted at source, stored and disposed off separately.

- 10.2 Wet garbage should be stored separately in an enclosed area.
- 10.3 Signage conforming to international standards for emergency exit together with emergency lighting must be provided in all areas of the hotel. Precautions should be taken in sea-side hotels and hotels with swimming pools for the safety of the users. Cautionary and warning signs conforming to international standards must be displayed prominently.
- 10.4 Protective measures must be taken to prevent lightning strikes. First-aid facilities must be available.
- 10.5 Doctor / s should be available 24 hours on-call in case of emergencies.
- 10.6 The hotel should be covered by Comprehensive Hoteliers' Insurance Policy including public liability and workmen's compensation.

11. Swimming pools

- 11.1 Where a swimming pool is available depth markings and internationally accepted safety signs should be permanently displayed. The water quality should be maintained according to internationally accepted standards. The quality of water should be checked and recorded at least twice a day. In the case of swimming pool with fresh water the water quality shall be maintained within the following parameters. PH 7.4 to 7.6 Residual Chlorine minimum 0.5 ppm (1.0 ppm is recommended)
- 11.2 Suitably qualified life guards should be available when the swimming pool is in operation
- 11.3 Adequate number of showers should be located in the vicinity of the pool.
- 11.4 The swimming pool should be adequately lit. Adequate pool deck furniture of excellent quality should be available.

12. Facilities for differently abled guests

- 12.1 The hotel must comply with the regulations stipulated in "Protection of the Rights of Persons with disabilities" Act (gazette notification no. 1, 467/15 of 17th October 2006)

13. Staff

- 13.1 All staff should be medically tested once a year and medical reports certified by a government registered medical practitioner should be submitted.
- 13.2 Separate changing facilities with clean toilets having water closets in good working order and well maintained showers should be available for the staff.
- 13.4 The management and staff should have adequately qualified and experienced personnel to ensure a very high standard of service.
- 13.5 All staff should be in uniformed attire. The uniforms should be formal or in keeping with the theme of the hotel.
- 13.6 Where staff accommodation is provided the building should be well ventilated and have maximum possible natural lighting. The floor shall be made of impervious materials to facilitate cleaning. The floor area provided per person shall be not less than 5 sq. m. Comfortable beds with suitable mattresses should be provided. The walls shall be smooth and treated with a finish conducive for cleaning.
- 13.7 For non-resident staff locker space of 0.13 cu.m. per person shall be provided where the height of the locker shall be not less than 90 cm. and the depth not less than

45 cm. The lockers should be well ventilated.

13.8 For resident staff locker space of 0.3 cu.m. per person shall be provided where the height of the locker shall be not less than 90 cm. and the depth not less than 45 cm. The lockers should be well ventilated.

13.9 Where staff meals are provided: Staff dining room shall be well ventilated. The floor shall be made of impervious material. Walls shall be covered up to 150 cm with impervious material to facilitate cleaning. The dining area shall be such that a minimum of 1.5 sq.m. is available per person. The total number of covers shall be adequate to serve 30% of the total staff in one sitting. The table should be covered with impervious material conducive for easy cleaning. At least two sinks with running hot and cold water with mixing facilities for washing of cutlery, crockery and glassware should be available.

14. Environment, Community & sustainability

14.1 The hotel should be equipped with a Sewer & Wastewater treatment plant/system approved by the CEA and maintained in good working order. The treated effluent should be recycled to effectively reduce the consumption of water. Performance test certificates for the plant must be available.

14.2 Effective energy conservation measures should be implemented. The effectiveness of the measures must be supported with historical data.

14.3 A system should be in place for recycling of waste. Food waste should be composted or used as animal fodder. Solid waste must be separated for re-cycling. A very clear arrangement must be in place for disposing of separated solid waste for re-cycling

14.4 The use of plastic, polythene and PVC should be discouraged. A policy to minimize the use of the above items must be in place. The use of re-cyclable containers such as glass bottles, glass jars etc. should be encouraged.

14.5 A system must be in place to pass on benefits to the neighborhood and the area. Policy on recruitment and procurement should have built in mechanisms to make the above process meaningful.

15. Common Area

15.1 A designated area to welcome and receive the guests must be available.

5.3 The guest corridors, where available, should be sufficiently wide, airy, safe and adequately lit and should be consistent with the standards of the hotel.

5.4 Boutique Hotel should have a separate service access independent of the guest entrance.

Source: Image formats were obtained from SLTDA (2018)

Appendix C

Channels used by Guests to Reserve Rooms



Appendix D

List of key players - Formal sector

1. Aditya
2. Amangalla
3. Amanwella
4. Ayana Sea
5. Brook Boutique
6. Buckingham Place
7. Cape Weligama
8. Casa Colombo
9. Chena Huts
10. Club Villa
11. Galle Fort Hotel
12. Highland Villa
13. Jims Farm Villa
14. Kumu Beach
15. Langdale Resort & Spa
16. Maalu Maalu Resorts & Spa
17. Mandara Resort
18. Paradise Road Tintagel Colombo
19. Saman Villas
20. Sooriya Resort & Spa
21. Tamarind Hill
22. Taru Villas - The Long House
23. The Elephant Corridor
24. Fort Bazzar
25. The Fortress
26. The Habitat
27. The Secret Ella
28. The Theva Residency
29. The Villas
30. The Walawwa
31. Ulagalla Walawwa Resort
32. Vil Uyana
33. Water Garden, Sigiriya
34. Wattura Resort And Spa
35. Wild Coast Lodge

Appendix E

List of key players - Informal sector

1. Albany Villa
2. Amaloh
3. Amaranthe Bay Resort and Spa
4. Anantaya Passikudah
5. Apa Villa
6. Arabella on Boossa
7. Bethany 101
8. Boulder Garden
9. Boutique 87
10. Buckingham Place
11. Camellia Hills
12. Cantaloupe Levels
13. Casa Heliconia
14. Ceylon Tea Trails Castlereagh
15. Ceylon Tea Trails Dunkeld Bungalow
16. Ceylon Tea Trails Norwood
17. Ceylon Tea Trails Summerville
18. Ceylon Tea Trails Tientsin
19. Chena Huts by Uga Escapes
20. Clingendael
21. Clove Villa
22. Coco Bay
23. Coca Tangalle
24. Colombo Court Hotel & Spa
25. Colombo Hotel by Ceilao Villas
26. Comilla
27. Deco on 44
28. Dutch House Galle
29. Eladetta Walauwa
30. Ellerton
31. Era Beach
32. Eraeliya Villas
33. Footprints
34. Fort Printers
35. Fortaleza Church Cross Street
36. Fortaleza Landesi
37. Frangipani Tree
38. Galavilla Boutique Hotel and Spa
39. Galle Henna Beach House
40. Governors Mansion
41. Havelock Place Bungalow
42. Helgas Folly
43. Horathapola Estate
44. Illuketia
45. Imagine Villa
46. Indisch
47. Jetwing Surf
48. Jetwing Warwick Gardens
49. Jungle Beach
50. Kahanda Kanda
51. Karpaha Sands
52. Kirchhayn Bungalow
53. KK Beach
54. Kottukal Beach House
55. Lake Lodge Kandalama
56. Lantern
57. Living Heritage
58. Lunuganga
59. Maniumpathy
60. `sMas Villa
61. Masada
62. Maya Villa
63. Melheim Resort
64. Mount Cinnamon
65. Mount Havana
66. Mountbatten Bungalow
67. Mowbrey House
68. Nisala
69. Nisala Arana
70. Niyagama House
71. Number 48
72. Owl and the Pussycat
73. Parrotfish Bay
74. Reef Villa and Spa
75. Rosyth Estate House
76. Sagala Boutique Hotel
77. Satin Doll
78. Sergeant House
79. Shinagawa Beach
80. Signature by Amaya
81. Soul Resorts
82. Sri Sharavi Beach Villas
83. Sri Villas
84. Stone HouseSun House
85. Tabula Rasa Villa
86. Tamarind Hill
87. Taru Villas - Rock Villa
88. Taru Villas – Yala
89. Taylors Hill
90. Thaproban Pavilion Resort
91. The Kandy House
92. The Kings Pavilion
93. The Last House
94. The Secret Kandy
95. The Tangalle Social
96. The Villa Bentota

97. Thotalagala
98. Tintagel
99. Tisara Villas
100. Tri Lanka
101. Turtle Bay
102. Ubuntu Boutique Hotel
103. Ulagalla Resort
104. Urban Castle
105. Villa 46
106. Villa Hundira
107. Villa Republic Galle
108. Villa Rosa
109. Villa Saffron
110. W15
111. Weligama Bay Resort
112. Wild Grass Nature Resort
113. 98 Acres Resort

Appendix F

Node Structure

Codes	Number of coding references	Aggregate number of coding references	Number of items coded	Aggregate number of items coded
Nodes\\Boutique Hotels	2	189	2	18
Nodes\\Boutique Hotels\Customer - Expecting Intimate Services and Facilities	39	39	9	9
Nodes\\Boutique Hotels\Customer - Expecting Luxury Services and Facilities	54	54	9	9
Nodes\\Boutique Hotels\Customer - Expecting Personalized Services and Facilities	37	37	9	9
Nodes\\Boutique Hotels\Intimate Services and Facilities	18	18	9	9
Nodes\\Boutique Hotels\Luxury Services and Facilities	17	17	9	9
Nodes\\Boutique Hotels\Personalized Services and Facilities	22	22	9	9
Nodes\\Brand Management	4	4	3	3
Nodes\\Crisis Management System	5	5	5	5
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\Customer - Design and Development Convince to Buy a Room	60	60	8	8
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\Customer - Expecting a theme based exterior design	72	72	9	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\Customer - Expecting a theme based interior design	63	63	9	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\Customer - Expecting hotel to be in a Tourist Destination	28	57	8	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\Customer - Expecting hotel to be in a Tourist Destination\Convenient Location	18	18	7	7
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\Customer - Expecting hotel to be in a Tourist Destination\Famous Location	11	11	7	7

Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Exterior Design\\Needed for Long Term Survival	36	93	9	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Exterior Design\\Needed for Long Term Survival\\Competitive Advantages	13	13	8	8
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Exterior Design\\Needed for Long Term Survival\\Winning the competitors	20	20	8	8
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Exterior Design\\Needed for Long Term Survival\\Winning the customers	24	24	8	8
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Exterior Design\\Theme of the Hotel	26	26	9	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Interior Design\\Needed for Long term Survival	33	108	9	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Interior Design\\Needed for Long term Survival\\Competitive Advantages	22	22	7	7
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Interior Design\\Needed for Long term Survival\\Winning the competitors	22	22	8	8
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Interior Design\\Needed for Long term Survival\\Winning the customers	31	31	9	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Interior Design\\Theme of the Hotel	26	26	7	7
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Location and Destination\\Location Advantages	34	34	9	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Location and Destination\\Location Familiarity	10	10	7	7
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Location and Destination\\Location Favourability	17	17	9	9
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Location and Destination\\Long Term Survival	41	41	8	8
Nodes\\Designing and the Development of the Hotel\\Manager - Location and Destination\\Maintaining Destination Standards	6	6	6	6
Nodes\\Digital Marketing of the Hotel\\Customer - Digital Marketing Convincing to buy the Room	35	35	9	9
Nodes\\Digital Marketing of the Hotel\\Customer - Expecting Digital Presence	27	27	9	9

Nodes\\Digital Marketing of the Hotel\\Manager - Identifying the Updated Digital Marketing Activities	27	27	9	9
Nodes\\Digital Marketing of the Hotel\\Manager - Implementation and Control Mechanism	23	23	9	9
Nodes\\Digital Marketing of the Hotel\\Manager - Implementing offline marketing activities	13	13	6	6
Nodes\\Digital Marketing of the Hotel\\Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival	68	68	9	9
Nodes\\Environmental Concern about the Business Activities\\Customer - Environmental Practices Convince to Buy the Room	12	12	8	8
Nodes\\Environmental Concern about the Business Activities\\Customer - Expecting Hotels to be More Environmental Friendly	18	23	9	9
Nodes\\Environmental Concern about the Business Activities\\Customer - Expecting Hotels to be More Environmental Friendly\\Environmental Practices	5	5	3	3
Nodes\\Environmental Concern about the Business Activities\\Customer - Expecting to pay more for Environmental Friendly Hotels	12	12	9	9
Nodes\\Environmental Concern about the Business Activities\\Manager - Implementing Environmental Policy	26	26	9	9
Nodes\\Environmental Concern about the Business Activities\\Manager - Managing and Maintaining the Policy	18	31	7	9
Nodes\\Environmental Concern about the Business Activities\\Manager - Managing and Maintaining the Policy\\Sustainable Environmental Practices	13	13	7	7
Nodes\\Environmental Concern about the Business Activities\\Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival	57	57	9	9
Nodes\\Financial Performance of the Hotel\\Customer - Expecting Proper Revenue Management System	34	34	9	9
Nodes\\Financial Performance of the Hotel\\Customer - Expecting Transparent Pricing System	32	32	9	9
Nodes\\Financial Performance of the Hotel\\Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival	59	59	9	9
Nodes\\Financial Performance of the Hotel\\Manager - Revenue Management System	55	55	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders	1	252	1	18

Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders\Customer - Buying Behaviour Getting affected from sustainable practices	28	28	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders\Customer - Expecting Stakeholder Management	35	35	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders\Manager - Needed for Long Term Survival	82	82	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders\Manager - Stakeholder Relationship Management	49	76	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders\Manager - Stakeholder Relationship Management\Positive and Open Relationship	25	27	5	6
Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders\Manager - Stakeholder Relationship Management\Positive and Open Relationship\Staff Development	2	2	2	2
Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders\Manager - Understanding the Stakeholder Requirement	14	30	7	9
Nodes\\Managing Stakeholders\Manager - Understanding the Stakeholder Requirement\Understanding Stakeholder Objectives	16	16	5	5
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Customer - Strategic Focus Convince to Buy Hotel Room	12	12	7	7
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Customer - Expecting Hotels to Focus on the Vision and Mission	23	29	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Customer - Expecting Hotels to Focus on the Vision and Mission\Expecting activities aligning to the vision and mission	6	6	4	4
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Customer - Expecting Hotels to have Aims and Objectives	12	20	8	9
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Customer - Expecting Hotels to have Aims and Objectives\Expecting activities aligning to the aims and objectives	8	8	4	4
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Manager - Developing Aims and Objectives Hotels	4	77	3	9
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Manager - Developing Aims and Objectives Hotels\Need Aims and Objectives	37	37	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Manager - Developing Aims and Objectives Hotels\Positioning in the Market Place	21	21	8	8
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Manager - Developing Aims and Objectives Hotels\Winning the Competition	15	15	7	7
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\Manager - Developing Vision and Mission for the Hotel	5	149	3	9

Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\\Manager - Developing Vision and Mission for the Hotel\\Aligning Activities	61	61	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\\Manager - Developing Vision and Mission for the Hotel\\Future Sustainability	30	30	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\\Manager - Developing Vision and Mission for the Hotel\\Need Vision and Mission	53	53	9	9
Nodes\\Managing Strategic Focus\\Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival	96	96	8	8
Nodes\\Managing the Customer	5	400	1	18
Nodes\\Managing the Customer\\Customer - Expecting key characteristics to repeat to the hotel or to talk about the hotel	30	30	8	8
Nodes\\Managing the Customer\\Customer - Expecting the promised level of service from the hotel	93	93	9	9
Nodes\\Managing the Customer\\Customer - Expecting to understand the guest requirements	31	31	9	9
Nodes\\Managing the Customer\\Customer - Intimate, Luxury and Personalized Service Convince to Buy the Room	19	19	7	7
Nodes\\Managing the Customer\\Manager - Delivering the Promised Service	65	65	9	9
Nodes\\Managing the Customer\\Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival	96	96	9	9
Nodes\\Managing the Customer\\Manager - Understanding the Customer Requirement	61	61	9	9
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Customer - Expecting a Business Model	27	27	8	8
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Customer - Expecting Standard Practices from the hotels	52	52	9	9
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Customer - Expecting to be Registered Property	8	8	5	5
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Manager - Driving to Sustainability	11	11	8	8
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Manager - High Market Share	7	7	6	6
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Manager - Long term Survival	13	13	7	7
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Manager - Need a Business Model	40	40	9	9
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Manager - No Business Model	18	18	9	9
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Manager - Satisfying the Customer	10	10	7	7
Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\\Manager - Set of Practices	33	33	9	9

Nodes\\Requirement of a Business Model\Manager - Winning the Competition	8	8	8	8
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel	20	475	1	18
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Customer - Excellent Level Service Delivery Convince me to Buy the Room	25	25	8	8
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Customer - Expecting Intimate Service	33	33	9	9
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Customer - Expecting Luxury Services and Facilities	58	58	9	9
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Customer - Expecting Personalized Service	51	51	9	9
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Intimate Service Delivery	20	37	8	9
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Intimate Service Delivery\Long Term Survival	17	17	7	7
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Luxury Service Delivery	22	41	8	9
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Luxury Service Delivery\Long Term Survival	19	19	8	8
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival	106	167	9	9
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival\Win the Competitor	21	21	7	7
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Needed Element for Long Term Survival\Win the Customer	40	40	8	8
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Personalized Service Delivery	25	43	8	9
Nodes\\Service Delivery of the Hotel\Manager - Personalized Service Delivery\Long term Survival	18	18	7	7

Appendix G

Group Queries

