Research in Hospitality Management 2014, 4(1&2): 21–28
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RHM
ISSN 2224-3534
http://dx.doi.org/10.2989/RHM.2014.4.1&2.4.1250

The ethics of an all-inclusive plan: An investigation of social sustainability in the case of all-inclusive resorts, Jamaica

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Ethics and sustainability are commonly used catchphrases in the modern business world. As several hospitality entities go out of their way to provide the emergent pro-environmentalist guest with value-added 'green' goods and services, others are forced to re-analyse their operational strategies to maintain competitive advantage (Miao and Wei 2012). The all-inclusive system, a marketing paradigm that involves inclusion of all (or most) hotel services at one standard price, has been extremely popular since the 1970s. This system gained prominence with the advent of mass tourism, and is still very common in the Caribbean islands. However, this bundling system has not been scrutinised from a sustainability perspective. The research recognises that sustainability is not limited to environmental practices, but also focuses on economic benefits and social development (Elkington 1997). A review of recent scholarship in the sustainability domain reveals that the environmental dimension has been the key focus of research, while the social aspect of sustainability has received little attention (Bonini et al. 2010). This study therefore aims to address this gap and investigate social sustainability of all-inclusive system. The research is located in Jamaica, a popular destination for all-inclusive travel. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with front desk agents at all-inclusive Resort X. Findings indicate that although employees value direct employment created by the resort, they resent some of the necessarily evils associated with all-inclusive system, such as lack of entrepreneurial opportunities, exclusion and subservience. Based on analysis of qualitative data, the paper presents a conceptual framework, the final outcome of this study. The conceptual model depicts four key dimensions of social sustainability on a hierarchical scale, based on importance attached to each of these by the respondents. The findings establish that employees and wider communities are increasingly expecting businesses to act responsibly. It is important to adopt a holistic and balanced approach to issues concerning business ethics and sustainability.

Keywords: sustainability, all-inclusive, ethics, business ethics, triple bottom line

Introduction

The principles of sustainable living are firmly entrenched within ethics, as ethical behaviours form the building blocks of human society. According to Aristotle, who laid the foundations of ethics over 2000 years ago, virtuous behaviour, such as generosity, justice and charity benefits the individual and society alike. But how can something as subjective and personal as ethics be defined? In a more general sense, ethics as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary refers to the distinction between right and wrong, thereby guiding behaviour. Clearly, this definition is very abstract. However, it can help us understand the concept of business ethics, commonly understood as morality and doing what is considered to be morally upright, fair and honest within a given business environment (Murphy et al. 2007). Although the study of ethics in an organisational context is not new, the field is constantly evolving and such issues are gaining prominence on the business agenda.

Likewise, issues concerning sustainability are fast gaining prominence as a key strategic objective. Sustainability has long been associated with environmental concerns and natural resource management (Mowforth and Munt 2009). John Elkington (1997) led the way in understanding sustainability as a multi-faceted concept and famously coined the term 'triple bottom line' (TBL), arguing that the performance of any business must be measured based not only on the profit (economic) dimension, but also planet (environmental) and people (social) bottom lines. The US Environmental Protection Agency (2013) further clarifies: 'sustainability permits fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations'. Evidently, socio-economic concerns are assuming heightened importance within sustainability discourse. A closer examination of sustainability's triple bottom line highlights some important points – most notably equity, opportunity, inclusivity, welfare and justice (Strock 2011, Elkington 1997). This value set is clearly grounded within business ethics. In other words, it is the ethical obligation of every organisation to contribute towards sustainable development. Ethics and sustainability can therefore be envisioned as two sides of the same coin. However, the social dimension of sustainability is a vastly underexplored study area. Issa and Jaywardena (2002) challenge this position too and state that for an organisation to be truly sustainable, the social dynamics of its operations need to be taken into account. With this reasoning, people/social dimension of sustainability is the key agenda this study aims to explore.

Miao and Wei (2012) rather controversially suggest that sustainability and hospitality cannot co-exist, given the hedonic nature of the industry. This is even more prominent with a marketing concept such as all-inclusive, whereby the traveller pays a one-off price and all services are bundled into the stipulated price, thereby encouraging gluttonous consumption. The all-inclusive package evolved in the 1960s in a bid to further promote mass tourism. The idea can rightly be articulated as the equivalent of 'readymade microwaveable meals' of the tourism industry. The concept of all-inclusive hospitality was borne from hedonistic consumption, in that travellers sought to satisfy all of their vacationing desires at the convenience of paying for those under a standard price. As the popularity of these packages increased over the years, so did their impacts on the TBL of the societies where such resorts operate. In case of Jamaica, as Bramwell (2004) and Boniface and Cooper (2009) note, the increased employment, tourist spending and foreign exchange earnings that all-inclusive hospitality brought have helped improve the livelihoods of many Jamaicans who were still trapped in poverty. Bramwell (2004) insists that benefits such as these have most certainly balanced against the associated problems of all-inclusive hospitality not just for the societies where these organisations operate, but also for the very tourists that these systems are serving. However, according to some critics, the all-inclusive system does more harm than good as far as the TBL is concerned and cannot possibly be sustainable (Issa and Jayawardena 2002). Given the very nature of this product, it is indeed difficult to visualise if the all-inclusive concept can be managed sustainably. This study pursues this line of enquiry, and investigates if the all-inclusive plan can be managed in a socially responsible manner.

Literature review

Sustainability

The earth belongs to each generation in its course, and in its rights no generation must contract debts greater than what may be paid during the course of its existence (Thomas Jefferson).

Few have captured the essence of sustainability as succinctly as in the above quote. Sustainability and sustainable development are ubiquitous terminologies, dividing academics, scholars and business managers on what these terms really imply. Both expressions are often used interchangeably and generally refer to the actions or activities of an organisation that 'meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED 1987). Evidently, this definition is abstract and even paradoxical, as it highlights the need for simultaneous resource conservation and exploitation. Despite key shortcomings, it does bring about the general idea that sustainability is mainly concerned with prudent management of resources, and also inter-generational equity. In simpler terms, it refers to the capacity to endure, or for things to continue indefinitely. A review of scholarly work in the sustainability domain reflects that the earlier literature equates sustainability with ecological concerns (Mowforth and Munt 2009). For many, the same is true even today as sustainability is still commonly equated with 'greening' (or tree-hugging!) and restoring the environment to its original state, free from the effects of climatic change. This view finds ample support from the US Environmental Protection Agency and Green Cross International, who contend that everything we need for our survival and wellbeing depends either directly or indirectly on the natural environment. For others, it encompasses the totality of the environment, including both the economy and the people within the environment. In the latter conceptualisation, sustainability seeks to improve the entirety of man's quality of life through maintaining the three tiers of economic, ethical and environmental reconciliation (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2009). These three tiers are commonly referred to as the triple bottom line (Elkington 1997), which advocates a balanced approach towards ecological, economic, political and cultural dimensions. Despite varying approaches adopted towards the definition of sustainability, the underlying underpinnings suggest the maintenance and upholding of all of the facets that make up the planet earth and its greater environment in supporting life. This all-encompassing and broad view forms the foundation of this paper too, although the social dimension of sustainability will be the key focus, as explained later.

Triple Bottom Line (Elkington 1997)

John Elkington, author of *Cannibals with forks: the triple bottom line of 21st century business*, is widely credited for presenting a holistic view of sustainability agenda. His conceptualisation, called the 'triple bottom line', is loosely based on the UN's Agenda 21 and is an accounting framework that challenges the popular view that the impacts of any organisation be measured strictly on the financial bottom-line (profit). Instead, this impact assessment needs to include social (or people) and environmental (or planet) bottom lines as well. Elkington advocates a balanced approach, implying that economic development be achieved with the purpose of social welfare and strictly within the confines of what the natural environment can sustain. In fact, this framework attaches expectations on businesses to create not only economic, but also social and environmental value. Planet 'P' concerns prudent management of natural capital, the environment, non-renewable resources and wider issues such as natural biodiversity. Profit 'P' is not limited to viability of the business (or the sector) itself, but also elaborates on how these profits are redistributed (for instance payment of taxes, fair wages, charities and donations). The people 'P' dimension advocates equity, welfare and better quality of life for humankind. The TBL clearly intends to capture an expanded spectrum of values and criteria for measuring organisational and societal success. By extension, the TBL model compels businesses to realign their strategies, to address stakeholders' expectations, rather than those of shareholders only.

However, the TBL remains one of the most widely criticised theories in contemporary literature. Sridhar and Jones (2013) challenge TBL rhetoric, claiming that it is so misleading that it might provide a smokescreen behind which firms can truly avoid effective social and environmental performance. Norman and MacDonald (2004) criticise the TBL from a uniformity and lack of practicality viewpoint, as they note that social issues are subjective, and hence cannot be objectively assessed in the same way as the profit bottom line, which has a common unit of measurement. The scholars further argue that the TBL really is unhelpful, owing to lack of integration between the three

stated dimensions. Measurement indeed is the most problematised aspect of the TBL (Milne and Brych 2011; Fauzi, Svensson and Abdul Rahman 2010) and this itself is paradoxical as the TBL was intended to be an impact assessment model. Richards and Palmer (2010) challenge the validity of TBL conceptualisation, and argue that an impacts-based model as such does not adequately address issues of sustainability. Therefore, they argue for an extension of the TBL into the quadruple bottom line, adding progress 'P' (Richards and Palmer 2010) to the mix. This highlights the need to not only conserve resources, but also to restore them. Their work, though, has not been widely accepted and even criticised for over problematising key issues at hand. Others such as Dryzec (2005) remain sceptical too and suggest that the sustainability agenda's global popularity is based upon its 'rhetoric of reassurance', where economic prosperity, social justice and environmental preservation can co-exist in harmony. Kagawa (2007) supports this view, and sets the environment against social and economic issues, and not essentially as complimentary. Despite these critical views, the TBL remains the most widely adopted framework of current scholarship on sustainability. The TBL is the guiding principle behind the development of ISO 26000 standards, the Global Reporting Initiative framework and other theoretical constructs such as a sustainability balanced scorecard (Cheng et al. 2010). Therefore this paper chooses to use the TBL conceptualisation, though one of the three dimensions, namely the people (or social) aspect of TBL will be the main focus of the study.

People 'P' of sustainability

The social pillar of sustainability is a widely contested theme too, as there is little agreement on what social sustainability actually constitutes (Vanclay 2004). Social dimension has always been circumscribed by the other two, and is often viewed as a financial burden (Omann and Spangenberg 2002). Earlier texts on the social dimension provide a rather simplistic view, limiting it to employment creation and poverty alleviation (Gladwin et al. 1995; Elkington 1997). The 'people' facet of TBL is concerned with social justice for the local community where an organisation operates. In some texts, this 'P' is referred to as 'ethics' (Norman and McDonald 2004; Crand and Matten 2007) and is concerned with the moral code that businesses are expected to adhere to. This includes positively contributing to the growth of the local community through just and beneficial labour policies that encourage employment of competent locals, while ensuring that no sections of the community are marginalised, and policies that improve the general living standards. Community relations, education, training, lifelong learning, building social infrastructure are all key agendas under this pillar of sustainability (Omann and Spangenberg 2002; ISO 26000 2010). All these are aspects of business ethics that encourage mutually beneficial relationships between businesses and the local communities in which they operate. Global Reporting Initiative (2014) include a wide variety of stakeholders and issues within this pillar of sustainability, including fair labour practices, adherence with human rights, anti-corruption, ethical marketing and customer safety. Focus on the 'people' facet of TBL theory is especially necessary for hospitality entities because the hotel sector by nature is people intensive as people provide both the production capacity of hospitality goods and services (human capital) and are also the consumers of hospitality product (as guests). In addition, this dimension of sustainability discourse continues to be an underexplored research area. Hence, the social / people aspect of TBL is the foundation for this study.

Sustainability and the hospitality industry

There is an evident shift within business models of the global hospitality industry as the hotel sector is making strong efforts to minimise the damage due to its operations. Kazim (2007) argues that operators, especially those of luxury hotel chain properties, express concern for and interest in reducing the ecological footprints of their operations. A simple online search reveals sustainability plans and policies of major industry players such as Marriott International, the Carlson Rezidor group and Hilton hotels, among others. The prime focus of these reports does seem to be variable, with the Marriott group (2013) concerning themselves the most with social issues (human rights, employee welfare and customer satisfaction), while the Carlson Rezidor hotel group considers environment as its key agenda (Rezidor 2013). Shangri La Hotels (2013) view sustainability as maintaining luxury services, which need not 'cost the earth'. At the same time, Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Limited (2013), widely known for the Peninsula brand, consider corporate governance as the key to unlock business opportunities presented through sustainability. Sustainable management of hospitality operations has indeed become a strategic imperative as consumers and governments are increasingly demanding that hotels adopt a balanced approach while embracing responsible practices (Kovaljova and Chawla 2013). The balanced approach is not simply about environmental conservation but the entirety of the environment, including the ethics of hotel operations and its impacts on the community's economic and social wellbeing (Miao and Wei 2012). Evidently, the industry is progressively (albeit slowly!) turning green (Enz 2009). In fact, it is not uncommon that mission and value statements or even the product offerings in entirety are now built around the concept of sustainability, as is the case with Green House Hotel (UK), whose business principle is to 'spoil the guests without spoiling anything else'. Legrand et al. (2009) postulate that the hotel sector is one of the prime polluters and places very high demands on natural resources. It is therefore imperative that the sector does assume ownership of and responsibility for its impacts. The industry is making efforts, but is still less than strategic in its approach when dealing with issues of sustainability (Chawla in press). Many measures are a common part of hotel operations these days, including recycling, waste management, voluntary work, donations and other philanthropic activities, water saving technologies, staff development and local sourcing. However, all-inclusive bundling of services is a unique case, and therefore the focal point of this study.

Methodology

The predominance of positivist research traditions in hospitality research is mainly due to the fact that the industry does not have a well-founded research background. Much of the methodology used today is borrowed and based on natural science research whose main aim is to examine and predict behaviour and the general cause and effect nature of research problems (Bryman and Bell 2003). Indeed hospitality and leisure based research has been heavily criticised for following

positivist traditions, and not providing enough insights (Finn et al. 2000). This study, however, aims to investigate the social discourse of TBL and has chosen to adopt an interpretivist philosophical research tradition. Subjective issues within social sciences cannot be appropriately analysed using the rigid structure of positivism (Veal 2006; Walle 1997). By extension, this paper will adopt a qualitative focus. Qualitative research methods are especially useful in articulating the meaning that people attach to events they experience, and when striving to understand social processes in context (Zikmund et al. 2010). In general, a qualitative approach is warranted when the nature of research question requires an in-depth understanding of what is going on from the standpoint of the respondents. Social sciences, particularly hospitality have been challenged as being too quantitative and not providing enough insights into the issues (Riley and Love 2000), crucial for a study of this nature.

This paper adopts a case study strategy and Resort X was purposely chosen as it claims to be '100% super inclusive' making it a poster child for the all-inclusive system. Case studies are much favoured in tourism research as they allow focus on the complexities of social facts, enabling the researcher to gain deeper understanding of the context, the phenomena and the relationship between variables (Beeton 2005). It must be acknowledged here that this limits the external validity, and the results might only be indicative. Resort X employs 621 staff members in total, of which front-office agents were selected to participate in the study. This was done as they are in constant interaction with the guests, and therefore are bound to experience the impacts of the all-inclusive system first hand. Additionally, all respondents belonged to the local community where Resort X is located. A total of 45 agents were employed in the department in summer 2013, all of whom were included in the sample. As one of the researchers was employed at the resort at the time, collection of primary data was convenient and face-to-face interviews were conducted with all front-desk agents. According to Saunders et al. (2009), for any study to provide generalisable results with a high degree of confidence and a tolerable margin of error, a sample size of 30 and above is normally required and is assumed to produce a normal distribution of results. A pilot study was conducted with the training manager at Resort X and her intern assistant. It was largely successful and the respondents agreed that the questions were neither leading nor long and monotonous. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data collection method as the questions prepared offered a framework/guideline, but provided a possibility for further inquiries and a better understanding (Denscombe 2010). Summarising, coding, categorisation (Saunders et al. 2009) was the main analytical procedure. Themes and patterns were developed, and relationships were established based on emerging patterns. Verbatim quotes were included in the analysis to capture the voices of the respondents and to reduce researcher bias, thus making the findings more reliable. The emergent themes allowed for development of a conceptual framework, presented as Figure 1 in the next section.

In order to ensure reliability and validity constructs, the researcher provided structured but open-ended questions that were definite and concise. Pilot testing ensured that there were no issues of vagueness in the questions asked. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researchers flexibility to address main themes, but also to probe emerging issues in depth. This adds to the validity of findings too. The researchers chose to use the entire population to collect data as opposed to just a section of the population (sample), and therefore the findings are more representative.

Analysis and discussion

The interviews started with more general questions, assessing respondents' understanding of business ethics. Although many seemed rather unaware, the majority quoted appropriate synonyms, reflecting that they had a sound understanding of ethical responsibilities of a business. The most widely used terms to explain ethics in business were morals, responsibility, values, fairness, justice, and distinction between right and wrong. As literature establishes, business ethics imply welfare of the wider organisational stakeholders (Murphy et al. 2007). However, some participants refuted this rather simplistic understanding of this complex agenda, and highlighted the subjectivity of the matter. This is evident by quotes below:

But then who decides for us what is right or not?
It is not a very common practice today, is it?'

Clearly, there is increased awareness, and greater interest in such issues, as supported in the literature (Chawla, in press). However, far from being a straightforward agenda, the same has been problematised given the subjectivity of underlying issues. Subsequent discussions focussed on four key elements of people 'P' of the TBL – namely employment, social infrastructure, remuneration and discrimination. Each of these will now be discussed in detail.

Employment

The respondents presented a much divided view on this all-important agenda. Interviewees expressed their overwhelming support for the all-inclusive system for its capacity to support large-scale employment, given the very nature of business model. By extension, the all-inclusive mechanism was branded as ethical, as it supports livelihoods and income. This line of inquiry finds support in the ISO

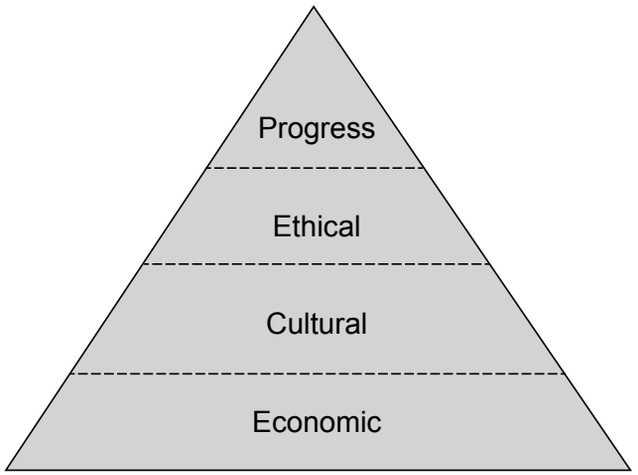

Figure 1: Conceptual model depicting four levels of the social aspect of sustainability

26000 (2010) sustainability standards too, as income generation and job creation are seen as the most positive socio-economic contributions of any business. However, further probing presented a very grim scenario, as participants voiced that the system was equally exploitative, as it did not really present developmental opportunities to the locals or promote entrepreneurship within the community (as guests really did not need to leave the resort). Some respondents expressed their views very strongly on the matter:

We are (still) treated as modern day, unworthy slaves.
They want us to remain like this, so they can continue exploiting us.

These statements are profound given Jamaica's past association with the slave trade, and demonstrate strong feelings, as it is evident that the nature of jobs offered (mostly low-level positions) can dent the pride and confidence of the locals. These issues have also been discussed extensively by Collins (2000), who argues that employment must improve human life. People attach meaning to their lives through their work, and are increasingly looking for association of self-worth through their jobs (Smola and Sutton 2002). In this respect, the all-inclusive system seems to be antithetical to principles of ethics and sustainability.

Social infrastructure

As was the case with employment related questions, the respondents confirmed that the community has benefitted through Resort X's investments into social infrastructure. These include developing and maintaining roads (mostly for the benefit of the visitors, but are also used by the locals), providing electricity and funding schools. Particularly noteworthy are some initiatives such as Resort X Foundation, which collects donations from guests and invests these to provide free education to children from the local parish. Bramwell (2004) has reported similar findings, as the author confirms that all-inclusive tourism has brought some benefits to Jamaica. The author even controversially suggests that the benefits balance out the problems associated with the nature of all-inclusive travel. Omann and Spangenberg (2002) also argue that building social infrastructure, thereby improving quality of life, is a key concern for any socially responsible organisation. However, some respondents held an opposing view, and many opined that they were robbed of their tips and gratuities, under the pretext of social infrastructure development. The Foundation, in their view was used as a smokescreen, and the resort itself took no interest or responsibility to this cause. Instead, all funds were drawn from either guests or employees. Some particularly strong opinions emerged, as respondents retorted:

They simply choose to harness all such resources and keep it for themselves.
They strip you of your tips in the name of charity.

The quotes above indicate a clear gap as far as this dimension of sustainability is concerned.

Remuneration

The discussions took increasingly negative turn, as the topic of remuneration came up. The questions revoked strong (mostly negative) reactions from the respondents. Despite the fact that Resort X is a key employer in the area, the all-inclusive system fared worst on this indicator, as a majority of respondents felt that the system was very unfair and unethical. The analysis reflects that three prime concerns were voiced in terms of remuneration, these being poor wages, prohibition of tipping and substandard commissions. As tips are typically part of the hotel price, participants felt that their hard work was under rewarded in this mechanism.

It hoards all the money we slave so hard for.
The system steals from us.

Key indicators of socio-economic aspect of sustainability as per GRI (2014) reporting guidelines are fair wages and compensation and moral labour practices. In essence, the all-inclusive mechanism does not promote any of these.

Discrimination

Friction was even more evident as issues concerning discrimination were discussed. The respondents univocally expressed their concerns on this matter, and felt that the system encouraged a glass ceiling, as the locals were only hired at low level positions, and the intention was to keep them in these subservient positions.

It [all-inclusive system] does not allow us to be promoted. Those positions are only for foreigners.
The resort is reclusive.

Others freely expressed that as the idea behind the all-inclusive agenda is to keep the money in the hotel, the locals did not really benefit as the opportunity to provide services to the tourists did not exist. These quotes reflect a clear lack of integration with the local community, and this is a prominent feature of the all-inclusive system. Crand and Matten (2007) postulate that an ethical organisation must ensure that none of the stakeholders are marginalised, and that employment (primary, secondary and tertiary) and entrepreneurship opportunities are created and supported. Empirical evidence suggests that the all-inclusive system works against these principles of social sustainability.

Although cultural issues were not explicitly discussed through the interviews, there were overtones within most discussions, and hence this is an important finding that will be elaborated upon in the next section. This finding is hardly surprising, as UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) argues that cultures are the fourth pillar of sustainable development. To summarise, conflicting views and discussions presented above clearly demonstrate that the impending issues concerning the people dimension of TBL can be viewed from competing perspectives. Our empirical findings suggest a lack of balance between varied aspects of the social dimension of sustainability.

Discussion

Based on the analysis presented above, it is evident that the respondents are much divided in their views. In their evaluation, by virtue of providing mass employment due to the service style of all-inclusive resorts, the system can be judged as ethical (ISO 26000 2010). However, other issues extend the discourse further, and the ethical dealings of the all-inclusive system have been questioned. Based on the issued discussed and the reactions of respondents, this paper offers a conceptual viewpoint (please refer to Figure 1), while presenting a hierarchical structure for articulating social issues, as investigated through the lens of people P of the TBL. The ordering

is reflective of the weighting respondents attached to each of these issues. The bottom two layers can be articulated as business imperatives, and the top two reflect the greater expectations the community has from the business. The four levels must not be viewed as exclusive (as indicated by dotted lines), and clear overlaps will be evident.

At the base of the pyramid, socio-economic dimension has been placed, as respondents attach great importance to these. Economic welfare is critical, as respondents place high value on provision of employment, especially in a remote, under developed area. This is a key agenda, and provision of employment itself is seen as ethical and responsible behaviour. However, it is crucial that all-inclusive resorts consider not only provision of jobs as important, but also the type of employment offered, and the level at which locals are employed (also supported in Chawla, in press). Provision of competitive wages and remuneration, capable of supporting basic needs and providing better standards of living must be a part of ethical business dealings. Lastly, jobs must be meaningful, and not degrading. The socio-economic dimension must be an integral part of the business strategy (GRI 2013).

Cultural issues have been depicted on the second level of the pyramid, as indigenous communities attach great importance to their cultures. UNESCO (2001) supports this finding, and places culture as an integral dimension of sustainability. Werbach (2009) advocates this view too, and argues that true sustainability has four coequal components – the triple bottom line and cultures. Though discussions about cultures were not an agenda this study aimed to pursue, it emerged as a key theme through discussions with participants. The respondents not only value and take pride in their culture, but are also keen to preserve it. A few respondents believe that all-inclusive resorts serve this dimension rather well, as the resorts try hard to contain tourists within the confines of the property itself, and therefore the local community is not impacted by their foreign way of life. However, most participants were extremely critical, and opined that the all-inclusive system posed a serious threat to the socio-cultural fabric of the destination. Quotes from respondents presented below demonstrate this:

> *It has tainted our culture. We all feel more Westernised.*
>
> *Guests do not learn anything from the locals.*
>
> *There is no cultural exchange.*
>
> *I've said it [Jamaican greeting] so many times to the guests, that it no longer feels culturally significant to me.*
>
> *… the longer I work here, the more I feel like I'm losing my culture. And to hear the guests repeating our words with such disregard!*

The all-inclusive system seems to prey on the desperation of the locals to find employment, while many aspects of their work is in conflict with the local Jamaican culture and way of life. An ethical organisation must be sensitive to these issues, and must provide for culturally meaningful work.

Based on responses from participants, ethical concerns occupy the third level of the pyramid. Here, the concerns reflect wider expectations employees have from hospitality enterprises (Carroll 1991). Hotel businesses could go the extra mile to demonstrate their involvement in the community (Valor 2005). Typically, anti-discrimination policies would feature in the ethical dimension (for instance, restricted access to the beach and the glass ceiling were some of the key concerns voiced by respondents). Supporting infrastructure within the local area is another expectation the respondents have from the management. Respondents also expressed their concerns about environmental degradation as a direct consequence of tourism-related activities, and expect managers to assume responsibility for the same. Overdevelopment is a prime concern, as resorts aim to build all possible facilities to better market the all-inclusive package. Communities view themselves as collective shareholders within the natural capital, and businesses must be willing to accept their responsibility in this regard. Branco and Rodrigues (2007) support these findings, as the authors argue that such social issues deserve moral consideration.

At the highest level of the pyramid, progress-related issues have been depicted, as the respondents clearly indicated that they do not only expect Resort X to manage themselves ethically, but also to contribute to social mobility (also refer to Richards and Palmer 2010). This could be achieved, for instance, through supporting local entrepreneurship by creating a supply chain within the community. Developmental opportunities may also be created within the company by providing training, and offering suitable promotions to the locals, thereby affording them a better quality of life. In addition, welfare could also be invested in by supporting social infrastructure such as health and education. At this level, the organisation must be willing to make contributions to the welfare of the community, provide opportunities for lifelong learning and help create a positive image for the destination as a whole, as this can further stimulate growth for all concerned stakeholders. It must again be highlighted that these four levels depicted in the model are not mutually exclusive, and many critical issues could rightfully be placed at multiple levels.

Conclusions

Willard (2002) argues that the TBL stipulates that organisations conduct their business in a manner inclined towards a reciprocal social structure, in which the wellbeing of corporate, labour and other stakeholder interests are interdependent. However, this case study demonstrates that this does not seem to be the case with all-inclusives. This business model has often been criticised from a social responsibility perspective. The system has been responsible for promoting mass tourism and uncontrolled overdevelopment in many places. However, it is becoming increasingly evident that this needs to change. It is time that the sector willingly embraces responsibility in response to greater stakeholder expectations. As is evident through this research, employees are not only pressurising businesses to manage themselves ecologically, but also to assume social responsibility (Werhane and Freeman 1999). The results indicate that the social dimension of sustainability is a complex agenda. The hospitality sector needs to adopt a strategic and holistic view of social responsibility, and this must be a prime business focus. The hierarchical model presented earlier also indicates that key stakeholders have expectations from business at various levels, and this must be a prime concern in strategy making. The way forward for the industry is to create shared value (Porter and Kramer 2011) for its stakeholders; the future viability of the industry is grounded in how well this is achieved.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

The paper adopts a case study approach and this is a key limitation. A larger-scale study would be required to test the validity of the conceptual model presented above. Likewise, primary data has been collected from only one group of stakeholders. Future research in this discipline could adopt a multiple stakeholder approach. This paper adopts a purely qualitative position, and there is scope for future researchers to adopt a quantitative approach to testing the main findings.

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