

Small Business Participation in Sustainable Tourism Certification:
Internal and External Influences

by

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ABSTRACT

As the number of travelers around the world grows, the importance of managing tourism destinations in a sustainable manner becomes increasingly important. Sustainable tourism has long been discussed as necessary for managing tourism responsibly, yet adoption of sustainable strategies and operationalization has been slow. Initiatives and programs often focus on environmental components of sustainability and the role of large companies. Certification programs are one way in which destinations are operationalizing community-wide sustainable tourism and small businesses are engaging in sustainability initiatives and recognition.

Using social cognitive theory as the research framework, this study examined internal and external motives and their influence on small business participation in sustainable tourism certification and sustainability practices. Incentives for behavior, modeling of other businesses, company values, and self-efficacy were examined as motives and barriers. Regression analysis and independent samples t-tests were used to examine statistical relationships.

This study partnered with the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) to study businesses that hold Adventure Green Alaska sustainable tourism certification or are viewed as prospects for certification. From a list of 77, 44 Alaska tourism businesses responded to an online questionnaire to participate in this study. Businesses were categorized into those with certification ($n = 31$) and those without ($n=13$). Results indicated participation in sustainability practices to be higher among certified businesses than non-certified. Internal motives indicated to be more significant than external motives for participation in sustainable practices and certification. Company values were of high

importance to both certified and non-certified businesses in implementing sustainable practices and certification. Consumer interest and marketing benefits were important incentives for participation in sustainability strategies. These findings have implications for tourism industry associations and organizations interested in the operationalization and development of sustainable tourism. This study is expected to aid in marketing and retention efforts for sustainable tourism certification programs, as well as future direction for development of sustainable tourism certification.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over one billion people are traveling around the globe and that number continues to rise, making travel one of the largest industries in the world (United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2015b). The positive impacts travel can have on communities and global relations are numerous. Economic growth for communities, cultural exchange, knowledge sharing, internal growth, and protection of historical and natural treasures, are a sampling of the documented benefits (Bricker, Black, & Cottrell, 2012; McCool & Bosak, 2015; Mill & Morrison, 1998). Along with the many positive impacts, travel has been known to bring negative effects. Problems such as accumulation of waste, crowding, carbon emissions, and loss of cultural identity are affecting communities and destinations around the globe (Bricker et al., 2012; Dunk, Gillespie, & MacLeod, 2016; McDowall, 2016). For example, it is estimated that 4.8 million tons of solid waste are produced by tourists each year, in excess of the amount of waste produced while at home (McDowall, 2016). Clean-up efforts strain limited community resources and can make attractions, such as beaches, uninviting. Iconic destinations, such as Venice, fear loss of cultural identity from the influx of tourists and residents moving out (Worrall, 2016). Communities unable to adequately address the challenges of tourism, face not only economic loss, but environmental and cultural damage, which can devastate the tourism product altogether (Byrd, 2007). To keep communities vibrant and attractive to both visitors and residents, management of tourism requires forethought, partnerships, and strategies (Bricker et al., 2012; Byrd, 2007; McCool & Bosak, 2015; Soteriou & Coccossis, 2010).

Principles of sustainable tourism seek to minimize the negative affects of tourism to environment and society, while maximizing positive economic impact to host communities (Bricker et al., 2012). As the number of travelers around the world grows, the importance of managing tourism destinations in a sustainable manner becomes increasingly important (Black & Crabtree, 2007; Bryd, 2007). Sustainable tourism has long been discussed as necessary for managing tourism responsibly, yet adoption and implementation of sustainable strategies has been slow as discrepancies exist in defining and operationalizing it (Ahn, Lee, & Shafer, 2002; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006, McCool & Bosak, 2015).

For sustainable tourism to be successful, stakeholders must be active participants and be engaged in the destination (Angelkova, Koteski, Jakovlev, & Mitrevska, 2012; Bregoli, 2013; Bricker et al., 2012; Byrd, 2007; Sheldon & Park, 2011). In addition to residents, consumers, and government officials, stakeholders invested in the success of tourism include any business affected by tourism, such as tour operators, lodging facilities, attractions and recreation facilities, destination management and marketing organizations, and transportation providers (Byrd, 2007). Reducing energy and water consumption, employing local community members, commissioning local artists, responsibly sourcing food, volunteering in the community, and measuring consumer interest in sustainability are some ways in which tourism businesses are implementing sustainable practices (Levy & Park, 2011; Martinez, Perez, & del Bosque, 2013; Sheldon & Park, 2011; Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., 2015). Destination management and marketing organizations create partnerships among these tourism providers, establish a cohesive brand for a destination, and educate the community of

pertinent developments for continued success of tourism. Certification programs are an approach destinations are utilizing to operationalize sustainability and implement sustainable tourism among partners in tourism (Font & Harris, 2004).

Many motives have been shown to influence a business to implement sustainable practices and/or certification. Internal motives, such as knowledge of sustainable tourism, values of the company (or company decision makers), and time involved are factors internal to a company. Belief in company (or decision maker) abilities to successfully implement sustainable practices is another motive, known as self-efficacy (Font, Garay, & Jones, 2016a; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Motives external to a company can also influence decision making regarding implementing sustainable practices and/or certification. External motives can involve various entities including consumers, competing businesses, and industry associations. Observing other businesses in implementing sustainable practices can be a way to learn sustainable behavior. This is known as modeling. Incentives for behavior must be present and include topics such as customer interest, marketing benefits, and obtaining competitive advantage (Font et al., 2016a; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Sustainable tourism certification brings a destination wide, even global, tool to implement sustainability and create consistent standards across the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism certification involves meeting a minimum criterion regarding environmental, sociocultural, and economic business practices. In return, companies potentially gain marketing and branding benefits, and competitive advantage over non-certified businesses (Black, 2012; Font & Harris, 2004; Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), 2016a). Reasons for participation in certification programs, barriers to

participation, and environmental impact have been studied in regards to certification programs (Font et al., 2016a; Rivera & De Leon, 2004; Sampaio, Thomas, & Font, 2012a). Yet, few address the triple bottom line, focusing instead on primarily environmental certification standards (Font & Harris, 2004; Jarvis, Weeden, & Simcock, 2010; Perusquia et al., 2014). Variance in communities and issues affecting destinations warrants further research into motives for participation and retention in sustainable tourism certification in a variety of locations. Small to medium-size businesses face unique factors to implementation of new initiatives, such as meeting sustainable tourism certification standards (Sampaio et al., 2012a). Social cognitive theory presents a framework useful for investigating internal motives of business owners and managers, as well as external environmental motives, and their influence on sustainable tourism behavior.

Problem Statement

This study was aimed at understanding the motives of small businesses to participate in sustainable tourism certification and sustainable practices. This study approached sustainability from the holistic, three pillars of environment, society/culture, and economy. Social cognitive theory presents a triadic model relating internal factors, external factors, and behavior, and provided a framework to garner the extent to which participation in sustainable tourism certification and sustainable practices is motivated by internal or external factors. Social cognitive theory was the framework used to investigate businesses' external motives to implement sustainable practices and certification, including incentives and modeling of other tourism business, as well as internal motives and barriers, including company values and perceived abilities (self-efficacy).

Purpose Statement

This study is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding sustainable tourism, destination sustainable tourism initiatives, voluntary certification, and business motives regarding sustainable tourism certification. The study is expected to aid in marketing and retention efforts for sustainable tourism certification programs, as well as future direction for development of sustainable tourism certification.

This study would be of interest to destination marketers, those interested in sustainable tourism and development, and those interested in voluntary certification programs. Owners and managers of small businesses interested in sustainable tourism initiatives would also find this study useful. Entities interested in cultivating sustainable travel including destination marketing organizations, community officials, tourism related businesses, online travel booking companies, and tour guides may also find this study useful. Outcomes of this research could be utilized to progress sustainable tourism, cultivate sustainable businesses, and assist destinations in sustainability initiatives and certification. Those interested in research on sustainable tourism, small businesses, certification programs, and destination marketing would find this study of use for guidance in developing business engagement and understanding business motives for certification.

Research Questions

1. How do sustainability practices vary among small businesses that are certified in sustainable tourism and those that are not certified?
2. To what extent do internal and external motives affect small business participation/potential participation in sustainable tourism certification and practices?
 - a. To what extent are incentives a motivational factor for implementation of sustainable practices and certification?
 - b. To what extent is modeling sustainable behavior a motivational factor for implementation of sustainable tourism practices and certification?
 - c. To what extent are company values a motivational factor for implementation of sustainable tourism practices and certification?
 - d. To what extent are self-efficacy beliefs important in motivating implementation of sustainable tourism practices and certification?

Delimitations

To add to academic literature and research on sustainable tourism the researcher has delimited the study. Choice of location is purposive.

1. Research on statewide sustainable tourism certification is limited, therefore the study population was intentionally limited to the fifty United States.
2. The researcher has chosen to concentrate on a destination whose tourism product fully represents the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, sociocultural, and economic. Environment, culture, and local businesses are

central to the tourism product of Alaska. All three of these pillars in Alaska face challenges from tourism and outside influences, such as climate change, that threaten the integrity of Alaska's tourism product.

3. To add to the literature on small to medium-size businesses' motives for sustainable tourism certification, Alaska presented a population to meet this objective.
4. The tourism organization plans to update the criteria for sustainable tourism certification, which made this location ripe for research. Results will inform current discussions for development of the certification program.

Limitations

This study comes with certain limitations.

1. Population sample size resulted in high standard errors in the non-certified group, which affected statistical analysis and confidence intervals.
2. The small sample size led to bivariate analysis and the use of many t-tests, as advance statistical testing could not be performed.
3. Respondents were likely to be businesses interested/involved in sustainable tourism and certification. Non-certified businesses were less willing to respond than certified businesses.
4. Because one statewide association which represents a destination was studied, findings may change by location and may be a topic for further research.
5. The researcher made every effort to be objective and minimize biases.

However, the researcher's motivation for this study comes from an interest in supporting the principles of sustainable tourism.

6. Bandura's social cognitive theory is often tested in a controlled setting. This research was a survey completed in an uncontrolled or natural setting and may not have controlled for internal and external influences.

Definition of Terms

Adventure Green Alaska (AGA) – voluntary, fee-based sustainable tourism certification program for Alaska tourism businesses meeting minimum criteria regarding environmental, sociocultural, and economic business practices (Adventure Green Alaska (AGA), 2016).

Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) – tourism industry organization promoting Alaska as a visitor destination, communicating the economic impact of tourism to the state, and maintaining a triple bottom line approach (Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), 2016a).

Certification (B) – “a voluntary procedure that sets, assesses, monitors and gives written assurance that a business, product, process, service or management system conforms to a specific requirement” (Black & Crabtree, 2007). A fee may be involved to achieve certification. Certifications come in the form of self-assessed evaluation or second/third party audit. Use of a branded logo is often provided upon obtaining certification (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) & United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2005). Participation in certification was used as a behavior (B) in this study.

Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) – an organization establishing and managing global sustainable tourism standards, educating stakeholders, and encouraging increased use of sustainable practices. The only sustainable tourism accreditation entity in the travel and tourism sector (GSTC, 2016a).

Incentives (IC) – Factors that lead a subject to practice a specific behavior, also known as motivational factors (Davidson & Davidson, 2003). Consumer demand, financial gain, marketing benefits, and networking opportunities are examples of potential incentives that may lead to sustainable tourism actions (Font et al., 2016a).

Modeling (M) – A form of observational learning in which the subject observes the behavior of another, and then performs the task themselves. There must be factors present that lead the subject to practice the behavior, or incentives. Modeling is a component of external factors as explained in Bandura's social cognitive theory (Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

Motivation – reason(s) for behaving in a certain way or taking certain action (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Self-efficacy (S) – one’s beliefs in their own abilities to perform or achieve a task (Bandura, 1986).

Social cognitive theory – a theory explaining the triadic relationship between behavior, internal factors, and external factors (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Internal factors (IT) – As defined by Bandura (1986), internal (and cognitive) factors include one’s beliefs in their own abilities (self-efficacy), internal values, knowledge, and morals. Internal factors have a triadic relationship with external (environmental) factors and behavior in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). What is referred to here as internal factors, is referred to as personal factors by Bandura and applies to an individual. For the purposes of this study, internal factors refer to factors internal to a business setting. As applied to sustainable tourism, internal factors include one’s knowledge of sustainable tourism, their belief in their own capability to implement sustainable practices and achieve success, and internal value placed on sustainability.

External factors (E) – As defined by Bandura (1986), external (environmental) factors are external to the individual. External factors have a triadic relationship with internal factors and behavior in social cognitive theory. External factors reflect modeling and learning behavior from others, as well as motivational incentives (Bandura, 1986). As applied to sustainable tourism, external factors include consumer desire for sustainability, communications with destination management organization, observing other businesses implement sustainable tourism, and staff input.

Sustainability practices (B) – behaviors of a business that contribute to the three pillars (environment, society/culture, and economy) of sustainable tourism. Includes such actions as decreasing energy and water use, decreasing waste, encouraging customers to be environmentally friendly, employing locals, informing visitors of local attractions and culture, and supporting the local community (Font et al., 2016a). Sustainability practices were used as a behavior (B) in this study.

Sustainable tourism – As defined by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2005), “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

Values (V) – the importance or worth placed on a behavior, idea, place, living being, etc. Included as an internal factor in social cognitive theory (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a review of literature and background information on the following topics: (1) Sustainable Tourism, (2) Social Cognitive Theory, (3) Tourism Certification, and (4) Alaska Tourism Industry.

Sustainable Tourism

The origins of sustainable tourism, in essence, begin with discussions of sustainable development. Modern-time origins of sustainable development are largely understood to have started in the last thirty years. Several reports and commissions have addressed sustainable development. Many authors point to the release of Our Common Future, or The Brundtland Report, by the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010; To & Tang, 2014) as the beginning of sustainable development becoming an important topic of discussion. The Brundtland Report was written to address global environmental concerns and states:

“Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future” (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Since the release of The Brundtland Report, sustainable development has been applied to a number of industries, including tourism. Swarbrooke (1999) indicates as sustainable tourism began to be discussed, terms such as green tourism were more frequently used. Since then, some have used other terms interchangeably with sustainable tourism. Words such as ecotourism, sustainable development in tourism, and green

tourism are often used in place of sustainable tourism (Butler, 1999). Sustainable tourism has by some been understood to mean sustaining the industry, as opposed to responsibly managing tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010). Berno and Bricker (2001) identify sustainable tourism as both sustaining the industry, as well as being sensitive to sustaining the resources used for tourism. The variance in words and definitions used can cause confusion with consumers, making it difficult to identify sustainable behaviors (Jenkins & Schröder, 2013). The World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as: “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005).

The term sustainable tourism can, in itself, seem paradoxical (Clarke, 1997). How can an industry contributing to carbon emissions, creating strain on resources, and infringing on communities claim to be sustainable? Travel is embedded in society and offers numerous positive contributions. There are no indications of travel diminishing; therefore, managing it sustainably is critical for current and future quality of life (Byrd, 2007). As a common understanding of sustainable tourism is adopted, it must be recognized communities vary in the challenges they face and implementation will vary from community to community. Sustainable tourism will forever be an evolving construct. As globalization, new technologies, innovations in business, and other developments arise, they will influence the course of actions needed for sustainability (McCool & Bosak, 2015).

Sustainable tourism has been discussed and researched from many angles. Higgins-Desbiolles (2010) refers to tourism as being hedonistic; to the growing trend of

people feeling entitled to the right to travel, rather than it being a luxury; and to consumerism and its effect on communities. Higgins-Desbiolles (2010) references sustainable tourism from the vantage point of the misuse of cultures, the environment and people in order to create a tourism product. While the discussion concentrates on developing countries, the concerns are important for all destinations and communities. Developing a product to attract visitors, while keeping the integrity of the people, culture and environment is vital. Utilizing resources for visitors, yet not taking away from the quality of life or needs of the host need to be taken into consideration (Dumitru & Gavrilă, 2014). Sustainability offers an opportunity to support local people, resources, culture and the integrity of a destination (Angelkova et al., 2012). Consumers have a role in cultivating sustainability with their attitudes and behaviors. Quality over quantity in growth is encouraged, as well as deeper experiences with destinations (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010).

As the number of tourists in the world grows, the importance of understanding sustainable tourism and implementing sustainable practices grows. The dissemination of accurate information regarding sustainable behaviors to consumers is imperative, yet it is also consumers that can drive businesses to be sustainable (Honey, 2002). In September 2015, world leaders of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations (UN), n.d.). The 2030 Agenda contains 17 global development goals that speak to the “universal need for development that works for all people” (UN, n.d.), including reducing inequality, ensuring sustainable consumption, and combating climate change (UNWTO, 2015a).

As one of the largest industries in the world, tourism's ability to contribute to these goals is apparent, but will require implementation strategies (UNWTO, 2015a). The United Nations has declared 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, recognizing the impacts of tourism and the potential for the tourism industry to contribute to sustainable development goals. Aims for the year will be to "raise awareness on the contribution of sustainable tourism to development among public and private sector decision-makers and the public, while mobilizing all stakeholders to work together in making tourism a catalyst for positive change" (UNWTO, n.d.). In addition to assisting change in policy and consumer behavior, change in business practices will also be encouraged (UNWTO, n.d.).

Sustainability is being operationalized in a variety of ways in the tourism industry (McCool & Bosak, 2015). Sustainable Travel International has partnered with tour operator G Adventures to offer an online course for consumers. This course educates consumers on responsible travel choices by guiding them through trip planning, in-destination, and post-trip decisions a traveler is likely to encounter (G Adventures, 2016). Tourism Cares coordinates annual volunteer events for tourism professionals to participate in clean-up and other city projects to improve destinations. In addition, they have implemented the Good Travels Advisor program, an online course to educate travel agents on consumers' growing interest in responsible travel, specifically volunteer and giving options (Tourism Cares, 2016). TreadRight Foundation, The Travel Corporation, and Me to We partnered to launch immersive volunteer trips that directly involve travelers in sustainable development in communities (TreadRight Foundation, 2016).

Certification programs are another way in which sustainable tourism is being operationalized (Font et al., 2016a; Jarvis et al., 2010). Certification provides criteria to standardize sustainability indicators and coordinate strategy among diverse businesses (Black, 2012). Research has been conducted on the operationalization of sustainable tourism, yet continued research is needed to examine the impact, successes, and challenges of programs, as well as the viability for implementation in differing destinations (McCool & Bosak, 2015). Understanding how tourism stakeholders operationalize sustainability and developing the operationalization of sustainability will factor into tourism's role in sustainable development goals.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory presents a triangulated framework relevant to understanding motivation and behavior towards sustainable tourism certification. An early indicator of the directionality of social cognitive theory starts with the bobo doll experiment, conducted by Albert Bandura in 1961. In the experiment, children observed adults either treating a bobo doll violently or docilely. The children's behavior towards a bobo doll was then observed. Results found the children who observed adults behaving violently toward the doll also behaved violently, whereas those who observed docile behavior were likely to behave docilely (Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

Years later, in 1977, Albert Bandura introduced his idea of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is one's beliefs in their own abilities to perform or achieve a task. One's self-efficacy affects cognitive, motivational, emotional and decisional states. Life choices, goals set for oneself, ability to cope with stress, as well as overall outlook on life can be explained by one's self-efficacy. Bandura states self-efficacy is the "foundation of human

motivation and accomplishment” (Davidson & Davidson, 2003). Tools to build positive views of one’s abilities include overcoming obstacles, learning from mistakes, and experiencing successes which builds confidence (Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

Bandura went on to develop social learning theory which accounts for the social context apparent in knowledge and behavioral development. Building on social learning theory, Bandura presented social cognitive theory in the 1980’s (Davidson & Davidson, 2003). Social cognitive theory presents relationships between behavior, cognitive and internal factors, and the external environment. Each is depicted with having a reciprocal influence on the other, though with varying degrees. As Bandura states, we are “producers and products of our environment” (Davidson & Davidson, 2003). Figure 1 portrays a graphic representation of social cognitive theory (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

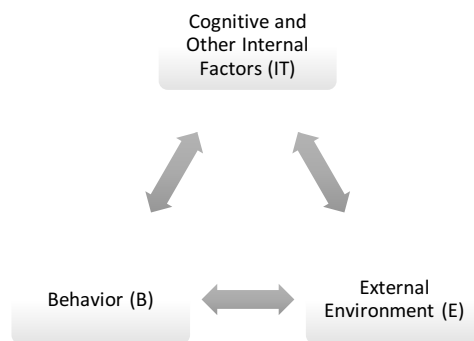


Figure 1: Schematization of the Relations among Behavior (B), Cognitive and other Internal Factors (IT), and the External Environment (E) (Wood & Bandura, 1989)

Social cognitive theory explains the interplay between individuals and the environment, accounting for individuals having influence on themselves and their surroundings, and not solely being products of the environment in which they live. Bandura explains learning as having modeling and imitation aspects, rather than occurring from direct experience alone. Steps involved in observational learning include:

the subject paying attention while observing; the subject performing the task themselves; and finally, there must be factors present that lead the subject to practice the behavior, or incentives. Incentives can also be referred to as motivating factors (Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

Bandura's triadic model of social cognitive theory accounts for learning through observation and modeling of behavior. Psychological theories developed prior to social cognitive theory often provided a linear model of behavior and placed the influence of behavior either entirely within the individual or solely on the environment, such as works of Freud and B.F. Skinner (Bandura, 1986; Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

Self-efficacy and modeling play large roles in Bandura's social cognitive theory. Self-regulation and moral disengagement are other terms which come into play. Self-regulation says humans are able to thoughtfully plan their lives and chose to do activities which bring them a sense of self-worth and satisfaction, and follow their moral standards (Davidson & Davidson, 2003). Moral disengagement explains humans attempt to behave in line with their moral standards, but demonstrate disengagement from their daily moral affirmations when actions appear to be necessary for a greater moral purpose. Going to war is an example of this. Killing is generally not morally accepted, but going to war to protect a valued cause may display a higher moral standard necessitating killing. Moral disengagement can take shape by sharing responsibility amongst a group or placing responsibility entirely onto others, so an individual can account for their detour from their moral standards (Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

As with most theories, criticisms are to be found. Critics of social cognitive theory point to the broad nature of the theory and loose relationship dynamics between

the person, environment, and behavior. Responses to social cognitive theory question the lack of biological factors in influencing behavior. Behavior changes through time, some argue, are not represented (Boundless, 2016). Vancouver (2012) speaks to self-efficacy saying Bandura's research does not account for positive and negative self-efficacy, and that it describes, rather than explains. Cowan (2006) points out contradictions Bandura has penned throughout the years regarding self-efficacy.

Social cognitive theory has been studied in fields such as communications, organizational management and work place motivation, education, virtual communities, health, and psychology (Bandura, 1998; Bandura, 2001; Dong & Yang, 2009; Park et al., 2016; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Social cognitive theory has been used to study sustainability, however, with limited applications (Font et al., 2016a; Lin & Hsu, 2015; Sampaio, Thomas, & Font, 2012b). Font, Garay, and Jones (2016a) use social cognitive theory to research motives for sustainable tourism behaviors and sustainability empathy. The authors indicate choosing sustainability actions can stem from an individual's knowledge base and their perceived ability to implement said behavior. Environmental and outside influences are examined to create the triangulated framework of social cognitive theory. As their research revolves around sustainability empathy, the authors cite connection to a place, the people and environment as an indicator of empathy (Font et al., 2016a). Lin and Hsu (2015) examine the consumer side of "green" choices. Utilizing social cognitive theory, they investigate external and internal factors, and outcome expectations to guide behavior, focusing in on ethics and self-efficacy's influence (Lin & Hsu, 2015).

Applying Bandura's social cognitive theory to motivation and retention in sustainable tourism certification provides a framework pertinent to accounting for the internal and external factors affecting small business owners' decision making process. In small businesses, decisions are motivated by a number of factors: cost, time in implementing, worldview, knowledge, and marketability, among others (Font et al., 2016a; Sampaio et al., 2012b). A small business owner's view of themselves as being able to implement sustainability has been shown to have an impact on certification participation (Sampaio et al., 2012b). Whether a business owner trusts their understanding of sustainable tourism or is motivated to learn more about it factors into participation (Font et al., 2016a). Both points represent self-efficacy and internal factors. External factors for participation in sustainable tourism certification can include: whether consumers prefer to purchase from sustainable businesses; one business observing another business participate and seeing the impact it has on business; communications with certification administrator which seek to educate and incentivize; staff input; and environmental and cultural changes in the community.

Tourism Certification

Certifications provide acknowledgment of having met a set of standards or indicators (Black, 2012; Honey, 2002; UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). They are intended to provide an indication of reliability and create transparency in product quality or business practices. Certifications provide a benchmark for businesses, provide consumers information to help in purchase decision making, and create transparency with stakeholders (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). Certification programs exist in a multitude of industries and have been around for centuries.

In the tourism industry, certification programs regarding health and safety, environmental regulations, and quality assurance, among other business guidelines exist (Honey, 2002; UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). Certification programs are regulated in a variety of ways. Some are self-assessed, meaning the business applying oversees decision making for compliance, and no second or third party audit occurs. Other programs, such as Global Sustainable Tourism Council Certified require second or third party audits to assure requirements are being met (GSTC, 2016a). Auditing strengthens certification as it brings an impartial party to ensure certification criteria is achieved (Black, 2012; UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). A time component is often included with certification, as a renewal process occurs once a year, once every two years, or as otherwise designated (Honey, 2002). A fee is generally involved for participation in certification. Certification programs are known to be implemented for reasons such as consumer interest, going beyond government regulations, getting ahead of government regulations, and establishing standardization of practices (Black, 2012; Jarvis et al., 2010).

Niches within the tourism industry have, or endorse, certification programs specific to their commerce. Accommodation providers have been early adopters of certification programs. States across the nation have green lodging certification programs, such as Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association's Certified Green, Florida's Green Lodging program, and California's Green Lodging program. TripAdvisor's GreenLeaders Programme utilizes the image of a green leaf to identify hotels and B&Bs with environmentally friendly practices (TripAdvisor LLC, 2016). One reason for hotel certification being largely adopted may be the large environmental impact of hotel operations (Dunk et al., 2016; Yu, 2013). Additionally, organizations like the Green

Restaurant Association and Green Meeting Industry Council encourage certification of restaurants and meeting venues respectively. Ecotourism certifications focus on nature-based and environmental criteria. Certifications have largely concentrated on environmental components of sustainability. Research regarding certification programs often concentrate on the environmental aspects of sustainability, rather than the triple bottom line approach (Font & Harris, 2004; Sampaio et al., 2012a).

Certifications vary by the type of business. But, consumers first choice in travel is often the destination, which is then followed by choosing lodging, transportation, activities, and other itinerary details (Jun, Vogt, & MacKay, 2007; Stewart & Vogt, 1999). Destination marketing or management organizations, as well as sustainability organizations, are educating stakeholders about sustainable tourism and developing certification programs. Organizations such as these create a network and cohesion among varying types of businesses (Black, 2012; Byrd, 2007). Integrating multiple types of organizations into a destination's sustainability framework requires further thought, as different types of businesses face distinctive challenges and have diverse operation aspects to consider. Applying certification across a destination presents a larger challenge, as criteria must account for all types of businesses for which participation is available (Honey, 2002).

Sustainable tourism certification is one tool in which destinations and the tourism industry are operationalizing sustainability (McCool & Bosak, 2015). In *Sustainable Tourism & the Millennium Development Goals*, Black (2012) discusses tourism as being able to contribute to Millennium Development Goal 8 regarding the development of global partnerships. Certification programs are one way in which the tourism industry is

building partnerships (Black, 2012). Sustainable tourism certification assesses environmental, social, and economic factors of business operations (Honey, 2002). Certification provides a means to provide transparency with consumers and the supply chain, assess oneself against market competitors (Font, 2002; McCool & Bosak, 2015), and raise standards within an industry (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). Honey (2002), notes all tourism certifications are voluntary. Dunk et al. (2016) suggest the Scottish Government will be requiring entry level certification of any business wanting to work with VisitScotland.

Over 100 tourism certifications exist around the world. The majority are European based and a handful are global programs (Honey, 2002). Interest in, and the number of, sustainable tourism certification programs is growing, yet academic research suggests participation rates remain low (Dunk et al., 2016; Font & Harris, 2004). The Green Tourism Business Scheme is a sustainable tourism certification program that started in Scotland, but has successfully grown to include Scotland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Canada, and Zimbabwe (Sampaio et al., 2012a). Green Globe is one of the few global sustainable tourism certification programs. Costa Rica's Certification for Sustainable Tourism and South Africa's Fair Trade Tourism are international examples of sustainable tourism certification programs. Organizations such as Sustainable Travel International, The International Ecotourism Society, and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) are organizations providing support and guidance in developing sustainable tourism indicators and programs.

Global Sustainable Tourism Council is the only sustainable tourism accreditation entity in the travel and tourism sector, and is supported by the United Nations. The

organization manages global sustainability standards and educates tourism stakeholders about sustainability practices (GSTC, 2016a). In addition to setting criteria for hotels and tour operators, GSTC has set criteria for destinations seeking to sustain natural and cultural resources, while contributing to local economic impact (GSTC, 2016a).

Recognizing that destinations have differences, GSTC criteria seeks to “reach a common understanding of a sustainable destination” (GSTC, 2013). Criteria for hotels and tour operators includes indicators addressing: demonstrating effective sustainable management; maximizing economic benefits to the host community and minimizing negative impacts; maximizing benefits to cultural heritage and minimizing negative impacts; and maximizing benefits to the environment and minimizing negative impacts (GSTC, 2016a; GSTC, 2016b; GSTC, 2016c).

In the United States, the number of states with sustainable tourism certification programs is growing. Started in 2006, Travel Green Wisconsin is a state-sponsored sustainable travel certification program that is noted as the first of its kind in the United States (Wisconsin Department of Tourism, 2016). Travel Oregon Forever’s Sustainable Business Challenge is another example of a state encouraging sustainability. To qualify to be a part of the network, Travel Oregon provides a self-assessment form, or businesses can show they have achieved second or third party certification from approved sources (Oregon Tourism Commission, 2016).

Research into certification programs largely investigates from the angle of motives and barriers for participation (Font et al., 2016a; Font, Garay, & Jones, 2016b; Jarvis et al., 2010; Rivera, 2002; Sampaio et al., 2012b). Another highly researched topic is examining the environmental, social, and/or economic impact of certification

programs, meaning if those certified are doing more than non-certified businesses and if certification is having a positive impact (Borck & Coglianese, 2009; Rivera & De Leon, 2004). Research has found certification to be adopted for a variety of reasons. Though mixed results have come from studying market advantages, marketing benefits appeal to many businesses as consumers gain interest in environmental and socially conscious purchasing (Jarvis et al., 2010; Lin & Hsu, 2015). Financial savings can accrue by implementing environmental changes such as decreasing water and energy usage (Font & Harris, 2004). Internal values of business owners lead businesses to certify, simply because they feel it is the right thing to do (Sampaio et al., 2012b). Certification provides transparency in business operations, an aspect found to be important for trust and relationship building with consumers and stakeholders (Font, 2002; To & Tang, 2014). Having children and/or grandchildren can be a motivational factor, as parents think about the state of the world their children will live in (Font et al., 2016b; Rivera & De Leon, 2004). Attachment to place can also be a factor, as those that care about a place have been found to be more invested in protecting it (Font et al., 2016a).

Criticisms of voluntary certification programs exist. The self-regulation of certifications can lead to greenwashing. Companies that do little in terms of environmental or sustainable initiatives, yet do enough to pass certification, are able to garner marketing and other certification benefits of those that are taking certification and sustainability to heart (Rivera & De Leon, 2004). Conversely, some businesses implement sustainably-conscious practices, yet do not seek certification for their efforts. Reasoning behind not becoming certified include the potential for greenwashing, certification standards not being high enough, and low return on investment (Sampaio et

al., 2012b). Contrary to greenwashing, greenhushing is another phenomenon that has been found amongst select businesses. Greenhushing involves businesses downplaying their sustainability efforts and not marketing the full extent of their sustainability practices (Font, Elgammal, & Lamond, 2016). In recognizing the hedonism in select travelers, as well as skepticism in marketing of sustainability, some businesses choose to shy away from communicating sustainability. They may communicate messages that have direct effect on visitor experience, like food being sourced locally, but not communicate other business operations that do not directly affect the consumer (Font et al., 2016).

Research into sustainability and environmental practices often focus on large firms due to the bigger impact of business operations, however, research on small to medium-size firms is less present in academic literature. Small to medium-size businesses represent unique motives, interests, and business challenges. Barriers to certification and lack of interest have been indicated. Cost involved is a significant factor in decision making. If a meaningful return on investment is not achieved or demonstrated business interest will wane (Borck & Coglianese, 2009; Font et al., 2016a). Lack of knowledge and understanding of sustainability is another barrier worth mentioning. As previously stated, discrepancies in defining sustainable tourism exist. Business owners busy with everyday business operations may find it difficult to learn about or appreciate the need for sustainability (Font et al., 2016a). Reluctance can exist in those not certain of their abilities to succeed in implementing sustainable initiatives (Sampaio et al., 2012b). The size of a business can be both a motivational factor and a barrier depending on circumstances. Some small businesses are a team of one or two, which means changing

the culture of a large staff is less necessary. However, staff members have also been found to be the drivers of a leader adopting new business ventures. Implementing sustainable business practices requires leadership and cultural change in an organization (Hoffman, 2008; Willard, 2008).

Further examination of destinations that are implementing sustainable tourism certification will add to the understanding of internal and external factors affecting business owners' or managers' decisions to implement sustainable practices and become certified. This, in turn, can aid in the development of communication strategies destinations use to appeal to small business owners. Whether deciding to meet sustainability standards for internal/business gain or for the collective benefit to the destination, or society at large, knowing the motivational factors of business owners is vitally important to future growth of certification programs and sustainable tourism strategies.

Alaska Tourism Industry

Alaska tourism presents a population relevant to examining small business motivation for sustainable tourism certification. Tourism in Alaska brings in over two million visitors to the state a year and \$1.9 billion of in-state visitor spending, which supports large and small tourism businesses, and provides municipal and state revenue (ATIA, 2016b). Alaska's tourism product includes iconic natural sights, for example Denali National Park and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, as well as cultural treasures, such as Totem Bight State Historic Park and Alaska Native Heritage Center (State of Alaska, 2016). In reference to all industries in Alaska, 97 percent are small businesses and employ 53 percent of the private-sector labor force. A small business is defined as

having fewer than 500 employees. In Alaska, 76 percent of small businesses have zero employees (U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, 2013).

Alaska is widely known for its tourism product and assets, and while it brings in substantial economic impact, it is not without its challenges. Global efforts to stop purchases of illegal elephant ivory are affecting Native communities in Alaska that legally carve walrus tusks, and have survived by selling their crafts to tourists (Hughes, 2016). Climate change is having noticeable effects on the Alaskan landscape as glaciers continue to melt, which provides a lesson to visitors (Jenkins, 2016), but also transforms the tourism product. A 2005 study for the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, found surges in tourism arrivals brought increased capacity on cruise ships which provided economic impact, but also harmed the cultural and natural fabric of communities in the southeast of Alaska (Cervený, 2005).

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is a membership-based organization which promotes Alaska as a visitor destination for economic growth. In addition to recognizing the importance of economic impact, ATIA's mission calls for "remaining attentive to care for the environment, recognition of cultures and Alaska's unique quality of life" (ATIA, 2016a). ATIA currently has 700 members, including lodging companies, tour operators, attractions, restaurants, transportation companies, media outlets, meeting venues, regional destination marketing organizations, and visitor service providers (ATIA, 2016a).

In 2014, Alaska Travel Industry Association took over management of Adventure Green Alaska (AGA), a voluntary sustainable tourism certification program for Alaska tourism businesses. Established in 2009, Adventure Green Alaska is the only sustainable

certification program in Alaska (AGA, 2016). Due to the transfer of management, ATIA has limited data on participant records prior to 2014. Tourism businesses operating in Alaska are eligible to apply for certification upon receiving a minimum amount of points based on a list of criteria regarding economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Criteria for certification includes sustainable indicators regarding local communities and economies, the environment, and Alaska history and culture (AGA, 2016). A fee, based on number of full-time employees, is required to participate in this self-assessed certification program. The application fee starts at \$100 for companies with zero to two full-time employees, and rises incrementally to \$500+ for companies with 51 and more full-time employees. Members of ATIA, as well as non-members, are eligible to apply for certification (AGA, 2016).

Adventure Green Alaska is a member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). ATIA is in the process of reevaluating AGA criteria and plans to increase the standards for AGA certification. They are using GSTC's hotel and tour operator criteria as a benchmark for making the certification more robust and competitive with global standards. As the Alaska Travel Industry Association works to update the Adventure Green Alaska certification program, understanding the motives of businesses to participate will assist in guiding messaging, marketing, and resource allocation for reaching out to new businesses, as well as retention efforts.

In summary, the increasing number of people traveling around the globe requires sustainable management of tourism to sustain resident and visitor quality of life. Businesses involved in tourism are operationalizing sustainable tourism in a variety of ways including implementing waste reduction initiatives, purchasing food and art from

local businesses, and educating consumers about the destination. Tourism certification, involving an assessment of environmental, sociocultural, and/or economic initiatives, is another way in which sustainable tourism is being operationalized. Social cognitive theory presents a triadic model for examining internal and external motives for participation in sustainability practices and sustainable tourism certification by tourism businesses. Internal factors, such as belief in abilities, barriers, and values influence company motives. External factors, such as modeling sustainability behavior of other businesses and incentives of consumer interest and marketing benefits can also influence motives for behavior. The Alaska tourism industry and their Adventure Green Alaska sustainable tourism certification program present a population of small businesses ripe for research into motives and barriers influencing participation in sustainable practices and certification, as outlined in this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Methodological details are described in this chapter, including: (1) Research Setting, (2) Participants, (3) Data Collection, (4) Questionnaire, (5) Measures, and (6) Data Analysis.

As evidenced in the literature review, small businesses encounter unique internal and external influences in choosing to operationalize sustainable tourism. Social cognitive theory presents a framework for studying the relationship between internal factors, external factors, and behavior. Internal company values and self-efficacy beliefs of small businesses are shown in literature to impact encounters with external entities such as consumers, competitor businesses, and other organizations. Conversely, these external factors can influence internal company values, knowledge, and self-efficacy, all of which influence behavior with varying degrees. This study examined the application of social cognitive theory to study the operationalization of sustainable tourism, specifically the sustainability practices of small tourism businesses and motivational factors for participation in sustainable tourism certification. This study utilized cross-sectional survey research to examine research questions (Creswell, 2014).

Setting

This study was a survey conducted of Alaska Travel Industry Association's Adventure Green Alaska sustainable tourism certification. Businesses that were certified as of November 2016, as well as businesses that have expressed interest in certification, and those that are no longer certified were studied. Businesses were located throughout Alaska. Criteria for certification requires meeting a minimum amount of points based on

items such as: percent of employees being locals; encouraging customers to visit local attractions; displaying a commitment to sustainable tourism; properly disposing of hazardous waste; and training employees on local history and culture. Twenty-five multiple choice and essay questions make up the certification application. The full AGA program application is included in Appendix A. Certification is valid for two years. After two years, businesses are required to reapply to maintain certification. ATIA is a membership organization, however, businesses do not need to be a member of ATIA to apply for certification.

Alaska Travel Industry Association's Adventure Green Alaska sustainable tourism certification program presented a population viable for research. Alaska represents a destination in which environmental and cultural integrity are critically important to the tourism product. Small business is ever present in Alaska, making it a population ripe for studying motivation for certification participation. The Adventure Green Alaska program will soon be undergoing revisions as ATIA works to meet the sustainable criteria for hotels and tour operators recommended by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. As the certification program transitions to include more standards, understanding current motives and sustainability practices of Alaska businesses will aid future communications and resource allocations of ATIA in marketing sustainable tourism certification.

Participants

A census population of Adventure Green Alaska certified businesses (N = 42), and a convenience sample of prospects for AGA certification (N = 26) and businesses which have let their certification expire (N= 9) were participants in this study. The

participants were businesses known to be interested in sustainable tourism/sustainability. Businesses uninterested in sustainable tourism/sustainability were not included in this study, which presented selection bias (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009).

The owners, general managers, and other appropriate representatives of each tourism business were the key informants asked to participate. This was purposeful selection, as the owners or general managers would be the most knowledgeable about the offerings of the business, and be key decision makers in certification participation, therefore the best suited to respond (Creswell, 2014). The participants were from a variety of business types, including: tour operators, lodging facilities, restaurants, transportation providers, fishing guides, cruise boats, and attractions. Certification status was provided on the sample list and verified with a question on the questionnaire. Certification status was used as an independent variable.

To ensure reliability of data, responses to certification status were compared to the original population list provided by ATIA. Forty-three of the 44 respondents matched in their reported certification status. One respondent indicated being a certified business, but the original list indicated they were not certified. The AGA website was utilized as a second resource and confirmed this business to be AGA certified. Being a new member explains the discrepancy in the lists.

Data Collection

This study utilized a cross-sectional survey to gather data from a population of certified businesses and a convenience sample of non-certified businesses as a comparison group. A questionnaire, cover letter, reminder emails, and reminder phone script were developed. The questionnaire, cover letter, reminder email, phone script are

included as Appendix items B, C, D, and E of this document. Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Arizona State University approval was obtained prior to distribution of the questionnaire (approval letter is provided in Appendix F) to ensure ethical standards and human subject research guidelines were met.

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Qualtrics software, a survey research platform known to be reliable for conducting electronic survey research. The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) promoted the survey in their January 4, 2017 member e-newsletter (Appendix G). The questionnaire was launched January 26, 2017 by emailing a cover letter and survey link to 77 businesses. January was off-season for many Alaska tourism businesses, and was chosen to cause little interruption to business practices. A reminder email was sent on February 2, 2017 to those that had not yet completed the questionnaire. Phone calls were made on February 8, 2017 to the remaining businesses that had not completed the questionnaire. Companies that opted out of further communications (n = 3) were not included in reminder emails or phone calls. Of those reached by phone, follow-up emails were sent to those that requested the questionnaire link be sent again and to those that provided new contact names as the best person to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was closed February 22, 2017.

Forty-four completed questionnaires were received for an overall 57 percent response rate. Thirty-one questionnaires were completed by AGA certified organizations, a 74 percent response rate. Thirteen questionnaires were completed by non-certified businesses, a 37 percent response rate (Table 1). One business which was once certified, but has not renewed certification responded to the questionnaire.

Table 1

Number of Questionnaires Distributed and Responses Received

	Certified	Non-certified	All Respondents
Number Distributed	42	35	77
Submitted Responses	31	13	44
Response Rate	74%	37%	57%

Questionnaire

The questionnaire utilized questions from previous research on motivation and sustainable tourism certification (Borck & Coglianese, 2009; Dunk et al., 2016; Font et al., 2016a; Font et al., 2016b; Jarvis et al., 2010; Rivera & De Leon, 2004; Sampaio et al., 2012b; Wood & Bandura, 1989). References used for questionnaire creation are further detailed in Appendix H. Secondary data were gathered utilizing websites such as Adventure Green Alaska, Alaska Travel Industry Association, and Alaska tourism businesses to inform the development of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was pilot tested with ASU students and faculty (Creswell, 2014). Results of pilot testing led to minimal changes in grammar/word usage and formatting for consistency and improved comprehension.

The questionnaire began with a cover letter detailing the reason for the study and confidentiality information. Section one asked respondents' general information regarding their company/organization. Type of business, number of employees, number of years in business, sustainable tourism certification status, and number of offices was included in this section. Section two asked about motives and barriers to participation in

sustainable tourism practices and AGA certification. Those that indicated not being certified with AGA received a question asking which benefits they would find valuable when considering becoming certified. The next set of questions asked about the company's sustainability initiatives (AGA, 2016; Font et al., 2016a; GSTC, 2013; GSTC, 2016b; GSTC, 2016c). That was followed by questions regarding general attitudes toward sustainable tourism. The next section asked respondents to provide general business information such as whether it is a family enterprise, number of customers they are able to accommodate in a day, most common type of traveler served, average annual sales, other certifications held, and industry association memberships (Font et al., 2016b). Lastly, respondents were asked to provide demographic information regarding the respondent, such as title, gender, age, and education level (Borck & Coglianesi, 2009; Dunk et al., 2016). Respondents were also asked if they would be willing to participate in follow-up interviews (To & Tang, 2014), however, interviews were not undertaken due to the high response rate of certified businesses.

Measures

Adapted from Wood and Bandura's (1989) schematization of social cognitive theory, Figure 2 provides a visual depiction of the constructs to measure internal and external factors, and behavior, relevant to the study of sustainable tourism certification. IT represents internal factors and includes self-efficacy and company values; E represents external factors and includes modeling the behavior of similar businesses, learning from organizational communications, and incentives such as consumer interest and marketing benefits. B represents behaviors and in this study includes obtaining and retaining certification as a first behavior and then implementing sustainable tourism practices as an

endogenous behavior. As evidenced in Figure 2, this study focused on the influence that internal factors have on behavior and the influence that external factors have on behavior. Appendix H includes a table of factors and variables included in the questionnaire with documentation from the literature where content and scales were adapted.

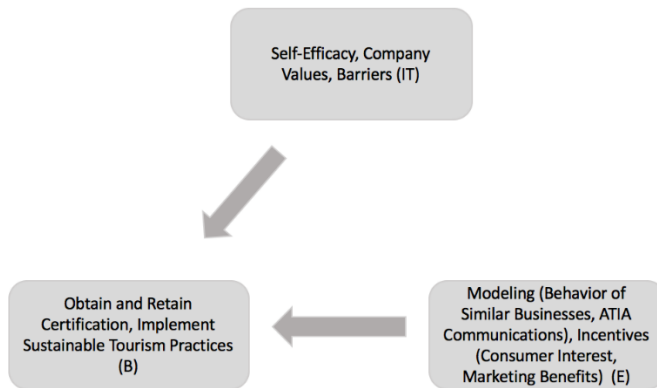


Figure 2: Social Cognitive Theory as Applied to Motives for Sustainable Tourism Certification. Adapted from Wood & Bandura (1989) schematization of the relations among behavior (B), cognitive and other internal factors (IT), and the external environment (E).

The behavior of certification was measured with a “yes” or “no” response to the question “Is your company currently Adventure Green Alaska certified,” from which respondents were grouped into certified and non-certified. Table 2 outlines the other key factors of this study and their measures. Sixteen motive items including internal and external factors were used as both independent and dependent variables depending on the research question. Motive items were measured as ordinal data. Three barrier items represented internal factors and were used as independent and dependent variables. Barrier items were measured as ordinal data. Twenty-six sustainability practice items represented behaviors and were used as dependent variables. Originally measured as nominal data, sustainability practice items were transformed into interval data.

Table 2

Key Factors

Factor (number of variables)	Factor Type^a	Variable Type^b	Raw Data Type	Response Options	Analysis Data Type	Analysis Data Scale
Motives (16)	IT and E	IV and DV	Ordinal	5-point Likert scale: “Not at all important” to “Extremely Important”	Nominal and Ordinal	5-point Likert scale
Barriers (3)	IT	IV and DV	Ordinal	5-point Likert scale: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”	Nominal and Ordinal	5-point Likert scale
Sustainability Practices (26)	B	DV	Nominal	“Yes, we do”; “No, we do not”	Interval	Index (0-1)
Certification Status (1)	B	IV	Nominal	Yes/No	Nominal	Yes/No

^a IT = internal, E = external, B = behavior

^b IV = independent variable, DV = dependent variable

Table 3 provides measurement at an item level for motives and barriers. The motive and barrier factors are labeled by internal and external; and self-efficacy, values, modeling, and incentives. Based on the content of items and definitions of the factor types and characterization, the constructs of social cognitive theory were operationalized. Sixteen statements regarding motives for implementing sustainability practices and sustainable tourism certification were asked. Respondents were provided a five-point Likert scale of “Not at all important” to “Extremely important” and asked to respond to each statement. Statements included items such as: “Customers have shown interest in sustainability,” “It allows for use of a branded logo acknowledging sustainability achievements,” and “The values of sustainable tourism are core to company identity”

(Font et al., 2016a; Borck & Coglianesi, 2009; Jarvis et al., 2010; Rivera & De Leon, 2004; Dunk et al., 2016; Sampaio et al., 2012a; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Three statements regarding barriers to implementation of sustainability practices and certification were provided along with a five-point Likert scale of “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree,” along with the option of “Other” and the ability to type in a response.

Table 3

Motive and Barrier Items

Items	Factor Type^a	Characterization^b
Motives		
It is a way to participate in Alaska's destination brand (i.e. Alaska Travel Industry Association).	E	IC
Customers have shown interest in sustainability.	E	IC
Company employees have encouraged my company to be sustainable.	E	IC
It allows for use of a branded logo acknowledging sustainability achievements.	E	IC
It leads to long-term business cost savings.	E	IC
It brings competitive advantage to my company.	E	IC
It provides marketing benefits (i.e. being able to market company as sustainable).	E	IC
I have seen other businesses benefit from implementing sustainability.	E	M
Information/communications from Alaska Travel Industry Association aids in my understanding of sustainable tourism/sustainability.	E	M
Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) provides support/guidance in implementing sustainability.	E	M
I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses.	E	M
The values of sustainable tourism are core to company identity.	IT	V
It helps in protecting the environment.	IT	V
It helps in improving our society.	IT	V
It is easy to implement.	IT	S
I believe in my company's abilities to implement sustainable strategies.	IT	S
Barriers		
Cost involved limits my company's involvement in sustainability.	IT	S
Paperwork involved is too time consuming.	IT	S
I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability.	IT	S

^a E = external factor; IT = internal factor

^b IC = incentive; M = modeling; V = company value; S = self-efficacy

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved multiple steps. First, survey responses were keyed in to SPSS 23 software, a trusted software program for conducting statistical analysis. Frequencies were conducted to review for missing data and any errors in keying. Reliability of certification status was ensured by comparing responses to the original population list. Second, new variables were created for descriptive and statistical analysis. Respondents which indicated fitting into more than one business category were provided a follow-up question to choose one main business category. Responses from the main business category question were combined with responses from the first business category question to have one main business category for each business. Number of years in business was asked as an open-ended quantitative response and recorded into interval data.

Next, descriptive data were estimated using frequencies and crosstabs. Indices of sustainability practices were generated. Multiple indices were calculated to categorize sustainability practices and were utilized for statistical analysis. The questions asking about participation in sustainable practices were required fields in the questionnaire in order to have complete data for creating indices. Sustainability practices had four categories: general practices, environmental practices, sociocultural practices, and economic practices. Four indicators were used for general practices, ten indicators for environmental, six for sociocultural, and six for economic. Each response was coded with a one for “Yes, we do” and a zero for the response “No, we do not.” An index was created for each category, as well as an overall index for all twenty-six sustainability practices combined. Each index was created by first summing the number of practices a

company was performing, and dividing by the total number of practices. This created an index between zero and one for each category.

Next, the reliability of relationships between motive variables was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha of 0.70 or higher (Darnall, Henriques & Sadorsky, 2008). Three of the four motive factors were found to be internally consistent. Self-efficacy items failed to meet the internal consistency test and were used in analysis as single-items. Table 4 provides the results of reliability tests by categorization groups including incentives, modeling, values, and self-efficacy. The incentive items (7) had a Cronbach's Alpha result of 0.75. These seven items have high internal consistency; therefore, all were used in further analysis of incentives. The modeling items (4) had a Cronbach's Alpha equal to 0.67, slightly lower than a 0.70 benchmark for acceptable internal consistency (Lin & Hsu, 2015; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). One item was removed to improve the reliability to 0.70. The value items (3) had a Cronbach's Alpha equal to 0.78. These three items have a high internal consistency. Self-efficacy items included motives and barriers. The self-efficacy motive items (2) had a Cronbach's Alpha result of 0.35. These two items were not reliable and therefore not made into a single factor. The self-efficacy barrier items (3) had a Cronbach's Alpha equal 0.51, lower than a 0.70 benchmark for acceptable internal consistency. One item was removed to improve the reliability to 0.64. To use both self-efficacy motive and barrier items in further analysis, they were treated as single variables.

Table 4

Reliability of Motive/Barrier Variables

Motive/Barrier	Factor Type ^a	Characterization ^b	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha ^c
Motives^d				
It is a way to participate in Alaska's destination brand.	E	IC	.734	.753
Customers have shown interest in sustainability.	E	IC	.691	
Co. employees encouraged co. to be sustainable.	E	IC	.745	
It allows for use of a branded sustainability.	E	IC	.714	
It leads to long-term cost savings.	E	IC	.720	
It brings competitive advantage to my company.	E	IC	.715	
It provides marketing benefits.	E	IC	.701	
I have seen bus. benefit from implement sustainability. ^e	E	M	.702	.667
Info. from ATIA aids in my understanding of sustainability.	E	M	.537	
ATIA provides support in implementing sustainability.	E	M	.511	
I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses.	E	M	.625	
The values of sustainable tourism are core to co.	IT	V	.680	.783
It helps protect the env.	IT	V	.690	
It helps in improving our society.	IT	V	.739	
It is easy to implement. ^e	IT	S	-	.352
I believe in my co.'s abilities to implement sustainability.	IT	S	-	
Barriers^f				
Cost involved limits co.'s sustainability involvement. ^e	IT	S	.643	.510
Paperwork involved is too time consuming.	IT	S	.251	
I do not know enough about sustainability.	IT	S	.292	

^aE = external factor; IT = internal factor ^bIC = incentive; M = modeling; V = company value; S = self-efficacy

^cCronbach's Alpha result is based on Characterization column (incentives, modeling, values, self-efficacy)

^dMotives measured on a five-point Likert scale of "not at all important" to "extremely important"

^eVariable removed from further analysis

^fBarriers measured on a five-point Likert scale of "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"

Lastly, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the relationship between certification status and sustainable practice indices, and certification status and motives. Linear regression was used to estimate the influence of each of the sustainability practice indices on the four motive categories – self-efficacy, company values, modeling and incentives.

In summary, the Alaska Travel Industry Association's Adventure Green Alaska sustainable tourism certification participants and prospects were utilized as a sample in studying motives of small businesses to participate in sustainable tourism certification and sustainable practices. Social cognitive theory was used as a framework to measure internal and external factors and their relationship to certification and sustainable practices. An online questionnaire was used to gather data. The creation of sustainable practice indices and independent samples t-tests were avenues for data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This section provides results of data analysis to answer the research questions, including: (1) Demographic Profile, (2) Model Descriptive Statistics, and (3) Statistical Analysis.

Demographic Profile

Frequencies and cross tabulation provided an initial understanding of survey respondents. As indicated in Table 5, the majority of businesses identify as tour operators (n=23), followed by lodging facilities (n=8), and tourism attractions (n=6). The two businesses which chose “other” identified as an adventure challenge course and a nonprofit park partner. Most respondents have been in business for at least ten years. Nineteen businesses indicated being open between ten and twenty-four years (44.2%), and thirteen businesses indicated being open between twenty-five and forty-nine years (30.2%). Certified and non-certified businesses showed similar trends in these categories. The average number of full-time employees and part-time employees is slightly higher for certified businesses (28.2; 22.1 respectively) compared to non-certified (22.4; 12.9 respectively). Having one office in Alaska was the most common response to number of offices (n=32). Eleven businesses have two or more offices in Alaska, one does not have any offices in Alaska, and seven businesses indicated having an office outside of Alaska.

Table 5

Business Demographics

	Certified n=31		Non-certified n=13		All Respondents n=44	
Primary business category ^a						
Tour operator	18	58.1%	5	38.5%	23	52.3%
Lodging	5	16.1	3	23.1	8	18.2
Tourism attraction	3	9.7	3	23.1	6	13.6
Guiding	2	6.5	2	15.3	4	9.1
Food and beverage	1	3.2	0	0	1	2.3
Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sports and recreation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transportation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	2	6.4	0	0	2	4.5
Number of Years in Operation						
	n=30		n=13		n=43	
1-4 years	3	10.0	1	7.7	4	9.3
5-9 years	1	3.3	1	7.7	2	4.7
10-24 years	12	40.0	7	53.8	19	44.2
25-49 years	11	36.7	2	15.4	13	30.2
50-99 years	2	6.7	2	15.4	4	9.3
100 years or more	1	3.3	0	0	1	2.3
Number of Employees						
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Full-time employees	28.19	4-200	22.38	1-180	26.48	1-200
Part-time employees	22.13	0-290	12.85	0-45	19.39	0-290
Number of Offices in Alaska ^b						
	n=30		n=13		n=44	
0	1	3.2	0	0	1	2.3
1	23	74.2	9	69.2	32	72.7
2 or more	7	22.6	4	30.8	11	25.0

^a Businesses may fall into multiple categories, but primary category is reported here.

^b Seven businesses indicated having offices outside of Alaska (range 0-4).

Table 6 details further information regarding certification status of respondents.

Of all respondents, thirty-one businesses were AGA certified at the time of data

collection. Most of those certified have been certified between one and three years (n=19) and two are newly certified, having held certification for less than one year. This is most likely due to ATIA’s recruiting efforts. One business was previously certified with AGA, but does not currently hold certification. Seven businesses have obtained sustainable tourism certifications other than Adventure Green Alaska (n=6 certified businesses; n=1 non-certified business). Other sustainable tourism certifications held by respondents, as written in by respondents, include: Sustainable Tourism International, Green Business Network, Green Star, TripAdvisor GreenLeader (2 businesses), USFS Permit holder, and Wildlife Rehab Permits from US Fish and Wildlife and Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Table 6

Certification Status

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	n=31	%	n=13	%	n=44	%
Number of years AGA certified (current AGA members) ^a						
Less than 1 year	2	6.5	-	-	-	-
1-3 years	19	61.1	-	-	-	-
4-6 years	5	16.2	-	-	-	-
7-10 years	5	16.2	-	-	-	-
Hold sustainable tourism certification other than AGA ^b						
Yes	6	19.4	1	7.7	7	15.9
No	25	80.6	12	92.3	37	84.1

^a AGA certified for the year 2017

^b One company indicated having two additional certifications, all others listed one additional certification.

Respondents were evenly divided between men (n = 21) and women (n = 21) and were generally between the ages of 25 and 44 years old (n = 23) (Table 7). Respondents were largely owners of the company (certified n = 14; non-certified n=6). Other position

titles represented were: Director of Corporate Marketing, Director of Operations, Office Manager, Regional Manager, Sales & Marketing Manager, Tourism and Education Manager, as well as variations of Executive Director and Owner. A four-year college degree was the most common education level achieved (n = 24). Respondents of certified businesses were slightly more likely to have children (56.7%) than other respondents.

Table 7

Respondent Demographics

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Position						
Owner	14	46.7	6	50.0	20	47.6
General Manager	6	20.0	4	33.3	10	23.8
Other	10	33.3	2	16.7	12	28.6
Gender						
Male	17	56.7	4	33.3	21	50.0
Female	13	43.3	8	66.7	21	50.0
Age						
25-44 years	17	56.6	6	50.0	23	54.8
45-64 years	10	33.3	5	41.6	15	35.7
65 years and over	3	10.1	1	8.4	4	9.5
Education						
Less than high school	0	0	0	0	0	0
Some high school	0	0	0	0	0	0
High school graduate	2	6.7	2	16.7	4	9.5
Vocational/trade certificate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Some college	5	16.7	1	8.3	6	14.3
Two-year coll. degree	1	3.3	0	0	1	2.4
Four-year coll. degree	16	53.3	8	66.7	24	57.1
Master's degree	4	13.3	1	8.3	5	11.9
Ph.D., M.D., J.D.	2	6.7	0	0	2	4.8
Have children						
Yes	17	56.7	6	50.0	23	54.8
No	13	43.3	6	50.0	19	45.2
Have grandchildren						
Yes	6	35.3	1	16.7	7	30.4
No	11	64.7	5	83.3	16	69.6

Most businesses represented are family businesses (certified n = 20; non-certified n = 11) (Table 8). A slight majority can accommodate more than 100 customers per day (n = 15) and the most common travel party was couples (n = 13). Forty percent of certified businesses bring in average annual sales between \$200,000 and \$499,999 (n = 12). Thirty-eight-point-five percent of non-certified businesses have average annual sales over one million dollars (n = 5). Memberships held by respondents include local convention & visitor bureau, local chamber of commerce, ATIA, and a variety of industry organizations.

Table 8

Business Demographics

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Family business						
Yes	20	64.5	11	84.6	31	70.5
No	11	35.5	2	15.4	13	29.5
Number of customers can accommodate per day						
Under 20	7	22.6	4	30.8	11	25.0
21-60	7	22.6	3	23.1	10	22.7
61-100	6	19.4	2	15.4	8	18.2
More than 100	11	35.4	4	30.7	15	34.1
Most common travel party						
Families	8	26.7	3	23.1	11	25.6
Friends	3	10.0	2	15.3	5	11.6
Couples	8	26.7	5	38.5	13	30.2
Solo travelers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cruise attendees	7	23.3	3	23.1	10	23.3
Group tour	4	13.3	0	0	4	9.3
Average annual sales						
Under \$49,999	1	3.3	0	0	1	2.3
\$50,000-\$99,999	1	3.3	1	7.7	2	4.7
\$100,000-\$199,999	3	10.0	4	30.8	7	16.3
\$200,000-\$499,999	12	40.0	2	15.3	14	32.6
\$500,000-\$1 million	4	13.3	1	7.7	5	11.6
More than \$1 million	9	30.1	5	38.5	14	32.5

Certified businesses indicated higher agreement towards tourism regulations being implemented to regulate tourism. “Tourism needs to be developed in harmony with the natural and cultural environment” garnered the highest agreement amongst all respondents (mean = 4.6) (Table 9), followed by “Tourism should benefit the community” (mean = 4.6). “Tourism decisions must be made by all in my community regardless of a person’s background,” while showing agreement, produced the lowest mean among all respondents (3.4) (Table 9).

Table 9

Attitude Toward Sustainable Tourism

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	Mean ^a	Agree ^b % (n)	Mean ^a	Agree ^b % (n)	Mean ^a	Agree ^b % (n)
Tourism needs to be developed in harmony with the natural and cultural environment.	4.68	96.8 (30)	4.54	92.3 (12)	4.64	95.4 (42)
Regulatory environmental standards are needed to reduce the negative impacts of tourism.	4.06	80.7 (25)	3.23	46.2 (6)	3.82	70.5 (31)
Tourist numbers should be limited in select areas to protect local resources.	4.06	77.5 (24)	3.69	61.6 (8)	3.95	72.7 (32)
Tourism decisions must be made by all in my community regardless of a person's background.	3.52	51.6 (16)	3.23	30.8 (4)	3.43	45.5 (20)
Tourism should benefit the community.	4.65	96.8 (30)	4.54	100.0 (13)	4.61	97.7 (33)

^a Scale where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

^b Two points of the scale “agree” and “strongly agree” were added together.

Only non-certified businesses were asked which benefits they would find valuable when considering AGA certification (Table 10). A “Special listing on Alaska tourism marketing pieces” received the most interest (n=11), followed by “Use of logo recognizing certification” (n=10). No one wrote in “Other” benefits. Results indicated higher interest in marketing benefits and consumer engagement, as opposed to educational and networking opportunities.

Table 10

Desired Benefits in Considering AGA Certification^{a, b}

	Non-certified	
	n	%
Use of logo recognizing certification (to be used for marketing).	10	83.3
Special listing on Alaska tourism marketing pieces.	11	91.7
Educational workshops regarding sustainable tourism.	4	33.3
Networking opportunities with other certified businesses.	1	8.3
Preference in tour operator bookings.	9	75.0
Other	0	0

^a Question presented only to non-certified businesses.

^b A select all that apply question.

Model Descriptive Statistics

The key variables of the research model - motives, barriers, sustainability practices, and certification status (as outlined in Table 36 in the Measures section of chapter 3) brought varying results. Motives ranged in importance as they apply to implementing sustainable tourism practices and/or certification (Table 11). When totaling all respondents, motives of highest importance were “It helps in protecting the environment” (mean = 4.7), “It helps in improving our society” (mean = 4.4), “I believe in my company’s abilities to implement sustainable strategies” (mean = 4.4), and “The values of sustainable tourism are core to company identity” (mean = 4.3). Certified businesses rated each of these with higher importance than did the non-certified respondents.

The motives of lowest importance were: “Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) provides support/guidance in implementing sustainability” (mean = 2.9), “I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses” (mean = 2.7), and “Information/communications from Alaska Travel Industry Association aids in my understanding of sustainable tourism/sustainability” (mean = 2.7). “I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses” was indicated as low importance, with certified businesses (3.0) rating this motive as slightly higher than non-certified businesses (2.1). The difference in certified and non-certified businesses in regards to “Information/communications from Alaska Travel Industry Association aids in my understanding of sustainable tourism/sustainability,” exhibited for certified businesses the mean was 2.9 and for non-certified businesses the mean was 2.3. Respondents that chose “Extremely important” for at least one of the motives were asked a follow-up question to

indicate their top motive. “The values of sustainable tourism are core to company identity” and “It helps in protecting the environment” each had twelve respondents choose it as their top motive.

Table 11

Motives for Implementing/Considering Implementing Sustainable Tourism Practices and Certification

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	Mean ^a	Highly Important ^b % (n)	Mean ^a	Highly Important ^b % (n)	Mean ^a	Highly Important ^b % (n)
It is a way to participate in Alaska's destination brand.	3.58	58.1 (18)	3.15	38.5 (5)	3.45	52.3 (23)
Customers have shown interest in sustainability.	3.87	67.7 (21)	3.08	41.7 (5)	3.65	60.5 (26)
Company employees have encouraged my company to be sustainable.	3.52	58.1 (18)	3.67	58.3 (7)	3.56	58.2 (25)
It allows for use of a branded logo of sustainability.	3.68	51.6 (16)	3.00	30.8 (4)	3.48	45.5 (20)
It leads to long-term business cost savings.	3.58	61.3 (19)	3.33	50.0 (6)	3.51	58.1 (25)
It brings competitive advantage to my company.	3.84	61.3 (19)	3.25	33.4 (4)	3.67	53.5 (23)
It provides marketing benefits (i.e. market co. as sustainable).	3.97	74.2 (23)	3.62	53.9 (7)	3.86	68.2 (30)
I have seen other businesses benefit from implementing sustainability.	3.42	51.6 (16)	3.25	41.7 (5)	3.37	48.9 (21)
Information/communications from ATIA aids in my understanding of sustainable tourism/sustainability.	2.87	25.8 (8)	2.25	0	2.70	18.6 (8)
ATIA provides support in implementing sustainability.	2.97	32.2 (10)	2.75	0	2.91	22.6 (10)
I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses.	2.97	29.1 (9)	2.08	0	2.72	21.0 (9)
The values of sustainable tourism are core to co. identity.	4.65	96.7 (30)	3.62	69.3 (9)	4.34	88.6 (39)
It helps in protecting env.	4.77	96.8 (30)	4.38	84.6 (11)	4.66	93.2 (41)
It helps in improving society.	4.58	96.8 (30)	4.08	69.3 (9)	4.43	88.6 (39)
It is easy to implement.	3.42	48.4 (15)	3.42	50.0 (6)	3.42	48.8 (21)
I believe in co.'s abilities to implement sustainability.	4.55	93.6 (29)	3.92	69.3 (9)	4.36	86.4 (38)

^a Scale where 1=not at all important and 5=extremely important.

^b Two points of the scale “very important” and “extremely important” were added together.

Barriers to implementing/considering implementing sustainable tourism practices and certification resulted in relatively low mean scores (Table 12), indicating disagreement with the statements asked. Yet, as expected, non-certified businesses indicated stronger agreement to barriers than did certified businesses. Paperwork being time consuming was indicated as the biggest barrier for non-certified businesses (mean = 3.7). “I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability” resulted in a mean of 3.2 for non-certified businesses. Cost involved was certified businesses biggest barrier (mean = 3.0). Respondents were provided an “Other” option and the ability to type in responses. Five respondents chose “Other” and indicated cost of certification, availability of recycling in Alaska, being clueless, and time/man power/technology being limited.

Table 12

Barriers to Implementing/Considering Implementing Sustainable Tourism Practices and Certification

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	Mean ^a	Agree ^b % (n)	Mean ^a	Agree ^b % (n)	Mean ^a	Agree ^b % (n)
Cost involved limits my company's involvement in sustainability.	2.97	35.5 (11)	2.77	30.8 (4)	2.91	34.1 (15)
Paperwork involved is too time consuming.	2.48	6.5 (2)	3.69	53.9 (7)	2.84	20.4 (9)
I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability.	2.06	6.5 (2)	3.17	25.0 (3)	2.37	11.6 (5)

^a Scale where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

^b Two points of the scale “agree” and “strongly agree” were added together.

Respondents were required to indicate which of twenty-six sustainability practices their company is currently undertaking. One-hundred percent of certified and non-certified businesses indicated currently doing the following sustainable practices:

“Encourage customers to be environmentally friendly in nature,” “Actively encourage

(customers') respect for the culture and customs of the area,” “Convey information to customers about the history of the areas in which you operate,” “Train your employees about the history and cultures of the area in which you operate,” and “Choose local businesses or suppliers for items such as food, equipment or services on a regular basis” (Tables 13 - 16). Lower participation by certified and non-certified businesses appeared in the general practices of “Follow a documented code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities with the collaboration and consent of the affected community” (n = 19) and “Follow a formal policy regarding company commitment to sustainable tourism” (n = 23) (Table 13), as well as environmental practices of “Use renewable energy sources (solar, wind, biomass)” (n = 23) and “Measure water consumption and implement water saving activities” (n = 25) (Table 14).

Certified businesses have implemented more sustainability practices than non-certified businesses. A noticeable difference appeared with general sustainability practices. Of the certified businesses surveyed, 65 percent indicated they “Follow a formal policy regarding company commitment to sustainable tourism,” whereas 23 percent of non-certified businesses noted that they followed a formal policy. When it comes to displaying a “sustainable tourism commitment to company website and/or promotional materials,” 81 percent of certified businesses indicated doing so, in contrast to 31 percent of non-certified businesses (Table 13). Use of renewable energy garnered limited participation from non-certified businesses (30.8%) (Table 14). Sustainable practice indices were created from these results (Table 17).

Table 13

General Sustainability Practices of Respondents

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	n=31	%	n=13	%	n=44	%
General						
Follow a formal policy regarding company commitment to sustainable tourism.	20	64.5	3	23.1	23	52.3
Display sustainable tourism commitment to company website and/or promotional materials.	25	80.6	4	30.8	29	65.9
Train or provide guidance to personnel regarding their roles and responsibilities with respect to sustainability management system.	31	100.0	10	76.9	41	93.2
Follow a documented code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities with the collaboration and consent of the affected community.	18	58.1	1	7.7	19	43.2

Table 14

Environmental Sustainability Practices of Respondents

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	n=31	%	n=13	%	n=44	%
Environmental						
Encourage customers to be env. friendly in nature.	31	100.0	13	100.0	44	100.0
Measure energy consumption and implement energy saving activities.	29	93.5	11	84.6	40	90.9
Measure water consumption and implement water saving activities.	19	61.3	6	46.2	25	56.8
Encourage customers, staff, and suppliers to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.	26	83.9	7	53.8	33	75.0
Implement practices to minimize pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and/or air, water, soil contaminants.	28	90.3	11	84.6	39	88.6
Use renewable energy sources (solar, wind, biomass).	19	61.3	4	30.8	23	52.3
Promote the use of recyclable, compostable, or biodegradable items such as paper products, packaging products, and food service.	29	93.5	10	76.9	39	88.6
Handle food, garbage, and yard waste in a manner that prevents the accidental feeding of wildlife, and/or other environmental impacts.	31	100.0	12	92.3	43	97.7
Avoid introduction of invasive species. Native species are used for landscaping and restoration wherever feasible.	28	90.3	10	76.9	38	86.4
Respect wildlife. Do not produce adverse effects on wildlife. Any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated, and compensation is made to conservation management.	31	100.0	12	92.3	43	97.7

Table 15

Sociocultural Sustainability Practices of Respondents

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	n=31	%	n=13	%	n=44	%
Sociocultural						
Actively encourage (customers') respect for the culture and customs of the area.	31	100.0	13	100.0	44	100.0
Convey information to customers about the history of the areas in which you operate.	31	100.0	13	100.0	44	100.0
Choose suppliers that demonstrate their social responsibility.	28	90.3	9	69.2	37	84.1
Incorporate elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in company operations, design, decoration, food, or shops, while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.	30	96.8	12	92.3	42	95.5
Do not sell, trade, or display historical and archaeological artifacts, except as permitted by local/international law.	29	93.5	11	84.6	40	90.9
Train your employees about the history and cultures of the area in which you operate.	31	100.0	13	100.0	44	100.0

Table 16

Economic Sustainability Practices of Respondents

	Certified		Non-certified		All Respondents	
	n=31	%	n=13	%	n=44	%
Economic						
Maintain an office in Alaska.	30	96.8	13	100.0	43	97.7
Choose local businesses or suppliers for items such as food, equipment or services on a regular basis.	31	100.0	13	100.0	44	100.0
Encourage customers to visit local visitor centers, museums and other attractions.	31	100.0	12	92.3	43	97.7
Support and participate in events, community development and/or heritage conservation in the communities in which you work.	30	96.8	12	92.3	42	95.5
Encourage customers to purchase local goods and services.	31	100.0	12	92.3	43	97.7
Offer the means for local entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history or culture (including food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.).	28	90.3	9	69.2	37	84.1

Table 17 presents the results of each sustainability practices index segmented by certification status. As expected, those businesses that are AGA certified are more likely to be near 1.00 on the index, to indicate they are performing nearly all the sustainability practices for said category. Non-certified businesses exhibited more of a range and come closer to approaching zero in the General Index and Environmental Index as compared to the certified respondents. The Economic Index resulted in the highest generation of 1.00's, indicating all economic indicators presented in the questionnaire are being done

by a business. Twenty-eight certified businesses and eight non-certified businesses were a 1.00 on the Economic Index.

Table 17

Sustainable Practice Indices by Certification Status^{a, b}

	Certified		Non-certified	
	n=31	%	n=13	%
General Practices				
.00	0	0	2	15.4
.25	1	3.2	5	38.5
.50	9	29.0	5	38.5
.75	9	29.0	1	7.6
1.00	12	38.8	0	0
Environmental Practices				
.20	0	0	1	7.7
.50	0	0	2	15.4
.60	2	6.5	1	7.7
.70	3	9.7	2	15.4
.80	6	19.4	1	7.7
.90	10	32.2	4	30.7
1.00	10	32.2	2	15.4
Sociocultural Practices				
.67	0	0	1	7.7
.83	6	19.4	5	38.5
1.00	25	80.6	7	53.8
Economic Practices				
.50	1	3.2	1	7.7
.83	2	6.5	4	30.8
1.00	28	90.3	8	61.5
All Practices				
.54	0	0	1	7.6
.62	0	0	2	15.4
.73	1	3.2	3	23.1
.77	3	9.7	1	7.7
.81	2	6.5	3	23.1
.85	4	12.9	0	0
.88	3	9.7	2	15.4
.92	6	19.4	1	7.7
.96	8	25.7	0	0
1.00	4	12.9	0	0

^a General includes 4 indicators, Environmental includes 10 indicators, Sociocultural includes 6 indications, and Economic includes 6 indicators. See Tables 13 to 16 for items.

^b Index created by summing number of “yes” responses and dividing by number of indicators for each section.

Statistical Analysis

Independent samples t-tests and regression analysis were used to answer the research questions. The first research questions examined the influence of certification on sustainability practices; the second research question tested the influence of internal and external factors on sustainability practices. An additional analysis examined the influence of certification on internal and external factors.

Research Question 1: How do sustainability practices vary among small businesses that are certified in sustainable tourism and those that are not certified?

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare certification status and the sustainability practice indices to test the research question “How do sustainability practices vary among small businesses that are certified in sustainable tourism and those that are not certified.” Table 18 shows the results of this test. There was a significant difference in the All Sustainability Practices Index based on certification status. The mean for certified businesses was 0.90 and non-certified businesses presented a mean of 0.76, indicating the difference in number of sustainability practices in which certified and non-certified businesses were engaged ($t = 4.82, p < .001$). The General Sustainability Practices Index indicated the greatest difference in the means (certified mean = 0.76, non-certified mean = 0.35) and the lowest engagement from non-certified businesses ($t = 5.54, p < .001$). The Environmental Index ($t = 1.97$), Sociocultural Index ($t = 1.75$), and Economic Index ($t = 1.42$) did not result in a significant difference with respect to certification status. The mean results of both the Sociocultural Index and Economic Index

of 0.97 for certified businesses and a mean of 0.91 for non-certified businesses indicated respondents are participating in many of these practices.

Table 18

Certification Status Compared to Sustainability Practices Indices

	n	Mean ^a	Standard Error Mean	t
General Practices				
certified	31	.76	.04	5.54***
non-certified	13	.35	.06	
Environmental Practices				
certified	31	.87	.02	1.97 [^]
non-certified	13	.74	.07	
Sociocultural Practices				
certified	31	.97	.01	1.75 [^]
non-certified	13	.91	.03	
Economic Practices				
certified	31	.97	.02	1.42 [^]
non-certified	13	.91	.04	
All Practices				
certified	31	.90	.01	4.82***
non-certified	13	.76	.03	

*significant at less than .05

**significant at less than .01

***significant at less than .001

[^]equal variances not assumed

^aIndices are based on a scale of 0 to 1.

Research Question 2: To what extent do internal and external motives affect small business participation/potential participation in sustainable tourism certification and practices?

To test the research model and examine the extent to which internal and external motives affect small business participation in sustainable tourism certification and practices, independent samples t-tests and regression analysis were conducted.

Before conducting regression analysis, independent samples t-tests that compared motives and barriers by certification status were conducted. Results indicated statistical significance in internal and external factors (Table 19). Based on a five-point Likert scale of “not at all important” to “extremely important”, certified businesses exhibited a high mean of 4.65 for “The values of sustainable tourism are core to company identity” variable. This variable is significant compared to certification status when equal variance is not assumed ($t = 2.59, p < .05$). Certified businesses also displayed a high mean for the motives “It helps in improving our society” (mean = 4.58) and “I believe in my company’s abilities to implement sustainable strategies” (mean = 4.55). Both were statistically significant ($t = 2.30, p < .05$; $t = 2.84, p < .01$ respectively).

“Customers have shown interest in sustainability” and “It allows for use of a branded logo acknowledging sustainability achievements” exhibited similar mean results, as well as statistical significance. Certified businesses presented a mean score of 3.87 for customer interest ($t = 2.23, p < .05$) and a mean of 3.68 for the use of a branded logo acknowledging sustainability achievements ($t = 2.03, p < .05$).

The last variable demonstrating statistical significance was “I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses”. A mean for certified businesses of 2.97 expresses a lower importance than the previously mentioned variables ($t = 2.71, p < .01$).

Table 19

Certification Status Compared to Motives^{a,b}

	n	Mean	Standard Error Mean	t
External				
It is a way to participate in Alaska's destination brand				
certified	31	3.58	.21	1.13
non-certified	13	3.15	.30	
Customers have shown interest in sustainability				
certified	31	3.87	.16	2.23*
non-certified	12	3.08	.40	
Company employees encouraged my company to be sustainable				
certified	31	3.52	.22	-.37
non-certified	12	3.67	.33	
It allows for use of a branded logo of sustainability				
certified	31	3.68	.18	2.03*
non-certified	13	3.00	.30	
It leads to long-term business cost savings				
certified	31	3.58	.23	.60
non-certified	12	3.33	.31	
It brings competitive advantage to my company				
certified	31	3.84	.17	1.79
non-certified	12	3.25	.31	
It provides marketing benefits				
certified	31	3.97	.18	1.04
non-certified	13	3.62	.29	
Information from ATIA aids in my understanding of sustainability				
certified	31	2.87	.20	1.77
non-certified	12	2.25	.22	
ATIA provides support/guidance in implementing sustainability				
certified	31	2.97	.23	.76^
non-certified	12	2.75	.18	
I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses				
certified	31	2.97	.19	2.71**
non-certified	12	2.08	.19	
Internal				
The values of sustainable tourism are core to co. identity				
certified	31	4.65	.10	2.59*^
non-certified	13	3.62	.39	
It helps in protecting the environment				
certified	31	4.77	.11	1.78
non-certified	13	4.38	.21	
It helps in improving our society				
certified	31	4.58	.10	2.30*
non-certified	13	4.08	.24	
I believe in my co.'s abilities to implement sustainable strategies				
certified	31	4.55	.11	2.84**
non-certified	13	3.92	.21	

*significant at less than .05 **significant at less than .01 ***significant at less than .001

^equal variances not assumed

^a Motives measured on a five-point Likert scale of "not at all important" to "extremely important"

^b "I have seen other bus. benefit from implementing sustainability," and "It is easy to implement" removed based on reliability results.

Independent samples t-test comparing certification status and two barrier variables were estimated. Barriers were of internal company self-efficacy. Non-certified businesses accounted for higher mean scores for barriers being an issue (paperwork mean = 3.69; knowledge mean = 3.17) (Table 20), as expected, compared to certified businesses (paperwork mean = 2.48; knowledge mean = 2.06). T-test results for “Paperwork involved is too time consuming” were -4.60 ($p < .001$) and for “I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability” t-test results were -3.96 ($p < .001$).

Table 20

Certification Status Compared to Barriers^{a,b}

	n	Mean	Standard Error Mean	t
Paperwork involved is too time consuming				
certified	31	2.48	.13	-4.60***
non-certified	13	3.69	.26	
I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability				
certified	31	2.06	.15	-3.95***
non-certified	12	3.17	.24	

*significant at less than .05

**significant at less than .01

***significant at less than .001

^a Barriers measured on a five-point Likert scale of “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

^b “Cost involved limits my company's involvement in sustainability” was removed from analysis based on reliability results.

Regression analysis tested the relationship between modeling, incentives, company values, self-efficacy, and each of the sustainability indices. As discussed in chapter three, modeling, incentive, and company value variables were generated from the

mean of the motives representing each topic. Reliability tests indicated the motives representing self-efficacy to not be reliable, therefore these were not combined into a new variable. To include self-efficacy in regression testing, one motive representing self-efficacy (“I believe in my company’s abilities to implement sustainable strategies”) and one barrier representing self-efficacy (“I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability”) were chosen based on their close relation to the definition of self-efficacy. The scale descriptors were different on these two items; the self-efficacy motive was measured on a five-point Likert scale of “not at all important” to “extremely important” and the self-efficacy barrier was measured on a five-point scale of “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

Due to the small sample size of this study and large standard errors, a significance of $p < 0.10$ was used in evaluating regression results and certification status was not controlled for. Results of the All Sustainability Practices Index regression showed the self-efficacy motive “I believe in my company’s abilities to implement sustainable strategies” to be significant ($\beta = 0.35, p < .05$) (Table 21). An increase in belief in company abilities to implement sustainability is related to an increase in number of sustainability initiatives practiced.

Table 21

Summary of Regression Analysis for Internal and External Motives and Barrier Variables Affecting All Sustainability Practices

Variables	Unstand. Coef.		Stand. Coef	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	SE	B		
Incentive	-.001	.027	-.009	-.048	.962
Modeling	.030	.024	.224	1.243	.222
Company Values	.021	.025	.125	.832	.411
Co. Ability ^a	.054	.025	.348	2.143	.039
Knowledge ^b	-.020	.016	-.170	-1.211	.233

* R = .65

* R² = .42

^a Motive representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point scale of “Not at all important” to “Extremely important”

^b Barrier representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point scale of “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”

Regression of the General Sustainability Practices Index resulted in significance for the self-efficacy barrier as a single item “I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability” ($\beta = -0.29$, $p < .05$) (Table 22). The negative relationship between general sustainability practices and knowledge is to be expected. With increase in sustainability practices, one would expect knowledge to be less of a barrier. The company values composite variable was also significant ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < .10$).

Table 22

Summary of Regression Analysis for Internal and External Motives and Barrier Variables Affecting General Sustainability Practices

Variables	Unstand. Coef.		Stand. Coef	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	SE	B		
Incentive	.028	.072	.070	.391	.698
Modeling	.059	.063	.167	.927	.360
Company Values	.118	.066	.269	1.788	.082
Co. Ability ^a	.044	.067	.106	.655	.516
Knowledge ^b	-.090	.043	-.291	-2.076	.045

* R = .65

* R² = .42

^a Motive representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point Likert scale of “Not at all important” to “Extremely important”

^b Barrier representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point Likert scale of “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”

Regression of the Environmental Sustainability Practices Index on motives

resulted in the single-item self-efficacy item to be significant at the 0.10 level ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < .10$) (Table 23).

Table 23

Summary of Regression Analysis for Internal and External Motives and Barrier Variables Affecting Environmental Sustainability Practices

Variables	Unstand. Coef.		Stand. Coef	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	SE	B		
Incentive	-.015	.049	-.063	-.302	.764
Modeling	.024	.043	.115	.546	.588
Company Values	.034	.046	.130	.743	.462
Co. Ability ^a	.078	.046	.324	1.709	.096
Knowledge ^b	-.011	.030	-.058	-.352	.727

* $R = .47$

* $R^2 = .22$

^a Motive representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point Likert scale of “Not at all important” to “Extremely important”

^b Barrier representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point Likert scale of “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”

The Sociocultural Sustainability Practices Index also resulted in significance with the barrier of “I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability” ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .05$) (Table 24). Again, a negative relationship was to be expected due to this being a barrier variable.

Table 24

Summary of Regression Analysis for Internal and External Motives and Barrier Variables Affecting Sociocultural Sustainability Practices

Variables	Unstand. Coef.		Stand. Coef	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	SE	B		
Incentive	.028	.023	.236	1.202	.237
Modeling	-.006	.020	-.056	-.283	.778
Company Values	-.004	.021	-.028	-.172	.865
Co. Ability ^a	.027	.021	.229	1.284	.207
Knowledge ^b	-.029	.014	-.325	-2.107	.042

* $R = .55$

* $R^2 = .30$

^a Motive representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point Likert scale of “Not at all important” to “Extremely important”

^b Barrier representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point Likert scale of “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”

Results differed from above for regression of the Economic Sustainability Practices Index. Modeling was the only variable to result in significance, which was not present with other index regression results ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .10$) (Table 25). An increase in the importance of modeling other businesses coincides with an increase in economic sustainability practices.

Table 25

Summary of Regression Analysis for Internal and External Motives and Barrier Variables Affecting Economic Sustainability Practices

Variables	Unstand. Coef.		Stand. Coef	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	SE	B		
Incentive	-.027	.033	-.169	-.822	.416
Modeling	.056	.029	.406	1.948	.059
Company Values	-.041	.030	-.236	-1.357	.183
Co. Ability ^a	.048	.030	.295	1.573	.124
Knowledge ^b	.020	.020	.166	1.023	.313

* $R = .48$

* $R^2 = .23$

^a Motive representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point Likert scale of “Not at all important” to “Extremely important”

^b Barrier representing self-efficacy. Measured on a five-point Likert scale of “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”

Sub-questions were included in this study to assist in answering research question number two. Sub-questions delved into internal and external motives of self-efficacy (internal factor), company values (internal factor), modeling (external factor), and behavioral incentives (external factor) and their impact on implementing sustainable practices and sustainable tourism. Results of the independent samples t-tests and regression analysis are summarized to respond to each these research questions.

Research Question 2a: To what extent are incentives a motivational factor for implementation of sustainable practices and certification?

Regression did not result in any significance in incentives as it applies to implementing sustainability practices. Independent samples t-tests of “Customers have shown interest in sustainability” and “It allows for use of a branded logo acknowledging sustainability achievements” exhibited similar mean results, as well as statistical significance. Certified businesses indicated both of these incentives to be of higher importance than did non-certified businesses, however, a high standard error mean is present for non-certified businesses.

Research Question 2b: To what extent is modeling sustainable behavior a motivational factor for implementation of sustainable tourism practices and certification?

Regression results indicated modeling to be significant with the Economic Sustainability Practices Index. General, Sociocultural, Environmental, and All Sustainability Practices Indices were not significant in relation to modeling. Independent samples t-test results indicated “I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses” to be significant. Certified businesses reported this to be of higher importance, yet a mean of 2.97 for certificated businesses and a mean of 2.08 for non-certified businesses indicates moderate levels of importance.

Research Question 2c: To what extent are company values a motivational factor for implementation of sustainable tourism practices and certification?

Company values had a significant relationship with the General Sustainability Practices Index, when a significance of 0.10 was used. Significance was not found in the Environmental, Sociocultural, Economic, or All Sustainability Practices Indices. “The values of sustainable tourism are core to company identity” and “It helps in improving our society” were both significant compared to certification status. Both were rated of higher importance by certified businesses, but were rated as very important by both groups. “It helps in protecting the environment” was not significant compared to certification status, however, it was rated of high importance by both certified and non-certified businesses.

Research Question 2d: To what extent are self-efficacy beliefs important in motivating implementation of sustainable tourism practices and certification?

Self-efficacy resulted in significance. Regression with All Sustainability Practices Index resulted in a significant relationship with “I believe in my company’s abilities to implement sustainable strategies.” This self-efficacy motive was also significant with Environmental Sustainability Practices Index, when the 0.10 significance level was used. The barrier of “I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability” was significant with the General Sustainability Practices Index, as well as the Sociocultural, as well as, General Sustainability Practices Index. The relationship with both indices indicates a mild relationship, with a Standardized Coefficients Beta of -0.3.

Independent samples t-tests indicated “I believe in my company’s abilities to implement sustainable strategies” to be significant compared to certification status. Certified businesses indicated it to be of higher importance compared to non-certified businesses. “Paperwork involved is too time consuming” and “I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability” were significant barriers to implementation of sustainability practices/certification when compared to certification status. Non-certified businesses indicated higher agreement to these barriers, yet a mean of 3.17 for “I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability” indicates near neutral on the matter.

In summary, results of demographic and model descriptive statistics, and statistical analysis provided a profile of the sample to answer the research questions. Internal factors of self-efficacy and company values, and external factors of modeling and incentives are represented to varying degrees and provide a profile of Alaska tourism businesses and their motives for implementing sustainability practices and certification. Sustainability practice indices and certification status provided an understanding of the sample’s engagement with sustainability, and the influence of internal and external factors on participation in sustainable practices and certification. These results and implications are further summarized in chapter five.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This section presents a discussion of results and conclusions in the following structure: (1) Summary of Results, (2) Sustainable Tourism Certification and Practices Implications, (3) Limitations of Findings, (4) Future Research and Industry Recommendations, and (5) Conclusion.

Summary of Results

This study examined internal and external factors influencing participation in sustainable tourism certification and sustainability practices. By using social cognitive theory as a framework, the modeling of sustainable behavior, incentives for behavior, company values, and self-efficacy were examined.

While a small sample size impeded some statistical analysis, interesting results were still found. The population studied revealed certified businesses were participating in more sustainable practices than non-certified businesses. Almost all the certified respondents were participating in 75 percent or more of the sustainability practices included in the survey. Thirteen percent of certified businesses self-reported participating in all the sustainability practices, whereas nearly 50 percent of non-certified businesses self-reported participating in between 50 and 75 percent of sustainability practices. General sustainability practices, such as having a sustainability policy and displaying commitment to sustainability, were found to be of significance when comparing certified and non-certified businesses. Certified businesses were far more likely to have a sustainability policy and display their commitment to sustainability. This could indicate the dedication to sustainability of certified businesses and validate their indication of

sustainability being a core company value. It could also point to a hierarchy of sustainability practices, as company policy and general practices appear to have a lower priority even with sustainable tourism businesses. Implementing water saving activities and using renewable sources of energy were environmental practices with a noticeable difference between certified and non-certified businesses. Both groups had lower participation in these than other practices, however, the percentage of certified businesses participating in water saving activities and use of renewable energy were near double that of non-certified businesses. Previous research has found mixed results as to whether certified businesses engage in more sustainable practices than non-certified businesses (Borck & Coglianesse, 2009; Darnall & Milstein, 2014).

Social cognitive theory presented a model relevant to studying the motives of small businesses to implement or consider implementing sustainable practices and/or certification. External factors of incentives and modeling displayed little significance, yet key takeaways were present when considering descriptive profiles. Incentives, as a whole, were not found to be statistically significant as motives to implement sustainable practices/certification. In examining each incentive included in this study, marketing benefits and consumer interest were rated with the highest importance as incentives. Modeling, which included learning from other businesses and ATIA communications, were rated with low importance. This distinction between incentives and modeling indicated the importance of the consumer side of business, as opposed to business network and resources being important. Modeling was found to be significant in its relationship to economic sustainability practices. This was a distinction from other findings of this study, as results presented the possibility that businesses are using

external networks to learn about economic initiatives, but not environmental or sociocultural initiatives.

Internal factors were found to be notable influences in implementing sustainable practices and/or certification. Company values and self-efficacy were examined as internal factors influencing business decisions. Nearly 60 percent of companies represented in this study were tour operators. Few respondents were new businesses, as nearly 75 percent have been in business ten years or more. Most companies indicated having one office in Alaska, and 25 percent reported having two or more offices in Alaska. The average number of full-time employees was 27. Company values were rated of high importance by the sample of Alaska tourism businesses. Company values stood out as significant with general sustainability practices. As stated above, this could indicate the difference in commitment to sustainability between certified and non-certified businesses. Self-efficacy, or belief in one's abilities was also found to be significant as an influence for companies participating in sustainable practices and/or certification. Believing in company abilities was significant when compared with environmental practices. The importance of values and self-efficacy aligns with previous research findings (Font et al., 2016a). Descriptive data revealed time consuming paperwork was the biggest barrier to participation for non-certified businesses. Cost involved with sustainable practices and certification was not significant for this sample and of little importance as a barrier to participation. Several past studies have found cost to be a barrier to certification participation for large and small businesses, as companies need to see a return on investment to participate (Jarvis et al., 2010).

Internal and external factors have some influence on this sample's decisions to implement or consider implementing sustainability practices and/or certification. Factors internal to a company most notably impacted involvement in sustainability practices and certification, rather than external factors. Believing in the company's abilities to successfully implement sustainability practices and/or certification was significant. As would be expected, and as follows the model of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is central to behavior (Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

Response bias would suggest businesses highly engaged in sustainability would be more likely to respond to a study of this nature (Rivera & De Leon, 2004). This thesis examined businesses that have demonstrated interest in sustainability. A study sample with greater representation of the population would likely reveal more variance in sustainability practices and importance of motives. Businesses less interested or unaware of sustainable tourism/sustainability would likely indicate external motives, such as consumer interest and marketing benefits, to be of higher importance compared to businesses engaged in sustainability.

Sustainable Tourism Certification and Practices Implications

Results of this study present various implications for the tourism industry, small businesses, and industry associations, most notably for marketing and communication strategies. Associations and organizations should implement different approaches to engage businesses highly involved in sustainability versus businesses less involved or unaware of sustainability. Appealing to core values of a company, as well as making a business case for sustainable tourism, would be advised for those looking to engage small businesses in sustainability. As the consumer is imperative to business success, ATIA and

similar industry associations would benefit in continuing to grow the marketing of certification and sustainability to consumers. Consumers, while ultimately being the individual traveler, also includes tour operators, travel agents, cruise companies, and others aiding the consumer experience. Businesses themselves are not only participants in certification, but part of the tourism supply chain looking for sustainably minded vendors (Font & Caray, 2005). Companies such as these present a direct link between the tourism industry and the consumer. Promotion of the certification program can therefore be expanded to target suppliers as well as consumer markets (Andereck, 2009).

While this study focused on businesses interested in sustainable tourism and found internal motives to be significant, communication strategies should also appeal to external motivational factors to gain new participants. Businesses unaware or uninterested in sustainable tourism and/or certification are likely to be motivated by external factors to adopt a new behavior. Sharing information about consumer interest in sustainability, cost savings, supply chain interest in working with sustainable companies, and media attention received, would help to gain the attention of businesses not yet involved in sustainable practices. Discussing the wins sustainable businesses are achieving and sharing information to educate companies on sustainable tourism and implementation would be necessary to gain the attention of businesses previously unengaged in sustainable tourism. ATIA provides support to businesses looking to increase their sustainability efforts. Benefits such as these should be promoted to add to the resources of small businesses.

Certification programs seek to create standards for an industry. Finding a common understanding of sustainable tourism and sustainability has shown to be difficult.

Certification programs for sustainable tourism and the tourism industry can aid in establishing standards and an increased understanding of sustainable tourism. As Lansing and Vries (2007) suggest, a rating system and sustainable tourism indicators are needed for consumer knowledge and industry standardization. Font and Caray (2005) also discuss the importance of a rating system in a certification program. It could be a useful tool in helping consumers distinguish between companies that are highly engaged in sustainable practices and companies that are less engaged. A rating system, or levels of certification, can also inspire businesses to participate in certification. Companies implementing fewer sustainable practices would be able to gain certification status, yet have something to aspire to in reaching higher status; and companies highly engaged in sustainable practices can shine as top achievers in sustainability (Darnall & Milstein, 2014; Rivera, 2002).

To become AGA certified, applications are reviewed and discussed by ATIA staff, as well as an AGA Advisory Committee made up of ATIA Board members and ATIA member businesses. ATIA utilizes customer comments and random site visits to monitor continued compliance with AGA standards (AGA, 2016). Additionally, it is suggested the AGA Advisory Committee conduct on-site interviews with businesses prior to acceptance into AGA certification. Third-party assessment of a business is highly recommended for certification bodies to remove bias and greenwashing from a certification program. However, where resources do not allow for third party assessment, on-site interviews add an additional authority to the certification process.

As addressed in this thesis, it is important to understand the unique challenges and considerations small businesses face when implementing sustainable tourism strategies.

Large businesses are also present in most destinations; therefore, consideration will need to be made to make certification appealing and equitable to both large and small businesses. In Alaska, for example, cruise ships are big business with around half of Alaska visitors coming in via cruise ship, according to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) 2015 data (CLIA, 2017). A tiered certification program, as well as interviews during the certification process would aid in ensuring compliance with certification standards and destination sustainability.

Organizations, such as Global Sustainable Tourism Council, are making strides to operationalize sustainable tourism and standardize indicators. Adoption of these standards aids in mainstreaming sustainability. The Alaska Travel Industry Association's decision to standardize the Adventure Green Alaska certification program to align with GSTC recommendations is a positive step. Individual consumers may not be conscious of the importance of this, but members of the tourism supply chain, such as tour operators, are more likely to appreciate the standardization efforts.

Those seeking to engrain sustainability into the core of a company, should increase discussion of the importance of sustainability policy to guide and sustain a company's commitment and achievement of sustainability goals. Having a sustainability policy showed low participation in this study. ATIA has made sustainable tourism core to their company vision, and could do well to include information about integrating sustainable strategies into company policy.

Resources of a destination, as well as resources of a certification body (such as ATIA), need to be considered in establishing certification standards and accordance measures. One survey respondent, for example, indicated a recycling facility was not near

them which limited participation in sustainable practices. All destinations are different and have their own challenges to consider. Therefore, while standardization across the tourism industry is important, consideration of the uniqueness of a destination and appropriate sustainable tourism strategies must be taken into consideration. Collaboration with state/community government, environmental, and other agencies would be necessary to build an infrastructure for sustainable practices to take hold throughout a destination. Balancing consideration of the unique resources of a destination, yet seeking to align with global standards will aid the operationalization of sustainable tourism.

Limitations of Findings

This research faced some limitations. The small sample size limited statistical analysis. High standard errors existed in the non-certificated business group and the small sample affected confidence intervals used. Though this study presents significant findings, destinations vary in a multitude of ways and therefore findings may not apply to all destinations. Respondents were likely to be businesses with greater commitment to sustainability. Study results would likely show greater variance in motives and sustainable practices with a larger sample of non-certified businesses and businesses that have not demonstrated interest in sustainability.

Social cognitive theory is often tested in a controlled setting and measures of internal and external factors were adjusted to align with this study's population, setting and research objectives.

As the Adventure Green Alaska certification included a self-assessed application of sustainability involvement, this study too relied on the self-assessment of sustainability practices. Therefore, a range of definitions could be found from a "yes, we do" or "no, we

do not” response on sustainability practices. Certification programs such as these tend to be self-reported, so this does not go against the norm. An advanced certification program may include more governance oversight and monitoring in the form of audits or evaluation research.

Future Research and Industry Recommendations

A number of avenues would be appropriate for further research to aid in the understanding of small businesses, their motives for sustainability, and operationalization of sustainable tourism. As Lin and Hsu (2015) attempt to develop a research model of green consumer behavior, so too would a model for sustainable tourism business behavior be useful for future research. This study pulled together a variety of research studies and industry resources to create a questionnaire and measures for answering research questions. A common scale for evaluating engagement with sustainable tourism and certification would aid in advancing the understanding and potential adoption of sustainable tourism principles.

As respondents were likely to be businesses with greater commitment to sustainability, assessing a larger population of non-certified businesses and businesses that have not expressed interest in sustainability would provide a more representative estimate of the operationalization of sustainable tourism. Research comparing multiple destination certification programs would be beneficial in assessing the sustainable tourism certification market, examining differences in certification schemes, and successes in operationalizing sustainable tourism.

Industry (ATIA) communications as an external influence did not provide significant results in this study, however, communications are key to an industry

association promoting sustainable tourism and certification. Future research into types of messaging and communication efforts that would engage tourism businesses in sustainable tourism participation is advised.

ATIA is a membership organization, yet membership is not required in order to gain certification with Adventure Green Alaska. Future research in Alaska, or similar destinations, could measure the difference in engagement with sustainability between those that are members of an industry association and those that are not. Future research into destination resources is also advisable. As one respondent noted, recycling facilities are not nearby their place of business which creates a barrier to participation in sustainable initiatives.

Social cognitive theory was used to establish the model for this research study. Future research to assess self-efficacy, modeling, and other internal and external factors affecting behavior could be developed. This study did not measure the relationship that internal and external factors have on one another, which could be a future area for research.

Conclusion

This study examined internal and external motives and barriers of small businesses to implement sustainability practices and sustainable tourism certification using social cognitive theory as a framework. This study has added to the quantitative research on small tourism businesses. This study would be of value to those interested in research on small businesses, sustainable tourism, sustainability, and certification. It expanded the use of social cognitive theory.

Results of previous research vary as to motives for participation in sustainability practices and certification. This study found internal company factors to be of greater significance than external factors. General sustainable tourism/sustainability practices, such as company having a sustainability policy and displaying commitment to sustainability for the public to see, were found to have lower participation than most other sustainability practices. Concern for environment and society were shown to be highly important to this sample. Sustainable tourism strategies, such as certification, present a necessary management tool for protecting the very assets and resources destinations rely on.

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APPENDIX A

ADVENTURE GREEN ALASKA PROGRAM APPLICATION



Adventure Green Alaska

An eco-sustainability program of the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA)

Thank you for your interest in becoming AGA certified. We encourage you to put thought and consideration into all essay question responses to help us best understand your business and eco-sustainability practices. Please type all application responses. **Hand-written applications will not be accepted.** For any questions on the AGA application please contact Erica Hedman at ehedman@AlaskaTIA.org or 907.646.3307.

Program Application

GENERAL INFORMATION

Business Name:

Contact Name & Title:

Mailing Address:

Mailing City, State, Zip:

Physical Address:

Physical City, State, Zip:

Website:

Email:

Telephone:

Number full-time equivalent (FTE)* employees working in Alaska during peak season:

** FTE employee example: Your business employs 5 full-time employees and 2 part-time employees during your peak visitor season. The total number would be 6 FTE employees.*

Please provide two references outside of your business or organization along with contact information:

ESSAY QUESTION: Description of business:

Application Fees*

- 0-2 FTE employees: \$100
- 3-5 FTE employees: \$150
- 6-20 FTE employees: \$250
- 21-50 FTE employees: \$350
- 51 + FTE employees: \$500 +

*If a business is not approved for certification, feedback will be provided with recommendations on ways to improve the application for resubmission. The initial application fee is valid for two years and there is no limit on the number of times businesses can reapply to achieve certification.

I hereby commit that my business meets the minimum legal standards of quality, safety, and sustainability and is compliant with applicable regulations and generally accepted business practices, including but not limited to:

- ~ Compliance with U.S. environmental, consumer protection, and labor laws, while operating within the state of Alaska or its territorial waters.
- ~ Business has a two year operating history in Alaska.
- ~ Membership in a tourism or community trade association such as a CVB, Chamber of Commerce, or ATIA.
- ~ Commercial liability insurance policy.
- ~ Valid commercial use permits with agencies managing public lands in our areas of operation, if applicable.
- ~ Collaboration with private and public land managers to ensure that operation do not harm sites of cultural or historic significance.

Signature

Date

By signing this application, I acknowledge that the information presented is true to the best of my knowledge. Furthermore, I agree that payment must be received by ATIA in order for the application to be reviewed and processed.

We encourage all applications to be submitted electronically to aga@AlaskaTIA.org.

Checks for the application fee should be made out to Alaska Travel Industry Association.

Please submit payment to:

Alaska Travel Industry Association
ATTN: AGA Application
610 E. 5th Ave., Ste. 200
Anchorage, AK 99501

Section A: Local Communities & Economies

1. Do you maintain an office in Alaska?
 Seasonal (5) Year- Round (10) Do not have an Alaska-based office (0)

2. Does your staff include local residents of the communities in which you operate?
 No less than 20% (2) 21-40% (4) 41-60% (6) 61-80% (8) 81-100% (10)

3. Does your business work with other local businesses or suppliers for items such as food, equipment and services on regular basis?
 Yes (5) No (0)

4. Do you encourage your customers to visit local visitor centers, museums and other attractions?
 Yes (4) No (0)

5. Does your business support and participate in events in the communities in which you work?
 Yes (3) No (0)

6. Do you encourage customers to purchase local goods and services?
 Yes (5) No (0)

7. Does your business have written safety policies & procedures? Please refer to the FAQ section on adventuregreenalaska.org for an example.
 Yes (5) No (0)

8. ESSAY QUESTION: Describe how your business benefits local communities and economies in ways not included above? Please attach extra pages as necessary (up to 25 points).

Section B: The Environment

1. Does your business have, and prominently display, a policy regarding your commitment to sustainable tourism on your website or promotional materials?
 Yes (5) No (0)
If yes, please submit samples of promotional materials or enter link to view online:
2. Has your business replaced incandescent lights with low-energy lights or compact fluorescent lights where feasible?
 Yes (4) No (0)
3. Has your business caulked and installed weather stripping on doors and windows?
 Yes (5) No (0)
4. Does your business provide both employees and customers with opportunities to recycle whenever possible?
 Yes (3) No (0)
5. Does your business purchase paper products such as office paper and toilet paper with a minimum 30% post-consumer recycled content?
 Yes (4) No (0)
6. Does your business properly dispose of hazardous waste materials?
 Yes (5) No (0)
7. Does your business convey information about the ecology and natural history of Alaska as a standard part of staff training and orientation?
 Yes (3) No (0)
8. Does your business handle food, garbage and yard waste in a manner that prevents the accidental feeding of wildlife and/or other environmental impacts?
 Yes (4) No (0)
9. Does your business use non-toxic, phosphate-free biodegradable laundry detergents and cleaning products?
 Yes (2) No (0)
10. Does your business actively encourage participation by in-state consumers?
 Yes (3) No (0)

If so, please provide a description here:

11. Do you promote the use of recyclable, compostable or biodegradable items such as paper products, packaging products and food service items, where possible?

Yes (3) No (0)

If so, please provide examples here:

12. ESSAY QUESTION: Has your business already taken steps to adopt sustainable practices such as improving fuel efficiency, following guidelines that minimize impacts to native plant and wildlife, promoting water conservation and/or investing in the use of alternative energy in your business operations?

If applicable, please provide a description here: (5-15 points)

13. ESSAY QUESTION: Not every question will be applicable to your business and you may use sustainable practices that are not addressed in this section. Please describe any ways in which your business helps to conserve the environment that have not been covered by the previous questions and attach extra pages as necessary (up to 25 points).

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE



The Center for Sustainable Tourism at Arizona State University (ASU) is partnering with the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) to learn more about participation in the Adventure Green Alaska (AGA) sustainable tourism certification program and sustainability practices of Alaska businesses. In addition to aiding ATIA in guiding development of the AGA certification program, this research is being conducted by ASU master's student, Kari Roberg, and will be utilized as her academic thesis research. As a valued member of ATIA, your time and input are greatly appreciated.

We are interested in knowing more about business motives for implementing sustainability practices and participating in Adventure Green Alaska certification. We received your name and email because of your involvement with Adventure Green Alaska or Alaska Travel Industry Association. We ask that you, the owner, or general manager of your company complete the questionnaire on behalf of your business or organization. You are one of a small number of people who have been asked to take part in this study so your responses are of great importance.

We are asking that you fill out this online survey which will take 15 to 20 minutes. You must be 18 years old or older to complete the questionnaire. Your participation is voluntary; starting or finishing this online survey will be considered your consent to participate. There is no penalty or negative consequence if you decide to withdraw from the study. You will not be required to answer questions if you do not want to. If you do submit the online survey, you are assured of complete confidentiality. Your online survey has an identification number so we can keep track of distribution and we may send you a reminder if we do not see that your online survey was started. All the information we collect will be grouped together and used for statistical purposes only. While we may use the information we collect in reports and publications, at no time will your name be released or associated with your responses. You may have filled out similar information for ATIA previously, but in the interest of giving others an opportunity to provide this information we ask that you take a moment to again provide the information requested. Clicking the red button below will begin the survey.

Your participation in this study will contribute to academic research on sustainable tourism and may contribute to efforts by Alaska Travel Industry Association regarding sustainable tourism. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Kari Roberg at kari.roberg@asu.edu or Dr. Christine Vogt at chrisv@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.



Powered by Qualtrics

This first set of questions asks about your company/organization.

What category does your company belong to? *(Select all that apply.)*

- Tourism Attraction
- Food & Beverage
- Retail
- Sports & Recreation
- Transportation
- Lodging
- Tour Operator
- Guiding
- Other (please describe):





Which of the following do you identify as your main business category? (Select one.)



Powered by Qualtrics



How long has your company/organization been open? *(Type in a number.)*

of years:

How many full-time and part-time employees (including yourself) currently work for your company/organization during peak season? *(Type in a number for each line item.)*

of full-time employees:
of part-time employees:

Is your company currently Adventure Green Alaska certified? *(Select one.)*

- Yes
- No



Powered by Qualtrics



How many years (in total) has your company held Adventure Green Alaska certification?
(Type in a number.)

of years:

Not including Adventure Green Alaska, is your company certified by any other sustainable tourism or environmental program? (Select one.)

- Yes
- No



Powered by Qualtrics

How many offices does your company have in Alaska, and outside of Alaska? (Type in a number for each line item.)

in Alaska:

outside of Alaska:



Powered by Qualtrics

This section asks about your motives/barriers for participation in sustainable tourism practices and Adventure Green Alaska certification.

For each of the following statements, please indicate the level of importance as it applies to your motives for implementing (or considering implementing) sustainable tourism practices, including sustainable tourism certification. *(Please rate each line item by clicking on the appropriate circle to indicate the level of importance it is in deciding to implement sustainable tourism.)*

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
I have learned how to implement sustainability from other businesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It leads to long-term business cost savings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have seen other businesses benefit from implementing sustainability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It helps in improving our society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is a way to participate in Alaska's destination brand (i.e. Alaska Travel Industry Association).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe in my company's abilities to implement sustainable strategies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information/communications from Alaska Travel Industry Association aids in my understanding of sustainable tourism/sustainability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It provides marketing benefits (i.e. being able to market company as sustainable).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It brings competitive advantage to my company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) provides support/guidance in implementing sustainability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The values of sustainable tourism are core to company identity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company employees have encouraged my company to be sustainable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customers have shown					

Company employees have encouraged my company to be sustainable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customers have shown interest in sustainability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It helps in protecting the environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It allows for use of a branded logo acknowledging sustainability achievements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy to implement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



For each of the following statements, please indicate the level of agreement as it applies to your company's barriers to implementing (or considering implementing) sustainable tourism practices, including sustainable tourism certification. *(Please rate each line item by clicking on the appropriate circle to indicate the level of agreement as it applies to your decision to implement sustainable tourism.)*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Cost involved limits my company's involvement in sustainability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Paperwork involved is too time consuming.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
I do not know enough about sustainable tourism/sustainability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please describe: <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



This next section asks about your company's sustainability initiatives.

For each of the following statements about sustainable tourism policy, please indicate whether your company currently does the following. *(Please rate each line item by clicking on the appropriate circle. An index of sustainability practices will be created from these results, so it is important to respond to each line item.)*

	Yes, we do	No, we do not
Follow a formal policy regarding company commitment to sustainable tourism.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Display sustainable tourism commitment to company website and/or promotional materials.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Train or provide guidance to personnel regarding their roles and responsibilities with respect to sustainability management system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Follow a documented code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities with the collaboration and consent of the affected community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



For each of the following environmental practices, please indicate whether your company currently does the following. *(Please rate each line item by clicking on the appropriate circle. An index of sustainability practices will be created from these results, so it is important to respond to each line item.)*

	Yes, we do	No, we do not
Encourage customers to be environmentally friendly in nature.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Measure energy consumption and implement energy saving activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Measure water consumption and implement water saving activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage customers, staff, and suppliers to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implement practices to minimize pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and/or air, water, soil contaminants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use renewable energy sources (solar, wind, biomass).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote the use of recyclable, compostable, or biodegradable items such as paper products, packaging products, and food service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Handle food, garbage, and yard waste in a manner that prevents the accidental feeding of wildlife, and/or other environmental impacts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoid introduction of invasive species. Native species are used for landscaping and restoration wherever feasible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respect wildlife. Do not produce adverse effects on wildlife. Any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated, and compensation is made to conservation management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



For each of the following social/cultural practices, please indicate whether your company currently does the following. *(Please rate each line item by clicking on the appropriate circle. An index of sustainability practices will be created from these results, so it is important to respond to each line item.)*

	Yes, we do	No, we do not
Actively encourage (customers') respect for the culture and customs of the area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convey information to customers about the history of the areas in which you operate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choose suppliers that demonstrate their social responsibility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incorporate elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in company operations, design, decoration, food, or shops, while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do not sell, trade, or display historical and archaeological artifacts, except as permitted by local/international law.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Train your employees about the history and cultures of the area in which you operate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



For each of the following economic practices, please indicate whether your company currently does the following. *(Please rate each line item by clicking on the appropriate circle. An index of sustainability practices will be created from these results, so it is important to respond to each line item.)*

	Yes, we do	No, we do not
Maintain an office in Alaska.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choose local businesses or suppliers for items such as food, equipment or services on a regular basis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage customers to visit local visitor centers, museums and other attractions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support and participate in events, community development and/or heritage conservation in the communities in which you work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage customers to purchase local goods and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer the means for local entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history or culture (including food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



This section asks about tourism and sustainability.

For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement as it applies to your company. *(Rate each line item by clicking on the appropriate circle to indicate if you agree or disagree.)*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Tourism needs to be developed in harmony with the natural and cultural environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulatory environmental standards are needed to reduce the negative impacts of tourism.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourist numbers should be limited in select areas to protect local resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism decisions must be made by all in my community regardless of a person's background.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism should benefit the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



This set of questions asks about your company/organization.

Is your company a family business? *(Select one.)*

- Yes
 - No
-

How many customers can your company accommodate per day? *(Select one.)*

- Under 20
 - 21-60
 - 61-100
 - More than 100
-

Which months is your company open for business? *(Select all that apply.)*

- January
 - February
 - March
 - April
 - May
 - June
 - July
 - August
 - September
 - October
 - November
 - December
-

In general, what is the most common type of travel party your business caters to? *(Select one.)*

- Families
- Friends
- Couples
- Solo travelers
- Cruise attendees
- Group tour

On average, how much does your company generate in annual sales? *(Select one.)*

Under \$49,999

\$50,000-\$99,999

\$100,000-\$199,999

\$200,000-\$499,999

\$500,000-\$1 million

More than \$1 million

Which organizations is your company a member of? *(Type in the names of **up to five** companies in which your company is a member.)*

Company 1:

Company 2:

Company 3:

Company 4:

Company 5:



This set of questions asks about you.

What is your position in your company? *(Select one.)*

- Owner
- General Manager
- Other, please type in title:

What is your gender? *(Select one.)*

- Male
- Female

What is your age? *(Select one.)*

What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? *(Select one.)*

- Less than high school
- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Vocational/trade school certificate
- Some college
- Two-year college degree
- Four-year college degree
- Master's degree
- Ph.D., M.D., J.D., or equivalent

Do you have children? *(Select one.)*

- Yes
- No

<<

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The last question(s) asks about participating in a follow-up interview.

Thank you for your time and input in responding to this questionnaire. To further understand study findings, interviews may be needed. If interviews are needed, are you willing to be contacted for a 30-minute interview as a follow-up to the answers provided here? Interviews would be conducted via phone or online portal and take place at your convenience between February 6 - March 6, 2017. *(Select one.)*

- Yes
- No

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Powered by Qualtrics



Thank you for your willingness to participate in a potential follow-up interview. Please provide your name, company, and email or phone number. If interviews are needed, you will be contacted to schedule a 30-minute interview. *(Please type in requested contact information.)*

Name:

Company:

Email Address:

Phone:



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We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

Powered by Qualtrics

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INVITATION

Email Subject: "Seeking your input on Adventure Green Alaska"

Dear (FirstName):

The Center for Sustainable Tourism at Arizona State University has partnered with the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) for a study that will inform ATIA's efforts for sustainable tourism in Alaska. We are inviting you to participate in this study.

As a valued partner in Alaska tourism, we are extremely interested in your perspective and company initiatives regarding sustainable tourism certification and sustainability practices. **Your participation will help us understand your involvement and interest in sustainable tourism.** You are one of a small number of people who have been asked to take part in this study, so **your participation will greatly enhance the quality of results.** You may own multiple companies, but in answering these questions please answer from the stand point of (Company Name). We are asking that *you, the owner, or general manager* of your company fill out this online survey on behalf of your business or organization.

If you are not able to complete the survey electronically, a paper copy can be provided at your request.

The survey will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete and can be accessed by **clicking the following link:**
(Survey Link)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
(SurveyURL)

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
(OptOutLink)

Your responses are confidential. Results of this study may be published, but the results will be presented in summary form only. Your identity will not be associated with your responses in any published format. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Kari Roberg at kari.roberg@asu.edu, or Dr. Christine Vogt at chriv@asu.edu. Thank you for your time and valued input.

Sincerely,

Christine Vogt, PhD, Professor
Director, Center for Sustainable Tourism
Arizona State University

Sarah Leonard
President & CEO
Alaska Travel Industry Association

APPENDIX D
SURVEY EMAIL REMINDER

Email Subject: "Reminder: Seeking your input on Adventure Green Alaska"

Dear (FirstNam):

The Center for Sustainable Tourism at Arizona State University has partnered with the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) for a study that will inform ATIA's efforts for sustainable tourism in Alaska. Approximately one week ago, we sent you an email inviting you to participate in our study on sustainability practices of Alaska tourism businesses and sustainable tourism certification. 25% of businesses have already completed the survey and we are looking to hear from everyone receiving this.

As a valued partner in Alaska tourism, we are extremely interested in your perspective and company initiatives regarding sustainable tourism certification and sustainability practices. **Your participation will help us understand your involvement and interest in sustainable tourism.** You are one of a small number of people who have been asked to take part in this study, so **your participation will greatly enhance the quality of results.** You may own multiple companies, but in answering these questions please answer from the stand point of (Company Name). We are asking that *you, the owner, or general manager* of your company fill out this online survey on behalf of your business or organization.

If you are not able to complete the survey electronically, a paper copy can be provided at your request.

The survey will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete and can be accessed by **clicking the following link:**
(Survey Link)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
(SurveyURL)

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
(OptOutLink)

Your responses are confidential. Results of this study may be published, but the results will be presented in summary form only. Your identity will not be associated with your responses in any published format. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Kari Roberg at kari.roberg@asu.edu, or Dr. Christine Vogt at chriv@asu.edu. Thank you for your time and valued input.

Sincerely,

Christine Vogt, PhD, Professor
Director, Center for Sustainable Tourism
Arizona State University

Sarah Leonard
President & CEO
Alaska Travel Industry Association

APPENDIX E

SURVEY PHONE CALL REMINDER SCRIPT

Good morning,

My name is Kari Roberg and I am a master's student with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at Arizona State University and partnering with Alaska Travel Industry Association to further understand sustainability practices of Alaska tourism businesses and interest in sustainable tourism certification.

In the last few weeks, you were sent emails inviting you to participate in an online survey. As a valued partner in Alaska tourism, we are extremely interested in your perspective and your participation will greatly enhance the quality of results.

I am calling to ask that you take approximately 15-20 minutes to provide your valuable perspective by participating in the survey. Your responses are confidential. Your identity will not be associated with your responses in any published format. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time. If you have further questions about the study or your participation in it, I am happy to answer them. Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX F
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Christine Vogt
 Community Resources and Development, School of
 -
 CHRISTINE.VOGT@asu.edu

Dear Christine Vogt:

On 1/23/2017 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Small Business Participation in Sustainable Tourism Certification: Personal and Environmental Influences
Investigator:	Christine Vogt
IRB ID:	STUDY00005567
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Questions_Certification Study, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Recruitment Communications_Certification Study, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Interview Questions_Certification Study, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Interview Consent_Certification Study, Category: Consent Form; • Survey Consent_Certification Study, Category: Consent Form; • IRB Protocol Form_Certification Study, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 1/23/2017.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Kari Roberg
Kari Roberg

APPENDIX G

SURVEY PROMOTION IN ATIA JANUARY NEWSLETTER

We Need Your Help - Adventure Green Alaska Survey

ATIA has partnered with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at Arizona State University to look at the sustainability practices of Alaska businesses. This study comes as ATIA is working on strengthening sustainability initiatives and updating the criteria for Adventure Green Alaska sustainable tourism certification. Your business may be selected to participate in this study. If you receive an email in January asking you to complete a survey regarding this, please take the time to reply as your feedback is valuable for ATIA, Alaska tourism, and the researchers at ASU!



APPENDIX H
QUESTIONNAIRE FACTORS AND VARIABLES

Table 26

Questionnaire Factors and Variables

	Factors	Variables	Reference	Question Type
Sustainability Practices				
	General	Follow a formal policy regarding company commitment to sustainable tourism	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Display sustainable tourism commitment to company	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Train or provide guidance to personnel regarding sustainability management system	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Follow documented code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities with the collaboration and consent of the affected community.	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
	Environmental			
		Encourage customers to be environmentally friendly in nature	Font et al., 2016a	Yes/No
		Energy and water saving activities	Font et al., 2016a; GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Encourage reduction of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Minimize pollution from noise, light, runoff, etc.	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Use renewable energy sources (solar, wind, biomass.)	Font et al., 2016a	Yes/No
		Promote use of recyclable, compostable, biodegradable items	AGA, 2016; Font et al., 2016a	Yes/No
		Handle food, waste in manner that prevents environmental impact	AGA, 2016	Yes/No
		Avoid introduction of invasive species	GSTC ^c	Yes/No

	Factors	Variables	Reference	Question Type
		Respect wildlife	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Encourage customers be environmentally friendly in nature	Font et al., 2016a	Yes/No
		Use environmentally friendly products	Font et al., 2016a	Yes/No
	Sociocultural			
		Actively encourage respect for the culture and language of the area	AGA, 2016; Font et al., 2016a	Yes/No
		Convey information to customers about the history of the area	AGA, 2016	Yes/No
		Choose suppliers that demonstrate their social responsibility	Font et al., 2016a	Yes/No
		Incorporate elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Do not sell, trade, or display historical or archaeological artifacts	GSTC ^c	Yes/No
		Train employees about the history and culture of the area	AGA, 2016	Yes/No
	Economic			
		Maintain an office in Alaska	AGA, 2016	Yes/No
		Choose local businesses or suppliers on a regular basis	AGA, 2016	Yes/No
		Encourage customers to visit local visitor centers, attractions	AGA, 2016	Yes/No
		Support and participate in community development	AGA, 2016	Yes/No
		Encourage customers to purchase local goods and services	Font, et al., 2016a; AGA, 2016	Yes/No
		Offer means for local entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products	GSTC ^c	Yes/No

	Factors	Variables	Reference	Question Type
Motives				
	Incentive	Because it was easy to implement	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^a
		In response to customer demand	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^a
		Employee influence	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^a
		Logo use and image benefits	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^a
		Competitive advantage	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^a
	Modeling	Seeing other businesses do it	Wood & Bandura, 1989	Likert Scale ^a
		Seeing other businesses benefit	Wood & Bandura, 1989	Likert Scale ^a
		To gain new information, advice from certification manager	Dunk et al., 2016; Sampaio et al., 2012a	Likert Scale ^a
	Values	It's an internal, lifestyle choice	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^a
		To improve our society	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^a
		To protect the environment	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^a
	Self-efficacy	Belief in abilities to succeed	Wood & Bandura, 1989	Likert Scale ^a
Barriers		Perceived benefits exceed the cost	Borck & Coglianese, 2009	Likert Scale ^b
		Limited understanding of sustainability	Font et al., 2016a	Likert Scale ^b
		Paperwork time consuming	Jarvis et al., 2010	Likert Scale ^b

	Factors	Variables	Reference	Question Type
Respondent Information				
		Gender	Font et al., 2016b	choose one
		Age	Font et al., 2016b	choose one
		Position in company	Font et al., 2016b	choose one, type in if choice not available
		Education level	Rivera & De Leon, 2004	choose one
		Number of children/grandchildren	Font et al., 2016b; Rivera & De Leon, 2004	choose one
Business Information				
		Year business established	Font et al., 2016b	type in
		Number of employees	Font et al., 2016b	choose one
		Whether family enterprise	Font et al., 2016b	choose one
		Other certifications	Font et al., 2016b	type in
		Business type	Dunk et al., 2016; Font et al., 2016b	choose one
		Capacity (number of people can accommodate per day)	Font et al., 2016b	if applicable
		Season	Font et al., 2016b	choose all that apply (list of months)
		Business performance	Font et al., 2016b	choose one
		Average type of travel party	Font et al., 2016b	choose one
		Years with AGA certification	Font et al., 2016b; Jarvis et al., 2010	choose one

^a Likert scale of “not at all important” to “extremely important”

^b Likert scale of “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”

^c GSTC, 2013; GSTC, 2016b; and/or GSTC, 2016c referenced