

**YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES**  
**MBA PROGRAMME**

**SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES OF TRAVEL**  
**AGENTS IN MYANMAR**

**ZIN POE PHYU**

**MBA II – 65**

**MBA 23<sup>rd</sup> BATCH**

**DECEMBER, 2019**

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**ACADEMIC YEAR (2017 – 2019)**

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A thesis submitted to the Board of Examiners in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA)

**Supervised by**

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2017 – 2019

## ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Sustainable Business Practices of Travel Agents in Myanmar**” has been accepted by the Examination Board for awarding Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

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**DECEMBER, 2019**

## **ABSTRACT**

The study intends to examine the influencing factors on sustainable business practices and to analyze the sustainable business practices on benefits of travel agents in Myanmar. Primary data are collected from 90 employees of 21 travel agents in Myanmar through questionnaire survey. The study finds out that customers and employee engagement have the positive influence on sustainable business practices. Furthermore, sustainable business practices also influence on benefits of travel agents such as cost savings, reputation, and employee satisfaction. The study suggests that travel agents should focus on sustainable business practices especially economic related measures in order to increase their employees' satisfaction at their job, and reconsider the current social related practices in order to achieve cost savings.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BS	Business Sustainability
CS	Corporate Sustainability
ECEAT	European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism
EMAS	Eco Management and Audit Scheme
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria
ISO	The International Organization for Standardization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SBP	Sustainable Business Practices
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprise
ST	Stakeholder Theory
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNF	University of North Florida
UNWTO	The United Nations World Tourism Organization

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development refers to the process by which an entity attains sustainability. According to Mowforth and Munt, 2008, sustainable development was development which meets the needs of the presents without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Although the concept of sustainable development has been embraced in the tourism industry, there is still needed to widely discuss and analyze its definition (Sharpley, 2000). However, it was difficult to translate the concept of sustainable development into precise actions and sustainable business practices for the tourism industry because of its difficult definition and the complexity involved by Horobin and Long, 1996.

A growing number of organizations are integrating sustainability into their business strategy—realizing they can do well by doing good. The goal of a sustainable business strategy is to make a positive impact on either environment or society. On the other hand, sustainability can drive business success. Several investors today use Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics to analyze an organization's ethical impact and sustainability practices. Investors look at factors such as a company's carbon footprint, water usage, community development efforts, and board diversity. Corporate sustainability is the challenge to reduce the environmental impacts of businesses while advancing social and human welfare concurrently which lead to the effective achievement of organizational goals (Sharma, 2003). When companies fail to assume responsibility, the opposite can happen, leading to issues like environmental degradation, inequality, and social injustice.

This research identifies factors influencing on implementing sustainable business practices by tracing out the extent and nature of Travel Agents in Myanmar. After analyzing the factors, the second objective of this research is to identify benefits by practicing those sustainable practices in their businesses. Identifying the benefits resulted out increases the understanding of how to incorporate sustainable business practices into business strategies.

## **1.1 Rationale of the Study**

Tour operators and travel agents play a central role in the tourism industry. They can influence the consumers' choices, suppliers' practices, and the development within destinations by playing the role of intermediaries between tourists and tourism businesses. Therefore, tour operators and travel agents can contribute a lot while protecting the environment and culture, and promoting social and human rights standards in the destinations they visit with their distinctive position. Business sustainability (BS) is associated to having a triple bottom line of social, environmental and economic conditions (Elkington, 1997) in the business management systems (Luken & Stares, 2005) for the long term. Furthermore, according to Husted et al., 2008, businesses have responsibilities beyond the production of goods and service and making money. Additionally, they have responsibilities to support community activities and programs (Pirsch et al., 2007) and be careful of their local environmental impacts (Aragon-Correa et al., 2008). Therefore, more and more tourism businesses take an active approach towards sustainability, not only because consumers expect them to do so, but also because they are aware that for the sustainability of the tourism industry, unharmed destinations are essential.

Sustainability adoption refers to the actual implementation of sustainable practices in currently operating business. The philosophy of business managers' and the corporation are the main motives for the implementation of sustainable business practices in businesses (Landrum and Edwardsm 2009). Moreover, positive public relations and higher employee commitment and satisfaction were also mentioned as important benefits (Baum et at., 2006). Most of the previous studies and the measures taken by businesses focus primarily on the environmental dimensions of sustainability and therefore need to acknowledge the holistic principle of sustainable development. According to Hitchcock and Willard, 2009, all three dimensions such as the socio-cultural, economic and environmental are interdependent and every business with the purpose of a sustainably managed one should optimize of all three. Therefore, a more detailed picture of the influences and actions of tourism businesses in Myanmar will be created in this research. It includes all dimensions of sustainability and analyzes how various factors influence on the actions implemented in businesses.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

There are two objectives in my study. They are:

1. To investigate the influencing factors on sustainable business practices of Travel agents in Myanmar.
2. To analyze the relationship between sustainable business practices and the benefits get by Travel Agents in Myanmar.

## **1.3 Scope and Methods of the Study**

This study focus on embracing sustainable business practices in travel agents in Myanmar and factors influencing on implementing those practices in businesses. Analytical method was used for this study and a quantitative method was used while structured questionnaires were given out to the managers or employees of travel agents in Myanmar. A total of 21 travel agents listed in Travelife (a Dutch not-for-profit organization promoting sustainability in tourism and was launched in 2007) were selected and census was used as the sample. The reason of selecting travel agents which are already listed in Travelife award was that they are currently practicing sustainable business practices in their business to be certified by Travelife award.

The target population of the research was employees from selected Travel agents in Myanmar. Therefore, employees of travel agent at different levels/ranks were respondents of this research. Among the 21 listed travel agents, they have employed around 900 employees. Therefore, 900 employees from a total of 21 listed travel agents were considered as the size of the population. In order to determine the sample size, Yamane formula was used to calculate.

Therefore, the sample size was 90 respondents where total population size was around 900 respondents at confidence level 10%. Random sampling method was used to select the respondents from various levels and only the questionnaire forms of 83 respondents were used for analysis after entering the data.

There are a total of 44 likert scale questions in the questionnaire with 7 demographic questions. Data were collected with both online and paper collection methods. For online data collection and processing, sogo survey platform (<https://www.sogosurvey.com/static/login.aspx>) was used to share the link to 15 travel

agents. For the rest of travel agents, copies of questionnaire were distributed to the employees from different levels. The survey was conducted in July and August 2019.

Finally, Linear Regression Model was used and therefore, in this research, influencing factors such as stakeholders, and employee engagement were considered as independent variables for the implementation of sustainable business practices by travel agents and doing those practices were considered as independent variables for achieving benefits in the businesses.

#### **1.4 Organization of the Study**

This study is composed with five chapters. Chapter one provides an overview of the thesis and its structure. It includes the introduction of the paper, the rationale of the study, the objectives of the study, the scope and method of the study and the organization of the paper. In chapter two, the influencing drivers towards implementing sustainability and sustainable development, its three dimensions are reviewed. It also examines challenges as well as benefits while adopting sustainable business practices by building conceptual framework. Chapter three explains the history and background information of Travelife awards, its awarding process and standard criteria for being awarded to Travel Agents. In addition, profiles of respondents are also described in it. The quantitative analysis of the data gathered will be done in chapter four together with the analysis on relationship of influencing factors and its effects of implementing sustainable business practices on businesses. Last but not least, chapter five presents findings, discussions, suggestions and recommendations and limitations and needs for further research of this study.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

This chapter explains the theoretical background of embracing sustainable business practices in Travel Agents. It contains the definition of sustainability, sustainable development, and sustainable business practices, background knowledge on sustainability, all three dimensions of sustainability and influencing factors that drive to the implementation of sustainable business practices in businesses and the conceptual framework of the study.

#### **2.1 Sustainability and Sustainable Development**

Sustainability reflects the awareness and involvement of the society, people and community of the entire world, and finding what is the most appropriate thing required to be done and which portion of the universe can be exclusive to oneself (Robertson, 2017). The Oxford English Dictionary defines the ecological meaning of 'sustainability' this way: 'Of, relating to, or designating forms of human economic activity and culture that do not lead to environmental degradation, especially avoiding the long-term depletion of natural resources' (Robertson, 2014). Dee N explained that sustainability makes sure that all economic, environmental and social developments are achieved, (2011). Corporate Sustainability concentrates on the firm's commitment and accountability to the natural ecosystem, economic development, environmental protection and social equity (Nayak, 2007). Sharma (2003) defines CS as the challenge to reduce the environmental impacts of businesses while advancing social and human welfare concurrently which lead to the effective achievement of organizational goals.

The growing concern for environment, resources and social equity in the 1980s led to the emergence of the concept of sustainable development (Mowforth and Munt, 2009), which was defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987) by the 'Brundtland Report'. Sustainable tourism was defined as development which meets the needs of the present of the tourists and host areas while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future according to report of the United Nations Tourism

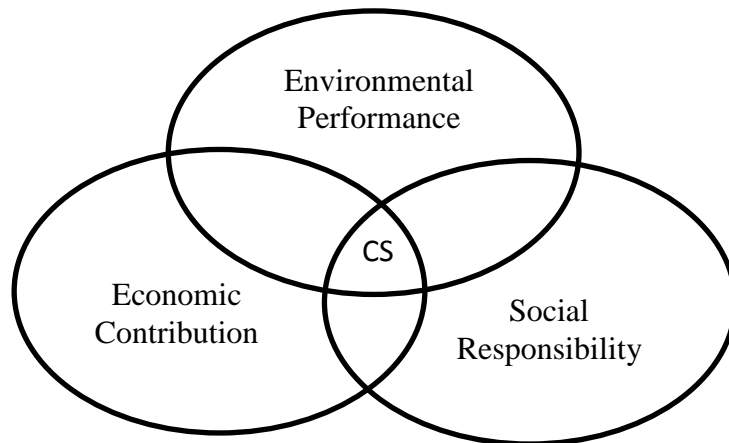
Organization (UNWTO). Maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and managing all the resources in such a sustainable way can fulfill the needs of economic and social needs. There were many different ways to interpret the concept of sustainable development. Maclaren, 1996 defined that sustainable development refers to the process by which an organization achieve sustainability while it refers to an achieved desired state or set of conditions which preserve long time. It is also an approach to development which keeps balance between differences and often competing needs while realizing the limitations of the environment, social and economic. It is more than focusing on the environment and it considers every stakeholders' needs as well as future generation while promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity.

## **2.2 Sustainable Business Practices**

According to University of North Florida (UNF), a sustainable business practice is defined as a business practice that is economically viable, socially responsible and environmentally friendly is usually regarded as being sustainable. On the other hand, sustainable business practices are environmentally-friendly practices which are initiated by a company to become a more sustainable organization. These organizations initiate unethical environmental practices through cut down on waste, poor environmental stewardship and unethical environmental practices for the purpose of reducing their environmental footprint. However, sustainable business practices differ among industries, and sometimes they are specified to the company type and the product or service it produces.

The idea of sustainable development was developed from ecological movements and campaigns in earlier decades and was specifically labelled in 1987 by the Brundtland Report through the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). The essence of such development is based on the concept of sustainability. "Sustainability is simply ensuring that economic, environmental and social developments go hand in hand" (Dee, 2010).

**Figure (2.1) Triple Bottom Line of Corporate Sustainability**



Source: Azapagic (2003)

Triple bottom line (Elkington, 1997) is a widely accepted framework in Business Sustainability which helps to better understand the role of business in the sustainable development (Roxas & Chadee, 2012). Triple bottom line framework explains that businesses regardless of their size, should accept pressure from the community to adopt strategies and practices to reduce their negative environmental and social impacts which come from their economic activities (Fraj-Andres et al., 2009). In triple bottom line framework, businesses are needed to consider economic, social and environmental dimensions of their activities in order to engage with sustainable development in the long term (Roxas & Chadee, 2012).

### **2.2.1 Socio-Cultural Dimension**

Socio-cultural sustainability was concerned with the social interaction, relations, behavioral patterns and values between people (Mason et al., 2003). With regard to Swarbrooke, 1999, tourists would be encouraged by sustainable business practices in order to visit local food producers, support organic and environmentally friendly agriculture and food processing industries. Involvement in the local community is one of the activities of socio-cultural sustainable business practices and according to Roberts, and Tribe, 2008, supporting the community through sponsorship of activities or groups was also a part of socio-cultural sustainable business practices.

Social sustainability asked businesses to meet the various needs and expectations of their stakeholders (Roxas & Chadee, 2012). Business sustainability-based businesses

should accept their broader responsibilities towards the community and stakeholders to satisfy their needs and improve their commitments (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010).

### **2.2.2 Environmental Dimension**

Environmental dimension of Business Sustainability was related to a process through which a firm manages its operation in order to minimize its harm to the environment (Chow & Chen, 2012), preserved the natural environment and improved the health of the biosphere (Benn & Bolton, 2011).

Based on environmental sustainability, businesses should monitor and control their activities' environmental impacts to be less damaging to the natural environment (Roxas & Chadee, 2012). For being environmentally sustainable, a business should invest in some activities such as reducing water consumption (Erol et al., 2009), buying green products (Zsidisin & Siferd, 2001), using less traditional fuels (Lindgreen et al., 2009), and reducing the negative impact on animal species and natural habitats (Rueda-Manzanares et al., 2008). In addition, there was an increased social awareness about the environmental protection which demands businesses to make their practices compatible with efficient management of the environment and natural resources (Buysse & Verbeke, 2003). Hence, businesses were required to take responsibility of their practices and try to reduce their businesses environmental impacts if they want to be able to compete in the business environment of which they operate (Wagner, 2009).

### **2.2.3 Economic Dimension**

Economic sustainability was referred to a business's ability to make profit in order to survive and benefit the economic systems at the local and national level (Roberts and Tribe, 2008). It also consider their economic impact on the community for example: job creation, local wages, and long-term economic growth. Moreover, an engagement across the supply chain to ensure similar values and practices is included in the group of economic sustainability. At the same time businesses needed to maintain corporate profitability and internal financial stability (Landrum and Edwards, 2009).

Economic dimension of Business sustainability required a firm to affect the financial status of its stakeholders positively via long-term participation in the market

(Chow & Chen, 2012). Based on Azapagic (2003), economic dimension of sustainability played a central role in sustainable development in the business context. It improved the community wellbeing via profit making and employing community people.

Sustainable business practices like local purchasing practices were means to maximize the economic benefits of tourism for the local economy and reduced the need for transport and energy consumption (Swarbrooke, 1999). Shaw and Williams (2002) took Lundgren's model of entrepreneurial development and hotel linkages as an example for supply and demand linkages for food by hotels. The more the linkages are strong, the more the economic benefit of tourism could be spread throughout the economy which could lead to improved development.

Sustainable business practices concerned with human resource management required that both employers and employees take a long-term view of their relationship in the mutual interest of both parties, of their customers and ultimately, of the company profitability' (Baum, 2006). The tourism and accommodation industry was a service industry whose quality depends on committed, well-trained, well-rewarded and empowered front-line staff (Baum, 2006).

### **2.3 Factors Affecting on Sustainable Business Practices**

Motivations for pursuing green management differ. Bansal and Roth (2000) present 3 major motivators for companies to go green: competitiveness, legitimation, and social responsibility. Some businesses wanted to gain competitive advantage; they wanted to enter to the market and create an effective business image .Competitiveness is the goal to create a competitive advantage through a company's environmental initiatives and sustainable practices initiatives. Green management is in this sense seen as a business opportunity. They argued that the goal is to increase profits and market share from the value created when the company reduces its environmental impact.

Legitimation regards acceptance and compliance. A company is motivated by survival and to follow the general norms and legislations from company stakeholders and governmental agencies. A lot of its efforts is aimed to satisfy major stakeholders in order prove legitimacy, so there is no tendency for these companies to go the extra mile but rather to do what is needed. The more ethical motivational factor is social responsibility or attitudes towards which is described as companies pursuing green management and

sustainable business practices because it is the right thing to do. Companies can of course be motivated by one, two, or all factors depending on what their values are. Therefore, understanding the meaning of sustainability in general and how it is linked to the business practices is very important in the adoption of sustainability.

A number of sustainability researchers (Roberts, 1992; Polonsky, 1995; Branco & Rodrigues, 2007; Gadenne et al., 2009; Evans & Sawyer, 2010) have grounded their research on Stakeholder Theory (ST). ST is based on the groups who are driving forces in the firm's performance. In other words, this theory assesses broadly the stakeholders to whom the firm is supposed to be responsible (Polonsky, 1995). Using this theory and other literature in SME sustainability, the most influential stakeholders behind firms' sustainability adoption are identified.

ST was first introduced by the Stanford Research Institute (Freeman, 1984). Based on ST, a firm is required to "consider its relationship with specific stakeholder groups as it sets the firm's direction and formulates its strategies" (Roberts, 1992). This theory has been used by researchers for different aspects of sustainability. For example, Gadenne et al. (2009) used ST to find the external influences of different stakeholders on the environmental awareness of SMEs. In a study about the environmental management systems in SMEs, Biondi et al. (2000) specified the external stakeholders as consumers, customers, local communities and public authorities. Also, Deegan (2007) identified suppliers, financial institutions, and other interest groups as the relevant stakeholders.

Apart from the external stakeholders, internal stakeholders influence the firm's performance as well. In SME context, the two internal groups of employees (Bubna-Litic & De Leeuw, 1999) have been identified as the effective internal stakeholders. According to Polonsky (1995), there are many internal and external stakeholders to whom the firm is accountable and each of them has a different set of expectations from the firm's performance. For example, owners/managers may consider the sustainability adoption as a costly action which contradicts their expectation of profit maximization, while employees expect safe and healthy working conditions.

Furthermore, Kusyk and Lozano (2007) identify internal and external drivers and barriers affecting the socially and environmentally responsible behavior of SMEs. They find that the "moral and ethical attitude of the owner/managers towards the community and environment" and "lack of financial resources and time" are the main internal drivers

and barriers for SMEs to be social and environmental responsible, respectively. From an external perspective, customers, suppliers and community are found as the most effective drivers to adopt responsible activities. Moreover, “cost cutting top-down pressure from the suppliers” is recognized as the main external barrier.

In this research, two main groups of effective factors are used to analyze. One group is internal factors that influence the adoption of sustainable practices from inside of travel agents in tourism industry. The other is external factors that affect the sustainability adoption from outside of the business. The following subsections provide the relevant literature on the internal (intrinsic engagement for sustainable communities) and external factors (role of stakeholders) affecting BS in travel agents.

### **2.3.1 Stakeholders**

Businesses can be limited in their implementation of sustainable business practices by external factors that are beyond their control such as government policy or the attitudes of stakeholders and their lack of interest towards sustainability and sustainable development. Apart from external factors, there are also internal obstacles within the company. As stated by Bubna-Litic and De Leeuw, 1999, the impact of business on the environment and community was considered as a concerning issue not only among government bodies and legislators but also among customers, local communities, suppliers and employees. Customer demand sustainable products and services and business owner/managers feel pressure from investors, society and their business rivals to adopt sustainable practices. Also, employees act as positive motivators to engage owner/managers with sustainable activities. Azapagic (2003) believed that the increased awareness of sustainability among employees will not only create practical innovation, but will also enhance the enjoyment of being part of a business that is committed to respect the community in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.

### **2.3.2 Employees’ Engagement**

A study on New Zealand wine industry by Gabzdylova et al. (2009) found that owner/managers personal values, preferences and satisfaction with the work affect their

engagement with sustainability. This confirms Quazi (2003) who explained that businesses are managed and represented by people with social obligations, thus SME owner/managers (as people) with internal values and attitudes toward the environment and community are critical drivers to the adoption or non- adoption of sustainable activities. Individual concerns of the owners/managers are reflected in their beliefs and attitudes towards sustainability issues (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

So respecting the environment and community in which SMEs operate, was an ethical concern (Gadenne et al., 2009) and those owner/managers who perceived environmental management as an ethical issue, will be more likely to involve in a group of environmental friendly practices like recycling and waste reduction irrespective of engaging in formal certification process (Hillary, 1999). In other words, owner/managers' individual concerns about sustainability acted as effective factors to adopt sustainable practices in SMEs (Bansal & Roth, 2000). Since preserving the environment is considered as an ethical issue, so some owner/managers adopt sustainability in their management processes due to their personal belief and commitment to their local community and environment, regardless of regulation pressure or financial benefits from sustainability adoption. In other words, some studies showed that there is a positive correlation between owner/managers' individual concerns and their expending time and resources on sustainability (Gadenne et al., 2009).

#### **2.4 Benefits of Sustainable Business Practices**

In order to implement sustainable business practices successfully, the integrated principle of sustainability must be understood and incorporated into the strategic planning of the business. Strategic sustainability represented a commitment demonstrated by top management that moves beyond compliance and efficiency to avoid risks and minimize costs (Dunphy et al., 2007). According to Hitchcock and Willard (2009), businesses need to focus long-term assessment on opportunities and threats of the external environment in order to integrate the sustainability into strategic planning. However, sustainability should be perceived as a company-wide goal which incorporates every aspect of business and its relationships. So goals, tactics, and budgets should be reviewed and updated regularly by using both bottom-up and top-down approaches. Blackburn (2007) stated that the process and performance also needed to be regularly monitored and audited.



The reasons for sustainability adoption within businesses refer to different issues. Some businesses want to gain competitive advantage; they wanted to enter to the market and create an effective business image (Bhaskaran et al., 2006). While some businesses adopted sustainability due to its monetary advantages such as cost saving, improved efficiency and profit (Bhaskaran et al., 2006). Furthermore, customers demand sustainable products and services and business owner/managers feel pressure from investors, society and their business rivals to adopt sustainable practices.

Also, employees act as positive motivators to engage owner/managers with sustainable activities. Azapagic (2003) believed that the increased awareness of sustainability among employees will not only create practical innovation, but will also enhance the enjoyment of being part of a business that is committed to respect the community in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. Understanding the meaning of sustainability in general and how it is linked to the business practices is very important in the adoption of sustainability. If sustainability was going to be taken seriously and integrated into the business practice, awareness raising and training among all employees were needed (Azapagic, 2003).

Sustainability and the benefits related to sustainable business practices tied the commercial interest of business to the goals of society (Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005). The most cited benefit of sustainable business practices was the reduction of costs (Swarbrooke, 1999). Tzschentke et al. (2004) declared it as the prime motive behind introducing environmental initiatives. Sustainable business practices can also bring benefits to a company in terms of positive public relations and improved businesses image with shareholders and local community. These benefits can differentiate the business from its competitors and can be the source of competitive advantages and new market opportunities (Swarbrooke, 1999).

Through sustainable human resource management employees were more likely to feel adequately rewarded, valued, proud of their work and had a more positive self-image (Swarbrooke, 1999; Baum, 2006). Sustainable human resource management and a sustainable corporate culture can help the company to attract and retain the best employees which was a serious problem at the moment in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry (Hitchcock and Willard, 2009; Swarbrooke, 1999). Consumer demand was the most controversial benefit of sustainable business practices. Environmental and social

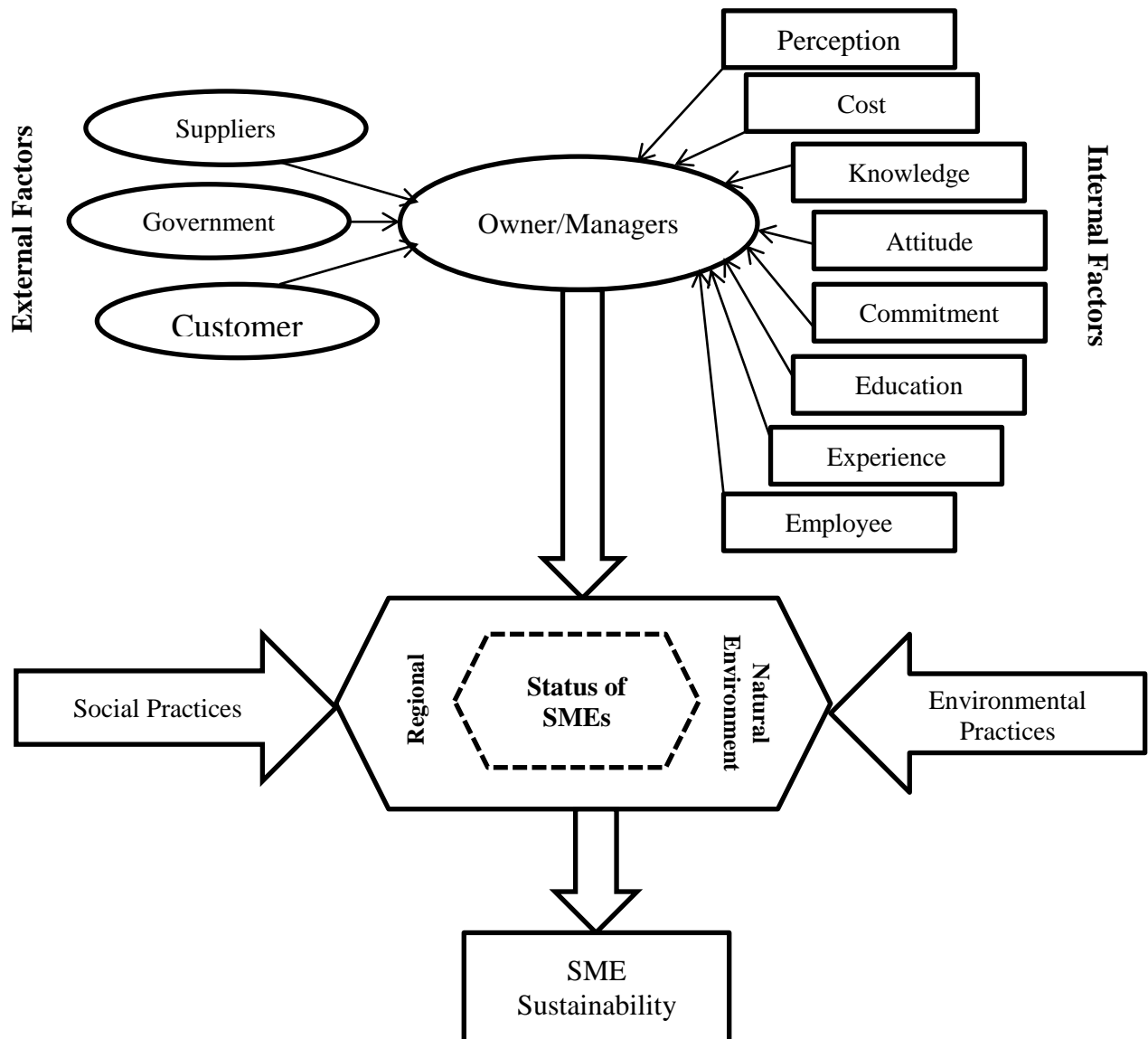
concerns increasingly influenced customer behaviour but so far it was debatable if this ‘green’ consumerism had reached the tourism industry (Hjalager, 2000)

## **2.5 Empirical Studies**

This research study was mainly focus on two main previous international research papers. The first prior research was about studying sustainable business practices in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Regional Australia. This paper was studied by Parisa Salimzadeh for his PH.D thesis in 2016, and it aims was to investigate the factors affecting sustainability adoption by SMEs in Regional Australia. In this research, it was designed to obtain an understanding of practices which were adopted by SMEs in Regional Australia, and it focused on the firm and the role of its owner/manager in regard to how SMEs engage with sustainable development and what factors affect their engagement with this issue. With regards to data collection, survey questionnaire was used to send the mail out to 1127 regional SMEs operating in Ballarat area. The theoretical framework for this study was as follow:

According to the findings, the results of this research indicate that, despite strong links to social and environmental practices, the regional SMEs under investigation show no clear strategic path towards a broader sustainable development business strategy. Although they totally understand about “doing the right thing”, however, there are many constraints such as lack of time, and resources to engage the totality of BS engagement and pursue such a complete strategy. Therefore, BS needs a system management approach that links to all stakeholders in the region and even to the “global village” (Rushton, 2002). In this study, the findings show the regional SMEs not to be attuned to ecosystems management, only contributing to social and environmental management of sustainability at a basic compliance stage, as per the Dunphy et al. (2007) sustainability phase model.

**Figure (2.2) Effect of Influencing Factors on SMEs Sustainability**



Source: Parisa Salimzadeh (2016)

With regard to the effective factors on BS in regional SMEs, results of this research show that role of stakeholders in driving sustainability, instrumental drivers to strategic competitive advantage and intrinsic engagement for sustainable communities contribute to the adoption of sustainability adoption by regional SMEs. Whereas negative perceptions on sustainability and resistance to change act as inhibitors to the sustainability adoption by such SMEs. The research finds a significant support for the hypothesis that business size and owner/managers' education levels have effects on the adoption of social practices within the Ballarat area. However, the results show that business category, business age and owner/managers' experience level have no

significant effect on the adoption of sustainability by SMEs in the regional city of Ballarat. In other words, any business category in any age range must be able to adopt the activities which are socially and environmentally friendly. Furthermore, even inexperienced owner/managers should be able to adopt such activities.

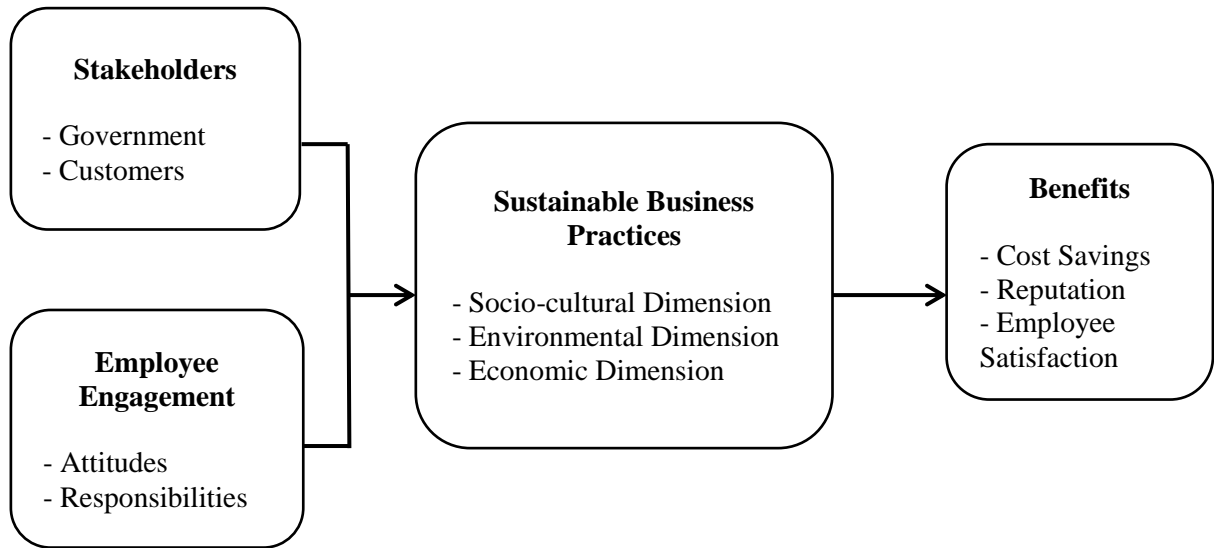
With respect to the second research paper, this study was investigated for the importance of sustainable business practices in accommodation businesses in Vietnam by Marita Raderbauer in 2011. Finally, it had been found out that a high implementation of sustainable business practices correlated with a high level of benefits perceived, more strategic planning and a less intense perception of barriers. The study showed that guests tend to perceive sustainable business practices as positive and businesses got benefits of enhanced reputation and image. Kirk's (1998) findings reported that large and higher classified hotels were more likely to see positive public relation benefits. On the other hand, this study found out that businesses that were part of a hotel chain perceived significantly more benefits in sustainable business practices than owner-managed businesses and similarly, managers of medium sized businesses noticed significantly higher benefits than managers of micro businesses.

Summarizing the results the most important finding by Marita Raderbauer in 2011 was that the perception of benefits is significantly related to the practices implemented. Cost reduction, enhanced reputation and reduction of negative impacts on the environment were benefits acknowledged by the vast majority of businesses. The controversy in results from the quantitative and qualitative data indicates that a differentiation between guest demand, which was perceived a low, and increased guest satisfaction, would need to be defined. As the final finding, employee satisfaction was another benefit perceived, although a change towards more sustainable human resource management was recommended in the qualitative interviews.

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

This conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 2.3. It explains the influence of two independent variables on the implementation of sustainable business practices and the effect of the implementation of those practices on the travel agents.

**Figure (2.3) Conceptual Framework of the Study**



Source: Own Compilation (2019)

Figure (2.3) demonstrates a study of sustainable business practices on Travel agents in Myanmar. It analyses the relationship between influencing factors and sustainable business practices in travel agents. And it explains the effects of implementing sustainable business practices on businesses such as travel agents. The independent variables are influencing factor which are measured by two variables such as stakeholders (government and customers), and employee engagement (attitudes and responsibilities) for sustainable communities and two factors are included under each variable. Sustainable business practices are dependent variables and attaining benefits are the results of implementing sustainable business practices in businesses. Three dimension /variables such as economic, socio-cultural and economic dimensions are used in sustainable business practices and all variables are measured by five-likert scale.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PROFILE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES OF TRAVEL AGENTS IN MYANMAR**

This chapter includes three parts. The first part explains the emergence of embracing sustainable business practices of travel agents in Myanmar. In the second part, sustainable business practices of travel agents in Myanmar are described with travelife awards sustainability systems and list of Travelife awarded travel agents. Finally, profile of respondents is analyzed with descriptive analysis.

#### **3.1 Sustainable Business Practices of Travel Agents in Myanmar**

Travel agents and tour operators play a central role in the tourism industry. As intermediates between tourists and tourism businesses, they can influence the choice of consumers, practices of suppliers and the development within destinations. Through their unique position, travel agents can make an important contribution to the protection of the environment and culture, and in promoting social and human rights standards in the destinations of their visit.

Myanmar's rich endowment of natural resources offers a plenty of benefits, as well as some risks. The Government of Myanmar recognises that the natural environment is the foundation upon which Myanmar's social, cultural and economic development may be sustained. Therefore, the GoM is committed to a national development framework (2018 – 2030) that enshrines the notion of environmental sustainability for future generations by systematically incorporating environmental considerations into the design and the implementation of its policies and projects. The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan is based on the idea that without sound environmental governance, rapid economic development risks further exacerbating existing environmental problems such as deforestation, mangrove loss, trade wildlife illegally, waste increase, unregulated mineral extraction, and pollution.

Business motivation is the most important motivation for companies and most of the travel agents are motivated by customer attraction and demand to do sustainable business practices. They engage sustainable business practices as they could have

international recognition, connection and being competitive. Social and Environmental motivation is second highest important motivation after business motivation to practice sustainable development progress because companies' managers are almost Myanmar national and they know very well about the needs of local communities and the context. Therefore, they want to do something good for the community.

Travel agents in Myanmar notice the importance of their impact socially, culturally and environmentally and through all that they do, they aim to support the local people and their environment while sharing the amazing culture of Myanmar through tourism. They promote responsible tourism to their clients, suppliers, partners and other stakeholders by offering support to protecting the environment and achieving sustained tourism. Therefore, travel agents observe widespread support and awareness for the need of sustainable of sustainable tourism development in Myanmar.

Local travel companies are more connected with the local community to conduct tourism trainings or language teaching than foreign-owned companies. Some travel agents have campaigns like trash awareness campaign or trash campaign concerned with plastics/trash as well as Soap for Hope program for the community by buying soaps from the Hotel and donating the money get to the orphanage. They also have community development programs to improve the livelihoods of the most disadvantaged populations while minimizing the negative social, cultural and environmental impacts tourism may generate. Furthermore, they have foundations and some travel agents save funds through laundry cost saving, collecting from staffs, donation box and one tourist one dollar saving for CSR funds. Some contributed with their profits/ certain percentage of company income and some do not have specific funds but they can get approval from the owner to do CSR activities or collect from head offices/ partner organizations when there is a need for emergency response. Last but not least, Travelife award sustainability system are explained and list of Travelife awarded travel agents in Myanmar are described with the table.

According to Freeman's stakeholder theory, employees are one of the important stakeholders for companies' business success. Travel agents in Myanmar generally do three types of employee-related practices: trainings, taking caring of staff's health and well-being, employing staff with disability and rewarding staff. They offer trainings for language skill development, office management and first aid. Some companies created social scheme for staff and some pay tax/ gratuity for the staff. Creating social scheme for

staff and tax/ gratuity for the staff are also one of the good sustainable business practice for retaining good staff for the companies and HR attraction.

Finally, Environmental friendly practice is also one of the attraction for customers and most of tour companies uploaded about their environmental related activities in their web pages Travel agents have more awareness for environmental friendly practice and are following green practices. They practices activities such as reducing waste, saving water and electricity, reusing and recycling papers in their office. Tree plantation was also popular in environmental-related activities due to prone to natural disasters in Myanmar which affects a large percentage of its people.

### **3.1.1 Travelife Sustainability System, Award for Tour Operators and Travel Agencies**

Travelife award has launched in 2007 by Travelife Ltd., with a core vision of destinations sustainability by believing tourism can enhance the lives of local communities and their environment. It makes accommodation providers easy monitor and assess their sustainability performance by themselves as it is a web-based certification system. Relevant stakeholders including tour operators, hoteliers, trade associations, Non-Governmental organizations, audit firms and academia have developed the Travelife system and its criteria. Travelife award is now recognized as one of the most comprehensive and credible tools within the travel and tourism industry.

Travelife is the first initiative for tourism companies to provide the services such as training, management and certification committed to reaching sustainability. Sustainability management is all about commitment and consistent sustainable business practices including the products, how the businesses monitor and manage the impacts and how they support their suppliers on their road to sustainability. As a consequence, businesses can achieve increased customer satisfaction, employees motivation and business efficiency as their competitive advantage through working toward sustainability. Both consumer and business now demand for responsible products and the public also wants to know how the businesses are managed.

It helps tour operators and travel agencies with a fair and affordable system in managing and improving social and environmental impacts by complying with sustainability criteria. Every tour operator and travel agency which meets the criteria and



requirement of Travelife system will receive the award. This Travelife system is managed by ECEAT-Projects – which is an NGO which supports touristic development that contributes to: Nature protection, Regional Development, Environmental Protection and Empowerment of the local population, it provides online training and practical tools for sustainability planning, management and reporting. Trainings provided and tools used by Travelife are suitable for any size of companies which cover all management fields of the travel businesses include office operations, supply chain, destinations and also consumers. After completing and meeting the standards set for the Travelife standard for Tour operators and Travel agencies, those businesses will be given the Travelife Partner or Travelife Certified status.

Under the compliance of ISO 14001 and EMAS III standards, all the Travelife management requirements are set. Those include labor conditions, human rights, environment, biodiversity and fair business practices to review the performance of those businesses. There are more than 200 Travelife criteria and best practices which all cover and include every aspect of relevant management areas of a travel company or tour operator. For example:

- **General Operations:** Sustainability Management, Legal requirements and Fair business practices
- **Office and Retail Operations:** Labour practices and human rights (office and retail), Community relations, Environment (office and retail), Procurement, Water, Energy, Waste, Training and awareness raising
- **Supply Chain Management:** Hotel and accommodations, transportation, trip activities, local partners, representatives and residents, destinations and locations, tour guides and group leaders.
- **Customers:** Awareness raising and motivation and Customer rights

### **3.1.2 List of Travelife Awarded Travel Agents in Myanmar**

There are a total of 29 tour operators or travel agent which are certified by Travelife Award meaning they are already proven commitment towards sustainability. Some of them are explained below.

**Table (3.1) List of Travelife Awarded Travel Agents**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Website Link</b>
1.	EXO Travel Myanmar	<a href="https://www.exotravel.com/">https://www.exotravel.com/</a>
2.	Khiri Travel Myanmar	<a href="http://www.khiri.com/">http://www.khiri.com/</a>
3.	Sampan Travel Ltd	<a href="http://www.sampantravel.com/">http://www.sampantravel.com/</a>
4.	Amazing Time Travels & Tours Co., Ltd	<a href="http://www.amazingtimetravels.com/">http://www.amazingtimetravels.com/</a>
5.	Take me to Myanmar	<a href="https://takemetomyanmar.com/">https://takemetomyanmar.com/</a>
6.	WAZO Travels Ltd	<a href="https://www.wazotravels.com/">https://www.wazotravels.com/</a>
7.	Tourism Myanmar Co.Op Ltd	<a href="http://www.tourismmyanmar.com/">http://www.tourismmyanmar.com/</a>
8.	Easia Travel – Myanmar	<a href="http://www.easia-travel.com/">http://www.easia-travel.com/</a>
9.	Ethical Seven Star Tours	<a href="https://www.ethicalsevenstartours.com/">https://www.ethicalsevenstartours.com/</a>
10.	Grand Lotus Tours	<a href="http://www.grandlotustours.com/">http://www.grandlotustours.com/</a>
11.	Living Irrawaddy Dolphin Project (Living Irrawaddy Travel Services)	<a href="https://burmadolphins.com/">https://burmadolphins.com/</a>
12.	Lotus Asia Tours – Myanmar	<a href="http://www.lotusasiatours.com/">http://www.lotusasiatours.com/</a>
13.	Asia EZ Travel	<a href="http://www.asiaeztravel.com/">http://www.asiaeztravel.com/</a>
14.	Myanmar Voyages	<a href="https://myanmarvoyages.com/en/">https://myanmarvoyages.com/en/</a>
15.	Asia Tour Myanmar	<a href="http://www.asiantour-myanmar.com/">http://www.asiantour-myanmar.com/</a>
16.	The Mighty Myanmar Travel	<a href="http://www.themightymyanmar.com/">http://www.themightymyanmar.com/</a>
17.	Pro Niti Travel	<a href="https://www.pronititravel.com/">https://www.pronititravel.com/</a>
18.	Interconnection Travels	<a href="https://www.myanmarholiday.com/">https://www.myanmarholiday.com/</a>
19.	Myanmar Upperland Travels	<a href="http://www.myanmarupperland.com/">http://www.myanmarupperland.com/</a>
20.	Lucky Treasure Travels Ltd.	<a href="http://www.luckytreasuretravels.com/">http://www.luckytreasuretravels.com/</a>

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Website Link</b>
21.	Beyond Boundaries Co., Ltd.	<a href="https://www.beyondboundariesmyanmar.com/">https://www.beyondboundariesmyanmar.com/</a>
22.	Trails of Myanmar Travel	<a href="https://www.trailsofmyanmartravel.com/">https://www.trailsofmyanmartravel.com/</a>
23.	Sky Bird Travels and Tours Co., Ltd	<a href="https://www.skybird-tour.com/">https://www.skybird-tour.com/</a>
24.	Myanmar Shalom Travels	<a href="http://www.myanmarshalom.com/">http://www.myanmarshalom.com/</a>
25.	Kinnari Travels and Tours	<a href="http://www.kinnaritravles.com/">http://www.kinnaritravles.com/</a>
26.	En Route Travels	<a href="http://www.enroutetravelmyanmar.com/">http://www.enroutetravelmyanmar.com/</a>
27.	Magodo Travel	<a href="http://www.magadotravel.com/">http://www.magadotravel.com/</a>
28.	Golden Orbil Int'l Travels and Tours Co., Ltd	<a href="http://www.myanmargotour.com/">http://www.myanmargotour.com/</a>
29.	Amazing Time Travels	<a href="http://www.amazingtimetravels.com/">http://www.amazingtimetravels.com/</a>

Source: Own Compilation (2019)

### **3.2 Benefits of Sustainable Business Practices in Travel Agents in Myanmar**

More and more travel agents, tour operators and tourism businesses are taking an active approach towards sustainability, not only because consumers expect them to do so, but also because they notice that intact destinations are essential in order to achieve the long term survival in the tourism industry. The benefits do travel agents receive while they are adopting sustainable business practices, mostly are business related benefits such as good reputation/ brand image through word of mouth, awards/ recognizing from other associations, competitiveness, job opportunities for local people, customer trust and loyalty, longterm relationship with customers and collaborators, cost reduction, HR attraction for staff/retain good staff and personal benefits such as feeling good, clean in mind, merit (religious sense), feel enjoy and delighted and sense of maintaining environment.

Benefits from practicing CSR are one of the main factors for companies to involve more in sustainable business practices. There are two main benefits while practicing sustainable business practices in Myanmar as a developing country context. The first one is business-related benefits like reputation/brand image, award from the Ministry and other organizations, long-term relationship with stakeholders and consumers, trust and loyalty from customers and retain good staffs. The secondary benefits are non-tangible benefits/ personal benefits like feeling good/ enjoy/ delighted, clean in mind, getting merit and sense of doing good things for the people and environment.

### **3.3 Profile of the Respondents**

The survey was conducted to evaluate the analysis of factors influencing towards the implementation of sustainable business practices of travel agents in Myanmar and effects of implementing sustainable business practices upon firms. It is a descriptive research with a total of 83 employees at various levels from a total of 21 Travel Agents in Myanmar although the total sample size is 90. Survey results were calculated by random sampling method. Respondents reported each statement on a Likert scale ranging (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

In this study, the number of respondents profiles were illustrated the following factors (a) number of respondents by gender, (b) number of respondents by age, (c) number of respondents by years of services in the business, (d) number of respondents by level of education, (e) age of the business, (f) size of the business and (g) number of respondents by role/position in the business.

In the following, according to Table (3.2), the number of male participants is 17 and the number of female participants is 61. In term of percentage is, female participant is 79% and male participant is 21%. Therefore, the portion of female participant in the survey is larger than the portion of male participants. In terms of age level of participants, it has been found out that most of the participants from travel agents are in the group of 20-29 years. The total number of respondents for that group is 39 in number (47%). The age group of 30-39 follows the second with the number of 33 (39.8%) and only 11 respondents (13.3%) come from the age group of 40-49. There is no one participated who is over 50 years in this paper.

**Table (3.2) Profile of Respondents**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Demographic Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	17	21.0
	Female	61	79.0
<b>2.</b>	<b>Age</b>		
	20-29	39	47.0
	30-39	33	39.8
	40-49	11	13.3
<b>3.</b>	<b>Years of Services in the Company</b>		
	Less than 1 year	9	10.8
	1-3	12	14.5
	4-6	24	28.9
	7-9	49	45.9
<b>4.</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>		
	Undergraduate	6	7.2
	Bachelor	65	78.3
	Master	9	10.8
<b>5.</b>	<b>Age of the Business</b>		
	Less than 5 years	14	17.3
	5 – 9 years	17	21.0
	10 – 15 years	11	13.6
	16 – 20 years	36	44.4
<b>6.</b>	<b>Size of the Business (No: of Employees)</b>		
	Less than 20	13	16.0
	20 -50	50	61.7
	51 - 100	9	11.1

	More than 100	3	3.7
<b>7.</b>	<b>Role/Position</b>		
	Senior Level	35	42.2
	Junior Level	48	57.8

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Concerning years of services of employees in the company, 49 survey respondents have the total service years of 7-9 in that business with the highest percentage of 45.9%. The group of 4-6 service years is the second largest number (24) and percentage (28.9%) is followed by the group of 1-3 service years with the number of 12 and percentage of 14.5% and the group of less than 1 year in service with the number of 9 and percentage of 10.8%. With respect to the level of education, there are 65 respondents who got bachelor degree with the percentage of 78.3%, 9 respondents who already finished their master degree with the percentage of 10.8% and only 6 respondents are Undergraduate with the percentage of 7.2%.

Regarding the age of the business, 5 groups are divided such as less than 5 year, 5 – 9 years, 10 – 15 years, 16 – 20 years, and more than 20 years. In term of frequency, the number of respondents is 14 in the group of less than 5 years, 17 in the group of 5 – 9 years, 11 in the group of 10 – 15 years, 36 in the group of more than 20 years. In term of percentage, less than 5 years is 17.3%, 5 – 9 years is 21%, 10 – 15 years is 13.6% and 16 – 20 years is 44.4% and more than 20 years is 0%. Therefore, most of the travel agents in Myanmar are in the age of 16 – 20 years.

As for size of the business, there are 4 groups for dividing size of the Business. There are 13 respondents for the size of less than 20, 50 for 20 – 50, 9 for 51 – 100, and 3 for more than 100. In term of percentage, less than 20 is 16%, 20 – 50 is 61.7%, 51 – 100 is 11.1% and more than 100 is 3.7%. As a conclusion, most of the travel agents has employee size of between 20 to 50. Finally, with regards to role/position of the respondents, there are 35 participants who are from the senior level and a total of 48 participants who are from the junior level in the travel agents. General Manager, senior manager, assistant sales manager, head of sales department, advisors and senior sales consultants and etc. are included in the senior level while different job position of sales executive, coordinator, tour guide, travel consultants and etc. are included in the junior

level. In term of percentage, 42.2% of senior level and 57.8% of junior level positions participated in the survey and answered the questionnaire.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES AND BENEFITS OF TRAVEL AGENTS IN MYANMAR**

This chapter conducts the detail analysis of the implementation of sustainable business practices and its effect on travel agents. Firstly, each variable of sustainable business practices and achieving benefits is analyzed with mean table. In the later part, the effect of influencing factors on the implementation of sustainable business practices and the relationship between doing sustainable business practices and achieving benefits are analyzed by using regression analysis.

#### **4.1 Analysis of Influencing Factors on Sustainable Business Practices**

In this section, influencing factors on implementing sustainable business practices will be analyzed. There are two influencing factors such as role of stakeholders, and intrinsic engagement for sustainable communities and two variables for each factor. Table (4.1), Table (4.2), Table (4.3) and Table (4.4) are used to show the analysis of influencing factors on sustainable business practices with mean value and standard deviation.

##### **4.1.1 Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are defined as the external factors which can influence towards the implementation of sustainable business practices in the businesses. Two variables are used such as government and customers in order to measure the influence of role of stakeholders. The following Table (4.1) and Table (4.2) analyze the mean value and standard deviation of government and customers as role of stakeholder and there are five questions for each to analyze. The mean value and standard deviation of each questions and overall mean are shown as below.



**(a) Government as Stakeholders**

Governments play the significant role in the adoption of sustainability by travel agents in the tourism industry through setting the regulations and standards to preserve the environment and society. Therefore, in order to analyze the influence level of the government rules, regulations and standards in Myanmar upon travel agents, Table (4.1) is used to show the mean value and standard deviation.

**Table (4.1) Government as Stakeholders**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1	Offering some form of recognition to businesses.	2.12	0.90
2.	Strict and enforced National and local environment laws and regulations.	2.26	0.59
3.	Introducing more new government regulations and standards.	1.47	0.50
4.	Government's pressure on businesses.	2.01	0.55
5.	Government's enforcement on the environmental taxes.	2.28	0.83
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>2.028</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

According to Table (4.1), the results show that the overall mean value of government is 2.028 which means there is no practical encouragement or supports from the government for travel agents for doing sustainable business practices in their businesses. The highest mean value among five components of government is the government's enforcement on the environmental taxes. Its mean value is 2.28 which explain that the government enforces a bit on travel agents or businesses in the tourism industry for environmental taxes regarding the concept of sustainable development and sustainable business practices. The lowest mean value is 1.47 for the component of introducing more new government regulations and standards. This shows that there is no well-grounded laws and proper rules and regulations on sustainable related issues including environmental management practices in Myanmar Tourism Sector, at the moment. Therefore, it needs more practical and doable regulations for embracing

sustainable business practices. As the conclusion, the government does not currently have well founded rules, laws and regulations for sustainable related issues in Tourism Industry as well as they also do not put any effort to initiate for doing sustainable business practices in businesses. In addition, the government does not have any supports for travel agents or tourism businesses which are doing the practices of sustainable related issues in their businesses, and it does not have yet any incentives for doing them.

**(b) Customers as Stakeholders**

Customers can also influence on the adoption of sustainable business practices in travel agents through encouraging environmental friendly practices by purchasing and demanding sustainable products and services. In order to find out the customers’ influence on travel agents, Table (4.2) is used to analyze the mean value and standard deviation of it.

**Table (4.2) Customer as Stakeholders**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	The support of customers.	4.00	0.78
2.	The pressure of existing customers.	4.17	0.66
3.	The attractiveness towards new customers.	3.89	0.70
4.	The cautious of customers towards green behavior.	4.22	0.75
5.	Demand on recycled and reused (green) products.	4.53	0.65
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.162</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

The results shows that the overall mean value of customer as role stakeholder is 4.162 which mean the implementation of sustainable business practices in travel agents are highly influenced by customers. Customers play one of role of stakeholders and have external effects upon implementing sustainable business practices. Therefore, the pressure of customer has the effects upon travel agents for implementing sustainable business practices.

Among the five components of customers, the highest mean value goes to demanding recycled and reused (green) products by customers (4.53) and it explains that today, customers become aware of sustainable concept and they are much demanding green products from businesses. They are encouraging for using recycled and reused products and they initiate the behaviors. Those customers changing behaviors and attitudes encourage travel agents to introduce sustainable concept into their businesses and those are one of the primary source for them to implement sustainable business practices into their businesses. However, the ability to attract new customers has the lowest mean value which is 3.89. It means that although travel agents introduce sustainable business practices and practicing them in reality, it does not make guarantee that travel agents could attract new customers. As the conclusion, in general, customers' pressure and awareness on sustainable related issues have highly effects upon travel agents for implementing sustainable business practices into their businesses.

#### **4.1.2 Employees Engagement**

The following Table (4.3) and Table (4.4) analyze the mean value and standard deviation of attitudes and responsibilities as intrinsic engagement for sustainable communities and there are five questions for each to analyze. The intrinsic engagement includes the internal factors (attitudes and responsibilities) which could have an effect to influence on businesses. The mean value and standard deviation of each questions and overall mean are shown as below.

##### **(a) Attitudes as Employees Engagement**

The perception and attitudes of employees are the internal factors which can drive to the adoption of the implementation of sustainable business practices in businesses. Employees' internal values and beliefs is one of the motivation factors of travel agents while they embrace and implement those practices into their business strategy. Therefore, Table (4.3) is used to analyze the perception and attitudes of employees in travel agents how they consider and accept the concept of sustainability.

**Table (4.3) Attitudes as Employees Engagement**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	A right thing to preserve the environment and local community.	4.23	0.50
2.	Reducing the negative impacts.	3.96	0.60
3.	Personal pride and enjoyment	4.24	0.51
4.	Relevance of considering environmental issues.	4.20	0.68
5.	The right industry to make a difference to the local community.	4.17	0.60
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.16</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Table (4.3) measures the employees' attitudes towards sustainable development and their perception on implementing sustainable business practices in their businesses (travel agents). Attitude is the internal factor and included in the group of employee engagement for sustainable communities. The results show that the overall mean value is 4.16 which means the attitudes of employees towards sustainable concept and its related is positive and it has highly effects upon travel agents in order to implement three dimension of sustainable business practices. They think that they should behave less effect on the environment, and promote social, cultural and economic development in the tourism sector while doing their own tasks.

The personal pride and enjoyment has the highest mean value (4.24), and it states that the more travel agents implement sustainable business practices in the businesses, the more make employees proud, enjoy and satisfied for their work. They feel proud and personal enjoyment when the businesses where they are working are concerning the environment and long-term social, economic and environmental related development. Meanwhile, the lowest mean value goes to the component of employees' perception on implementing sustainable business practices can reduce the negative impacts on social, cultural and ecological environment (3.96). According to its mean value, employees think that negative impacts on social, cultural and ecological environment could not be reduced by only doing implementing sustainable business practices in their businesses.

**(b) Responsibilities as Employees Engagement**

It is assumed that employees consider themselves it is their responsibility to preserve the environment and promote the sustainable development in the tourism industry regardless of their perception on them and other external factors (rules, regulations and achieving financially benefit). In order to find out this assumption, Table (4.4) is used to analyze with the mean value and standard deviation.

**Table (4.4) Responsibilities as Employees Engagement**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	High management priority on environmental issues.	4.20	0.62
2.	Ensuring the health and safety of the employees.	4.16	0.67
3.	Ensuring the health and safety of the communities.	4.38	0.49
4.	Regulating ourselves to improve environmental practices.	4.18	0.39
5.	Polices (e.g. CSR policies) to improve society.	4.07	0.62
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.20</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Table (4.4) measures another internal factor – “responsibilities” which is the part of employee engagement for sustainable communities. According to the result findings, the overall mean value is 4.20 which show that employees from tourism sector think that they have high responsibilities to promote sustainable awareness and initiate and implement sustainable business practices in their businesses. They think that they have full responsibilities to preserve the environment and promote the socio-cultural related issues, while making profit for their businesses. They assume that it is not enough to preserve the environment only, and all three dimensions of sustainable business practices must be considered. Therefore, they think that they are responsible for promoting and implementing sustainable business practices in the tourism sector. Meanwhile, employees from travel agents think that they must make to ensure the health and safety of the communities while they are doing their regular tourism business as it has the highest mean value of 4.38. It is their responsibility to make sure to consider to improve the

health and to have the less negative impact on communities' benefits while doing business in tourism industry. For the policy making within their businesses such as CSR policy, the mean value is the lowest among the five components of responsibility (4.07). Although it is the lowest value among five components, the mean value is over 3 which means employees think that it is their responsibility to have CSR policies and do them for sustainable related issues. The lowest mean value describes that it is the lowest priority by employees put while taking care of other four components.

### **4.1.3 Sustainable Business Practices**

In this section, the implementation of sustainable business practices in travel agents will be analyzed. There are three dimensions of sustainable business practices such as social practice, environmental practice and economic practice. Table (4.6), Table (4.7), and Table (4.8) are used to show the analysis of implemented sustainable business practices with mean value and standard deviation.

#### **(a) Social Practices**

The social practice is related to community and it considers the well beings of the local community to be sustainable. The following Table (4.5) analyzes the mean value and standard deviation of social practice and there are five questions to analyze. The mean value and standard deviation of each questions and overall mean are shown as below.

In the following, the results show that the overall mean value of social practice is 4.08 which means that travel agents have well founded practices related to socio-cultural and they are actually doing those practices in their businesses. It shows that travel agents promote local cultural, heritage, traditional food and drink, support some tourism related community programs and offer opportunities to local initiatives by doing their businesses as the part of embracing and implementing sustainable business practices.

**Table (4.5) Social Practices**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	Informing about local cultural and historical heritage.	4.48	0.74
2.	Promoting authentic traditional food and drink.	4.07	0.68
3.	Offering opportunities to local residents for hotel facilities.	3.73	0.65
4.	Cooperating and supporting with local initiatives.	4.18	0.68
5.	Sponsoring and supporting the community program.	3.95	0.88
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.08</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Among five components, the mean value for informing about local customs, cultural and historical heritage is the highest (4.48), which means that travel businesses always let tourists know about Myanmar culture, tradition and heritage to be maintained in order to be sustainable tourism in Myanmar. On the other hand, offering opportunities to local residents for hotel facilities has the lowest mean value (3.73) which explains that travel agents least practice offering job opportunities to local related to hotel and accommodation. Although this activity is one of social related sustainable business practices, sometimes it is difficult to execute those practices in reality for various scenarios such as it is difficult to find the accommodation by cooperating with local in some areas for the convenience of tourists or others.

**(b) Environmental Practices**

Environmental related sustainable business practices means activities which reduce negative effect and harm on the environments, reduce wastage of resources and preserve the natural environment. The following Table (4.6) analyzes the mean value and standard deviation of environmental practice and there are five questions to analyze. The mean value and standard deviation of each questions and overall mean are shown as below.

**Table (4.6) Environmental Practices**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	Using environmentally friendly products.	4.00	0.83
2.	Encouraging eco-friendly behaviors.	4.07	0.68
3.	Reducing waste.	4.29	0.90
4.	Saving energy consumption.	4.54	0.63
5.	Saving water usage.	4.46	0.70
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.27</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

According to the results of Table (4.6), the overall mean value of environmental related sustainable business practice is 4.27 which states that travel agents already have well set up environmentally sustainable business practices such as reducing water usage, saving energy consumption, reducing waste and using environmental friendly products. Moreover, they are actually practicing those practices in their business. Practicing the environmentally sustainable business practices make travel agents achieve their long term goals of preserving the environment while doing their businesses.

In the meanwhile, the mean value for saving energy consumption (e.g. turning off equipment and lights) is the highest (4.54) which means travel agents most frequently do the practice of turning off equipment and lights in their businesses when people/users are not around there in order to save energy consumption as the part of the activities of the environmental related sustainable business practice. On the other hand, the mean value for using environmental friendly products (e.g. ecological detergents, unbleached fabrics, reusable items etc.) is the lowest which explains that they do not frequently buy and use environmental friendly products in their businesses only compared to doing other four activities such as saving energy consumption, water usage, reduce waste and increase awareness.



**(c) Economic Practices**

Economic related sustainable business practices consider the economic impact and well beings of all stakeholders including employees, the government, and the community. Job creation for local community, considering suitable wages for employees, and contribution to local economic growth are considered as economic related sustainable business practices. Therefore, the following Table (4.7) analyzes the mean value and standard deviation of economic practices and there are five questions to analyze. The mean value and standard deviation of each questions and overall mean are shown as below.

In the following, Table (4.8) shows that the overall mean value of economic related sustainable business practices is 3.97 and is above average. It indicates that travel agents generally notice economic practices and they practice them in their businesses already. Economic practices are related to the well-being of their employees, long term winning profit of their businesses and sustainable economic development of the tourism industry.

**Table (4.7) Economic Practices**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	Ensuring long term profitability and financial viability.	4.12	0.89
2.	Focusing on buying local products.	4.23	0.70
3.	Product innovation and quality.	4.13	0.96
4.	Encouraging employees' career development and long term commitment.	3.92	0.84
5.	Setting pay scales, benefits and rewards over the legal minimum requirements.	3.45	0.89
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.97</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

With respect to highest and lowest mean value, the mean value for focusing on buying local products is the highest (4.23) and it shows that travel agents mostly focus on buying local products as the economic related sustainable business practice in order to

improve GDP of the country which in turn lead to long term economic development of tourism industry. In contrast, the mean value for setting pay scales, employment benefits and rewards over the legal minimum requirements is the lowest (3.45), which means that travel agents do not too much focus on employees’ pay scales and other benefits. They are not aware too much that considering the well-beings of employees is one of the economic related sustainable business practices. Therefore, they should reconsider it in their business strategy.

**(d) Sustainable Business Practices**

The following Table (4.8) explains the summary of the overall mean value of sustainable business practices. All three dimensions of sustainable business practices such as social, environmental, and economic related are measured and summarized below with mean value.

**Table (4.8) Sustainable Business Practices**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Overall Mean</b>
1.	Social Practices	4.08
2.	Environmental Practices	4.27
3.	Economic Practices	3.97
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.12</b>

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Table (4.8) shows the summary of the overall mean value of sustainable business practices. The environmental practice has the highest overall mean value (4.27) which means that travel agents put more effort to do environmental related sustainable business practices in their businesses and in the tourism industry rather than the rest two practices while the overall mean value of social practice is 4.08 and the overall mean value of economic practice is 3.97. Based on the findings, travel agents are more aware of doing the activities of reducing waste, saving energy consumptions through turning off lights, and using green products into their businesses and they are more actively practicing them into their business strategies.

With regard to economic practices, travel agents are not aware too much how they should practice those practices in their businesses yet. They tried to impact economic development of the country by buying local products and promoting tourism services, however, they forgot to consider the welfare of their own employees. They should put more effort on the activities of employees' career development and plans for their pay scales and reward systems.

#### 4.1.4 Influencing Factors on Sustainable Business Practices

In this section, linear regression model is used to analyze the effect of influencing factors on sustainable business practices. Table (4.9) and Table (4.10) show the effects of influencing factors on three dimensions of sustainable business practices. Two variables are used to measure the influencing factors such as stakeholders and employees' engagement for sustainable communities.

##### (a) Effect of Stakeholders on Sustainable Business Practices

Two external factors such as government and customer are included in the group of stakeholders. From the external perspective, government and customers are founded as the most effective drivers to adopt responsible activities in the tourism industry.

**Table (4.9) Effect of Stakeholders on Sustainable Business Practices**

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t-value	Sig.	VIF
	B	Std. Error				
(constant)	-0.190	0.322		-0.590	0.557	
Government	-0.020	0.066	-0.020	-0.312	0.756	1.088
Customers	1.022***	0.080	0.834	12.774	0.000	1.088
R	0.827					
R Square	0.687					
Adjusted R Square	0.679					

F-Value	87.622***
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Source: Survey Data (2019)

Notes: \*\*\* Significant at 1% level; \*\* Significant at 5% level; \* Significant at 10% level

In order to find out the effects of role of stakeholders on the adoption of sustainable business practices in the travel agents, regression analysis is used. The above Table (4.9) shows the results of the regression analysis on the effect of stakeholder as influencing factor on sustainable business practices. According to Table (4.9), the adjusted R square is 0.679 which describes that about 67.9% of the variation in sustainable business practices is explained by two external factors such as government and customer. The F value is 87.622 and significant at 1% which indicates that the model is less error and valid. Therefore, the model can explain the effects of influencing factors (including government and customers) on the implementation of sustainable business practices.

With respect to the result findings, only one independent variable (customer) made a statistically significant contribution to the model which reflects all three dimensions of sustainable business practice. There is a positive relationship between the influence of customers and the implementation of sustainable business practices in the businesses. The value of sig is 0.000 which means that it is significant at 1% and customers strongly influence on travel agents for the implementation of sustainable business practices. They initiate to have well-grounded sustainable business practices and practice them in their businesses because of customers' pressure. With respect to the B value, it shows that when the demand or pressure of customers is increased by 1 unit, 1.002 unit will be increased in implementing sustainable business practices by travel agents.

As customers now become aware of environmental issues, preserving the nature, culture and heritage, treating the employees in the right way, they are demanding more environmental friendly services or enjoy using green products. They impresses the businesses and use their services more when they concern about environmental issues, consider the society and focus on the well-beings and benefits of their own employees which in turn leads them to use more services from those businesses. These changing consumer attitudes upon business and behaviors make travel agents to introduce the

sustainable development concept into their businesses, embrace and implement them to fix into their business strategy.

On the other hand, government did not make statistically significant contribution to the model which reflects sustainable business practices. There is no relationship or influence of the government. The result shows that at the moment, the government does not have proper rules, and regulations in hand regarding sustainable related issues such as environmental management laws. It does not have any activities to increase the awareness of sustainable development and rewards/incentives to promote responsible businesses in the tourism industry. Therefore, the current motivation of travel agents to become responsible businesses cannot be influenced by the government.

**(b) Effect of Employee Engagement on Sustainable Business Practices**

Attitudes and responsibilities variables are included in the group of employee engagement for sustainable communities which plays as one of the influencing factors towards the adoption of sustainable business practices. Employees including owners/managers with internal values and attitudes toward the environment and community are critical drivers to the adoption or non-adoption of sustainable activities in their businesses. Since preserving the environment is the ethical issue, it is assumed that employees adopt sustainability in their management processes due to their personal belief and commitment regardless of other regulation pressure or financial benefits.

**Table (4.10) Effect of Employee Engagement on Sustainable Business Practices**

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t-value	Sig.	VIF
	B	Std. Error				
(constant)	-3.040	0.679		-4.476	0.000	
Attitudes	0.545**	0.172	0.247	3.175	0.002	1.279
Responsibilities	1.142***	0.139	0.641	8.232	0.000	1.279
R	0.788					
R Square	0.620					

Adjusted R Square	0.611
F-Value	87.622***

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Notes: \*\*\* Significant at 1% level; \*\* Significant at 5% level; \* Significant at 10% level

In order to find out this assumption, the above Table (4.10) is used to analyze the results of analysis on the effect of employee engagement for sustainable communities as influencing driver towards sustainable business practices by using linear regression analysis. According to Table (4.10), adjusted R square are at 61.1 percent .This indicates that the model can explain 61.1 percent about the variance of dependent variable (sustainable business practices) with independent variables (attitudes and responsibilities). The value of F-test is 87.622, and the overall significance of the models, turned out highly significant at 1% level. This means that the model can explain the relationship between two variables of intrinsic engagement for sustainable communities and sustainable business practices with less error and more valid.

Regarding employee engagement for sustainable communities, both attitudes and responsibilities are significant at their respective confidence level. For the variable of attitudes, it has positive significant effect on the implementation of sustainable business practices as it is significant at 5% confidence level. According to the statistical explanation, every one unit increase in employees' attitudes or positive perception upon sustainable related issues, travel agents implement more 0.545 unit for sustainable business practices in their businesses. Likewise, the variable of responsibilities is significant at 1% confidence level and it has positive effect on the implementation of sustainable business practices and when employees think increase in one unit that it is their responsibilities to preserve the environment, the activities and practices for the concern of sustainable related issues they do will be increased by 1.142 unit according to the statistical explanation.

As a conclusion, there is the overall positive significant effect of employee engagement for sustainable business practices on the implementation of sustainable business practices. It found out that travel agents adopt and do sustainable business practices to be a part of their strategies not only because of the external factors such as strict governmental regulations or customers demand or financially benefit, but also because of the internal value or attitudes the employees have upon sustainability concept.

The assumption made in this paper turns out to be true that the implementation of sustainable business practices in travel agents is influenced by the attitudes and perception accepted by the employees in businesses. They passionately initiate, warmly welcome and then actively implement sustainable business practices as part of their daily activities because they consider that it is the ethical issues to preserve the environment. Last but not least, they have the personal belief to promote the social and cultural in the long-term and commitment to the well-beings of the society, employees, local community and other stakeholders. Therefore, the internal factors such as employees' attitudes and perception towards sustainability have the positive influence on the adoption of it in the businesses.

## **4.2 Analysis of Effect of Sustainable Business Practices on Benefits**

In this section, the effect of sustainable business practices on benefits is analyzed. There are three benefits such as cost savings, reputation and employee satisfaction. Table (4.11), Table (4.12), and Table (4.13) are used to show the analysis of benefits with mean value and standard deviation and Table (4.15) is used to show the analysis of the effect of sustainable business practices on benefits.

### **4.2.1 Benefits of Travel Agents**

In this section, the benefits of strategic implementation of sustainable business practices are analyzed. There are three benefits such as cost savings, reputation, and employee satisfaction achieved by doing sustainable business practices in the businesses. Table (4.11), Table (4.12), and Table (4.13) are used to show the analysis of the results of the strategic implementation of sustainable business practices with mean value and standard deviation.

#### **(a) Cost Savings**

One of the primary motives behind introducing environmentally sustainable business practices is cost savings. These practices are for example recycling systems, using low energy light bulbs and energy conservation measures. The following Table (4.11) analyzes the mean value and standard deviation of cost savings which is one of the

factors of achieving benefits and there are three questions to analyze. The mean value and standard deviation of each questions and overall mean are shown as below.

**Table (4.11) Cost Savings as Benefits**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	Cost savings from energy or other resource efficiencies.	3.78	0.70
2.	Cost savings from protecting future cost increase.	3.70	0.67
3.	Cost savings from recycling products.	3.43	0.50
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.64</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

According to the results of Table (4.11), the overall mean value of achieving cost savings is 3.64 which indicate that travel agents succeed cost savings by doing sustainable business practices in their businesses. Cost savings are achieved especially through the implementation of environmental dimension of sustainable business practices in order to reduce the rising costs for water, energy and waste disposal led.

The most obvious environmentally sustainable business practice is energy savings and other resources usage efficiencies (e.g. turn of unnecessary light). Its mean value is 3.78 and the highest mean value among the three components. It indicates that travel agents save costs from energy or other resource efficiencies savings in their daily operations at their office. On the other hand, travel agents do not save too many costs from recycling the products in their daily operations as its mean value is the lowest (3.43).

**(b) Reputation**

Reputation is also one of the primary motives for the business which brings benefits in terms of having positive relationship with the public, local community, and other stakeholders. This benefit can be different from other competitors and can be the source of competitive advantages and new market opportunities such as increasing customer awareness and demand. Therefore, the following table shows the mean value



and standard deviation of achieving reputation and five likert scale were used to analyze three components.

**Table (4.12) Reputation as Benefits**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	Enhancing reputation and image of the business.	3.54	0.63
2.	Improving the relationship with the local community.	3.42	0.56
3.	Increasing customer satisfaction, awareness and demand	3.78	0.70
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.58</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

According to the result findings of Table (4.12), the overall mean value is 3.58 which mean travel agents can enhance their image and reputation through embracing and doing sustainable business practice in their businesses. Travel agents increase their reputation and image through good positive relationship with the public and local community. This in turn leads to customer awareness on travel agents and can make the customers' satisfactions and demand their products or services increased.

Among the three components, increasing customer satisfaction, awareness and demand has the highest mean value of 3.78 which indicate that by implementing sustainable business practices in their daily operations, travel agents can obtain more customers satisfaction and increase their demand on services. On the other hand, the lowest mean value goes to improving the relationship with the local community. The value (3.42) explains that travel agents can improve their relationship with the local community by concerning sustainable related issues and initiating sustainable business practices.

**(c) Employee Satisfaction**

Another motive for initiating sustainable business practices is increasing employee satisfaction. Being practicing sustainable concept, employees are more likely to feel adequately rewarded, valued, proud of their work and have a more positive self-

image (Swarbrooke, 1999; Baum,2006). The mean value and standard deviation of employee satisfaction is analyzed in the following table and five likert scale is used to analyze each component.

**Table (4.13) Employee Satisfaction as Benefits**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1.	Increasing employees' job satisfaction.	3.70	0.70
2.	Increasing employees' morale.	3.43	0.50
3.	Increasing ability to attract and retain staff.	3.42	0.57
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.52</b>	

Source: Survey Data (2019)

The overall mean value of employee satisfaction is 3.52 in the Table (4.13) which provides the meaning that travel agents can increase their employees' satisfaction as one of the factors of achieving benefits by implementing sustainable business practices. Regarding the highest mean value, the component of increasing employee's job satisfaction is 3.70. It shows that employees feel proud, enjoyment and satisfaction with their jobs when their businesses take the challenge of focusing sustainable related issues such as long term environmental management, and economic development (considering their own employees' well-beings). However, it is not enough to retain the existing employees and attract the new ones by only focusing and doing sustainable business practices as its mean value is 3.52 (the lowest value among three components).

**(d) Benefits**

The following Table (4.14) shows the summary of the overall mean value of achieving benefits for travel agents while the adoption of sustainable business practices in their businesses. Three types of benefits such as saving costs, enhancing reputation and increasing employees' satisfaction are measured and analyzed below.

**Table (4.14) Benefits**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Overall Mean</b>
1.	Cost savings	3.64
2.	Reputation	3.58
3.	Employee Satisfaction	3.52
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.58</b>

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Table (4.14) indicates the summary of the overall mean value of achieving benefits for the implementation of sustainable business practices in the businesses. According to the results, travel agents mostly save their operational costs for doing and practicing those sustainable business practices as the benefit of cost savings has the highest mean value of 3.64 among three components. Increasing reputation is the second highest with the mean value of 3.58 and employee satisfaction has the lowest mean value of 3.52. This explains that travel agents do not attain the benefit of employee satisfaction because they are doing less economic related sustainable business practices compared to other two resulted in Table (4.8). Therefore, based on the result, travel agents should more focus on to do the activities of economic related practices in order to increase employee satisfaction.

#### **4.2.3 Effect of Sustainable Business Practices on Benefits**

There are three dimensions included in sustainable business practices such as socio-cultural, environmental and economic related. Although sustainable business practices differ among industries, it should be economically viable, socially responsible and environmentally friendly. The successful implementation of sustainable business practices brings benefits to the businesses in term of cost savings, increase reputation, and enhance employee satisfaction. The following Table (4.15) shows the linear regression

model analysis in order to explain the effect of the implementation of sustainable business practices and achieving benefits.

**Table (4.15) Effect of Sustainable Business Practices on Benefits**

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t-value	Sig.	VIF
	B	Std. Error				
(constant)	2.073	0.203		10.187	0.000	
Social Practices	-0.0179*	0.091	-0.259	-1.957	0.054	3.398
Environmental Practices	0.193**	0.063	0.379	3.076	0.003	2.945
Economic Practices	0.3568***	0.061	0.664	5.822	0.000	2.519
R	0.770					
R Square	0.593					
Adjusted R Square	0.577					
F-Value	38.317***					

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Notes: \*\*\* Significant at 1% level; \*\* Significant at 5% level; \* Significant at 10% level

According to the Table (4.15), the adjusted R square is 0.577 which means the model can explain 57.7% about the variance of dependent variable (benefits) with independent variables (social, environmental and economic related sustainable business practices). The value of F-test is 38.317 and therefore, the overall significance of the model was highly significant at 1% confidence level which means the model can explain the relationship with valid and less error.

Regarding social related sustainable business practices, it has negative significant effect on achieving benefits and it is significant at 10% confidence level. According to the statistical explanation, the B-value with the negative effect explains that when travel

agents do one more unit in social related business practice in their businesses, they will lose achieving benefits in 0.179-unit.

Some social related business practices are measured by providing and promoting authentic traditional food and drink, offering local residents access to hotel facilities, and sponsoring one community program. It is found out that doing such three social related practices can reduce slightly in achieving benefits although some social sustainable business practices (e.g. promoting local culture, heritage and customs) could increase reputation and employees' job satisfaction. For example, travel agents try to have access with local initiative for accommodation in order to give job opportunity as the part of sustainable social practice, this type of practice makes businesses to lose their profit as they cannot charge too much profit on local community or maybe can increase while looking for the best suitable local initiatives for their service users. Although this activity can increase its reputation and sometimes can make their employees proud for their businesses, it is not financially successful. Therefore, one unit increase in practicing social related sustainable activity can decrease achieving benefits a bit because cost savings related components are included when measuring the benefits.

For the variable of environmental related sustainable business, the result shows that it has positively relationship between the implementation of sustainable business practices and achieving benefits. It is significant at 5% confidence level and the positive relationship indicates that the more travel agents implement environmental practices into their business strategies, the more they obtain benefits. In terms of statistical explanation, B-value explains that one unit increase in doing environmental practices achieve benefits by 0.193-unit for travel agents.

While measuring environmental related sustainable business practices, the activities of saving energy consumption, water usage, reduce waste and use environmentally friendly products are used. Therefore, it is found out that travel agents save costs through the activities of reducing energy consumption or other resource usage efficiencies, reducing waste by turning off light or adjusting printer settings to draft quality in the office. Those practicing activities in the businesses can make travel agents not only save the costs but they can also be recognized by the community or customers as the responsible tourism business. As a consequence, they enhance their reputation as well as increasing employees' satisfaction in their job.

Last but not least, it has been found out that practicing economic related sustainable business activities has positive effect on achieving benefits and it is significant at 1% confidence level. With regards to statistical explanation, the value of B shows that one unit increase in doing sustainable economic activities increase attaining benefits by 0.356-unit.

Activities which focus on long term profitability of the businesses or personal development of employees are included in economic related sustainable business practices and meanwhile cost savings, increasing reputation and increasing employees satisfactions are used to measure the factor of achieving benefits. As travel agents concern a lot and do the practices in their businesses regarding the career development and welfare of employees, employees feel satisfied with their work and that can make them motivated and increase their morale. Furthermore, travel agents focus on buying local products in order to improve economic development of the industry, and that practice makes enhance their reputation and recognized by the public. Ultimately, travel agents develop business plan and produce innovative, and new products which can help them financially validity and sustainable profitability.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter highlights the conclusion of the study on 78 respondents who are employees at various levels in a total of 21 travel agents. In the first section, findings and discussions of the previous chapter are described. Those findings and discussions are based on the analysis of the influencing factors, sustainable business practices, achieved benefits and their relationship with each other. In the second section, suggestions and recommendations are explained and need for further research is described in the last section.

#### **5.1 Findings and Discussions**

Today, the concept of sustainable development is on the rise and many industries including the tourism industry has embraced the concept of sustainable development. To be sustainable tourism, tourism businesses should consider four main themes such as effective sustainability planning, maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community, enhancing cultural heritage, and reducing negative impacts to the environment. Therefore, the importance of sustainable development in the tourism industry, the influencing factors on the implementation of sustainable business practices and the results of practicing those practices into their daily operational activities in travel agents was studied in this research. The two main objectives were analyzed and investigating the influencing factors on the implementation of sustainable business practices was analyzed in the first part and another objective was analyzed in the rest parts.

According to the findings, the government as one of the external factors does not influence on the implementation of sustainable business practices in travel agents in Myanmar. The results show that the government does not still have well-grounded rules, and regulations including environmental management practices in Myanmar to promote the sustainable development in the tourism industry. Besides, it does not provide any support or encourage to travel agents for the adoption of those practices in their businesses. Furthermore, the results show that the current motivation of travel agents to

implement sustainable business practices does not influenced by the pressure of the government. On the other hand, customers have highly influence on travel agents for the implementation of sustainable business practices into their strategies and operational activities. Today, customers are demanding more green behaviors or products from the businesses. They impress and positive attitudes about socially responsible travel agents and they buy and use more services from them. Therefore, travel agents motive to implement sustainable business practices into their daily operations to adapt to the needs of consumers' changing behaviors.

With respect to the two internal factors such as attitudes and responsibilities (perception) of employees, they both have positive relationship with the implementation of sustainable business practices. It has been found out that travel agents embrace and practice sustainable business practices in their daily operations as their own employees are willing to do it. Employees including managers become aware of the concept of sustainable development and they are very passionate to do those activities regardless of strict laws, regulations and financially profitable. Employees' internal values, and beliefs are strong enough on sustainability for travel agents to initiate and implement those practices besides the high pressure of customers demand.

With regard to the implementation of sustainable business practices, travel agents do all three dimensions such as social, economic and environmental related practices. However, they do more environmentally sustainable business practices such as using ecological detergents, turning off equipment and lights, saving water usage and reducing waste in their day to day operations compared to the rest two practices such as social and economic related practices. On the other side, travel agents do not frequently do the activities of considering employees' long term career development and setting minimum pay scales. They just focus on long term profitability and financial viability of the businesses rather than employees' welfare as economic related sustainable business practices.

Concerning achieved benefits, travel agents attain three main benefits such as saving costs, enhancing reputation, and increasing employee satisfaction by doing sustainable businesses practices in their businesses. For the analysis results of the effect of the implementation of sustainable business practices on achieving benefits, all three dimensions have the relationship with achieving benefits, however, only social related practices have negative relationship.



Regarding to the analysis result for the relationship between social related practice and achieved benefits, the findings show that the more travel agents do some social practices, the more they less achieve cost savings. Practices such as promoting local authentic products and offering opportunities to local residents for hotel facilities cannot make travel agents financially successful as it is expensive for buying and using authentic products and it can lead to difficulty in saving costs. Nonetheless, practicing social related sustainable business practices can still enhance reputation and increase employee satisfactions.

With respect to the environmentally related sustainable business practice, the results show that travel agents save their operational costs by saving water usage, energy consumption and reducing waste (e.g. avoiding duplication of papers at meetings or their office) in order to reduce negative effects on the environment. Those practices can not only save costs but also increase reputation with local community and employee satisfaction.

Last but not least, there is also a positive relationship between implementing economic related sustainable business practices and achieving benefits which means that the more travel agents do economic practices, the more they can increase their employees' job satisfaction. However, regarding the mean value, the economic practices and employees' satisfaction at work has the lowest value among the rest factors which means travel agents do not do many economic practices in their businesses and employees are not satisfied a lot with their job as well. This is because travel agents do not put too much effort on practicing economic related practices in their businesses which leads to reduce employees' satisfactions at their work. They just consider financially survival and long term profitability of their businesses rather than the well-being of their own employees. Considering the well-beings of the employees is also the part of economic related sustainable business practices, and it can also encourage the long term economic development of the country. However, travel agents are not aware this fact yet and therefore, it has been found out that they still need to focus on doing more economic sustainable business practices in their businesses.

## **5.2 Suggestions and Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following section provides detail suggestions and recommendations on each point for future improvements in tourism industry related to sustainable development. According to the findings, there are no well-grounded laws and proper rules and regulations on sustainable related issues including environmental management practices in Myanmar Tourism Sector, at the moment. Therefore, it needs more practical and doable regulations for embracing sustainable business practices. In addition, the government does not provide any supports for travel agents or tourism businesses which are currently doing the sustainable business practices in their businesses, and it does not have yet any incentives for doing them. Therefore, the current motivation of travel agents for implementing sustainable business practices in their daily operations is not influenced by the government and so the responsible persons at the ministry of tourism should be aware first about the importance of sustainable development in the tourism industry in order to be noticed and embraced by themselves before encouraging others to do sustainable business practices.

Concerning another external factor, the finding shows that customers can influence a lot upon travel agents to practice sustainable business practices into their businesses. Customers now become aware of environmental issues, preserving the nature, culture and heritage, treating the employees in the right way. As a consequence, they are demanding more environmental friendly services from travel agents or enjoying using green products by themselves. Therefore, travel agents should provide new and unique products or services by considering the green concept in order to meet and fulfill the needs of the changing behaviors of consumers.

Finally, according to the findings, travel agents practice all three dimensions of sustainable business practices such as social, environmental and economic practices in their daily operations. It has also found out that there is a positive relationship between the implementation of some economic related sustainable business practices and increasing employee satisfaction which means the more travel agents do those economic related sustainable practices in their businesses; the more the employees increase their job satisfaction. With respect to the mean values, travel agents practice less economic related sustainable business practices in their businesses and employees less satisfy with their job. Therefore, travel agents should more focus on considering the well-beings of their own employees by developing new career development plan and well enough salary

packages, benefits and rewards than financial survival and profitability of their businesses while implementing economic related sustainable business practices in order to increase their satisfaction at their work.

### **5.3 Needs for Further Research**

This study only focuses on the effect of sustainable business practices on Travel agents in Myanmar. Those selected travel agents are only sorted out with the criteria of certified Travelife award. Therefore, we can analyze other tourism businesses in the industry whether they are embracing and practicing sustainable business practices in their businesses. With respect to investigating influencing factors towards the implementation of sustainable business practices, only two external factors and two internal factors were used to analyze in this research. Therefore, many other external factors such as suppliers, community and internal factors such as commitment, knowledge towards sustainability should be analyzed to find out the more detail influence of every stakeholder on the adoption of sustainable business practices by travel agents. Lastly, the mediating effect of barriers or challenges to the implementation of sustainable business practices should also be needed to find out as the further study because it is not very easy for travel agents while they are implementing those practices. Therefore, finding out these mediating effects could have an impact upon achieving benefits of the implementation of sustainable business practices.

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## APPENDIX (A)

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

I am a student from Master of Business Administration Programme at the Yangon University of Economics currently researching for my Master dissertation in sustainability. This questionnaire is part of a study into the importance of sustainable business practices in Myanmar Tourism Businesses. Your help in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated. All answers will be treated anonymously. This research is conducted for academic purpose only but not for any commercial purpose. The results of this study can be provided on request.

#### **Demographic Data**

1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Others

2. Age

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- Above 50

3. Years of services in this company

- Less than 1year
- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- More than 9 years



4. Level of Education

- Undergraduate
- Bachelor
- Master
- PhD
- Others

5. Age of your business

- Less than 5 years
- 5-9
- 10-15
- 16-20
- More than 20 years

6. Size of your business (no: of employees)

- Less than 20
- 20 – 50
- 51 – 100
- More than 100

7. Your role (position) in the firm .....

### I. First Part (Influencing factors)

In this section, you are requested to determine the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it affects the adoption of sustainable business practices in your business.

<b>Stakeholders</b>					
<b><u>Government</u></b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. The government offers some form of recognition to businesses that have good environmental management practices.					
2. National and local environmental laws and regulations are strictly enforced in the tourism business context.					
3. More government regulations are required to introduce and control standards for sustainable business practices in Myanmar tourism industry.					
4. The government puts pressure on businesses to be socially and environmentally friendly.					
5. The government enforces environmental taxes for tourism businesses.					

<b><u>Customer</u></b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
6. Tourism Business with good environmentally and socially management practices are well supported by customers.					
7. Pressure from existing customers forces tourism businesses to keep sustainable business practices.					
8. Socially and environmentally responsible tourism business attracts new customers.					
9. Customers care about green behavior.					
10. Customers demand recycled and reused (green) products.					
<b>Employee Engagement for Sustainable Communities</b>					
<b><u>Attitudes</u></b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. Preserving the environment and local community is simply the right thing to do.					
2. Implementing sustainable business practices reduce the negative impacts on social, cultural and ecological environment.					

3. Contributing to protecting the environment and supporting the local community gives personal pride and enjoyment.					
4. Environmental issues are relevant to our business.					
5. We are in the right industry to make a difference to the local community.					
<b><u>Responsibilities</u></b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
6. We put a very high management priority on Environmental issues.					
7. We ensure the health and safety of our employees.					
8. We ensure the health and safety of our communities.					
9. We regulate ourselves to improve environmental practices.					
10. We have policies (for e.g. CSR policies) that help improve society.					

## II. Second Part (Sustainable Business Practices)

The section consists of items relating to the sustainable business practices (social, environment and economic practices) which your business engages. For each of the items below please tick the most appropriate response.

<b>Social Practices</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1. We inform tourists about local customs, cultural and historical heritage.					
2. We provide and promote authentic traditional food and drink.					
3. We offer local residents access to hotel facilities.					
4. We cooperate and support local initiatives to promote and enhance appreciation for cultural and historical heritage.					
5. We sponsor and/or support at least one community program (for e.g. community events)					

<b>Environmental Practices</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1. We use environmentally friendly products (for e.g. ecological detergents, unbleached fabrics, reusable items etc.) at our					

businesses.					
2. We encourage eco-friendly behavior by tourists through awareness's raising and information (for e.g. public transport, water and energy saving advice, etc.)					
3. We reduce waste by adjusting printer settings to draft quality or avoid duplication of papers at meetings.					
4. We save energy consumption (for e.g. turn down unnecessary heating or turn off equipment and lights or monitor energy and water use).					
5. We save water usage in all departments.					

<b>Economic Practices</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1. We develop business plans to ensure long term profitability and financial viability of the business					
2. We focus on buying local products.					
3. We strike for business					

growth through product innovation and quality.					
4. We have a long-term commitment to all employees and encourage their personal and professional trainings, career planning, equal promotion opportunities, etc.					
5. We value our staff through pay scales, employment benefits and rewards over the minimum legal requirements.					

### III. Final Part (Benefits)

In this section, the main benefits will be identified while implementing sustainable business practices in your businesses. For each of the items below please tick the most appropriate response.

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>Saving costs within 2 years</b>					
1. Reduction of cost from energy or other resource efficiencies.					
2. Saving future cost increase (e.g. tax or transport) through adopting better management of waste and resources.					

3. Saving costs from recycling products.					
<b>Enhancing Reputation within 2 years</b>					
4. Enhancing reputation and image of the business.					
5. Improving the relationship with the local community.					
6. Increasing in customer satisfaction, awareness and demand.					
<b>Increasing Employee Satisfaction within 2 years</b>					
7. Increasing employees' morale.					
8. Attracting and retaining staff.					
9. Increasing in employee job satisfaction.					



**APPENDIX (B)**  
**STATISTICAL OUTPUTS**

**(A) Effects of Role of Stakeholders on the Implementation of Sustainable Business Practices**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.829 <sup>a</sup>	.687	.679	.21159	.687	87.622	2	80	.000	1.043

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer - Mean , Government - Mean

b. Dependent Variable: Total Sustainable Business Practices Mean

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	7.846	2	3.923	87.622	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	3.582	80	.045		
Total	11.427	82			

a. Dependent Variable: Total Sustainable Business Practices Mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer - Mean , Government - Mean

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.190	.322		-.590	.557
government - mean	-.020	.066	-.020	-.312	.756
customer - mean	1.022	.080	.834	12.774	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Total Sustainable Business Practices Mean

**(B) Effects of Employee Engagement for Sustainable Communities on the  
Implementation of Sustainable Business Practices**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.788 <sup>a</sup>	.620	.611	.23286	.620	65.375	2	80	.000	2.002

a. Predictors: (Constant), Responsibilities - Mean, Attitudes - Mean

b. Dependent Variable: Total Sustainable Business Practices Mean

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.090	2	3.545	65.375	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4.338	80	.054		
	Total	11.427	82			

a. Dependent Variable: Total Sustainable Business Practices Mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsibilities - Mean, Attitudes - Mean

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-3.040	.679		-4.476	.000
Attitudes - mean	.545	.172	.247	3.175	.002
Responsibilities - mean	1.142	.139	.641	8.232	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Total Sustainable Business Practices Mean

**(C) Effects of the Implementation of Sustainable Business Practices on Achieving Benefits**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.770 <sup>a</sup>	.593	.577	.16775	.593	38.317	3	79	.000	2.053

a. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Practices - Mean, Environmental Practices - Mean, Social Practices - Mean

b. Dependent Variable: Benefits – Mean

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	3.235	3	1.078	38.317	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	2.223	79	.028		
Total	5.458	82			

a. Dependent Variable: Benefits - Mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Practices - Mean, Environmental Practices - Mean, Social Practices - Mean

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.073	.203		10.187	.000
Social Practices - Mean	-.179	.091	-.259	-1.957	.054
Environmental Practices - Mean	.193	.063	.379	3.076	.003
Economic Practices - Mean	.356	.061	.664	5.822	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Benefits - Mean