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Abstract

This paper examines the individual and combined impacts of the aspects of environmental responsibility perception, sustainable practices and Muslim-friendly services on the experience of guests in the Muslim-friendly hotels. A two-path model, which combines sustainability and religious sensitivity, was applied as the data of 210 hotel visitors in Malaysia was analyzed through the PLS-SEM. The findings indicate that these three factors have a substantial contribution to making a guest experience significant, and the combination between sustainable practices and Muslim-friendly services is not significant, so the guest evaluates the factors on their own. The research also fulfills one of the gaps in hospitality research, and it is more of practical wisdom that can be used by hotel managers to satisfy both environmental and religious needs of current travelers.

1. Introduction

One of the greatest trends that affect the hospitality industry at the moment is a paradigm shift in consumer preferences towards the drive towards sustainability and ethical values when it comes to lodging. Raised social consciousness about climate change, global warming, deprivation of resources, and environmental destruction has created increased expectations that the hotels should be sustainable in terms of energy use, waste, and eco-friendly service innovations (Han et al., 2022). At the same time, the Muslim travel market is becoming one of the most rapidly developing markets in the world, and Muslim travelers are interested in accommodation facilities that correspond to their religious and cultural beliefs, especially in halal food, prayer rooms, and segregated facilities by gender (Battour et al., 2021).

This combination of eco-awareness and religious awareness raises a serious, though less studied, crossroad in the study of hospitality (Mohamad, 2022). Though the main aim and requirements of Muslim-friendly hotels are of the religious origin, the necessity to embrace sustainability which will appeal to the general ethical and environmental values is slowly but surely forcing its way into the Muslim-friendly hotels. In this regard, environmental responsibility perception i.e how the people perceive the environmental efforts of a hotel is a key determinant of creating guest experience, satisfaction, and loyalty (Javed et al., 2023). Nonetheless, though studies have approached an individualistic discussion of green practices and religious service customization independent of the other, there is minimal empirical enquiry on the double effect of the two practices on guest outcomes. This new research is filling this research gap by designing and testing a two-path model that combines the factors of environmental responsibility perception, sustainable practices, and Muslim-friendly services to forecast the experience of the guest in Muslim-friendly hotels. In doing this the study adds to the growing body of literature at the nexus of sustainability and faith-based hospitality. Based on the existence of reliant empirical data processed with SMART PLS, the study aims to present a more comprehensive account of the following question: How do culturally designed services and environmentally friendly operations interact (or do not interact) to influence guest perceptions and behavioural intentions? The results of study will provide not only theoretical contribution, but such practical implications as well, considering that the research is to address the needs of hospitality providers working in multicultural and environmentally sensitive markets.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Muslim-Friendly Hotels: Increased tourism of Muslims across the globe has led to the growth in demand of hotels that conform to the requirements of the Muslims. To adhere to religious demand, Muslim-friendly hotels provide the following services: halal food services, Qibla direction indicators, prayer rooms, and gender-separated amenities (Battour et al., 2021; Razzaq et al., 2016). The services are not just placebo since they are proved to impact greatly on the satisfaction, trust, and loyalty of Muslim travelers (Battour et al., 2014). Although past studies have confirmed the effects of Islamic features on destination image and customer satisfaction, it is unclear empirically on how these religious-based services influence the entire sustainability efforts towards formation of wholesome guest experiences. This represents a gap because service provision that is friendly to Muslims as well as ethical and environmental is to be additionally investigated.

2.2 Sustainable Practices in Hospitality: Hospitality has incurred an environmental sustainability imperative based not only on government regulation but also on force of changing consumer values (Azizul, 2020). Green hotel policies such as energy efficiency, water sustainability, and waste reduction have become more likely to be perceived by the guests as the element of corporate social responsibility (Han et al., 2022). There is the empirical evidence according to which ecologically minded customers will choose hotels that show they are green in their practices and such initiatives have potential to influence customer satisfaction, brand perception, and the readiness to spend money (Pulido-Fernandez & Lopez-Sanchez, 2019; Kang et al., 2012). Nonetheless, although information pertaining to general sustainability is readily available, there is scarcely a body of knowledge surrounding the application of the same to religious hospitality settings. In the present research paper, the researcher will explore the question of whether sustainability coupled with other culturally sensitive services would be able to create a differentiated value suggestion in Muslim-friendly hotels.

2.3 Guest Experience: Hospitality industry guests experience is now being thought of as a multidimensional concept in any case, and consists of functional, emotional, cultural and ethical factors (Chen & Chen, 2010). When it comes to Muslim guest experience, comfort and quality of service are no longer sufficient factors to consider to become Muslim-friendly hotel (Battour et al., 2021). Furthermore, the emerging literature on the subject points to the fact that green hotel operations play an important role in the perceived experience, which is manifested in the feeling of ethical comfort and environmental responsibility of the guest (Han et al., 2011; Javed et al., 2023). Though these findings are true, there is a lack of research on the joint influence of the religious alignment and sustainability on the guest experience. The work will fill such a gap in that it has incorporated the two dimensions into a coherent experiential framework.

2.4 Environmental Responsibility Perception: The perception of environmental responsibility means the perception of the guests of a given hotel being viewed as truly interested in sustainable and environmentally friendly operations (Arifin, 2018). Good perception in this region has been associated with increased satisfaction with customers, trust and loyalty to brands (Javed et al., 2023; Han et al., 2010). According to Pulido-Fernandez and Lopez-Sanchez (2019), not only are tourists becoming cognizant of sustainability-related efforts but also they are becoming eager to express their appreciation by returning to the businesses and in a positive way of mouth. Nevertheless, the studies have not successfully explored the functionality of the environmental responsibility perception against culturally unique settings like Muslim-friendly hotels. This interaction is the key factor in creating the approach that will address the needs of environmentally and spiritually devoted guests in their strategy.

3, Research Framework

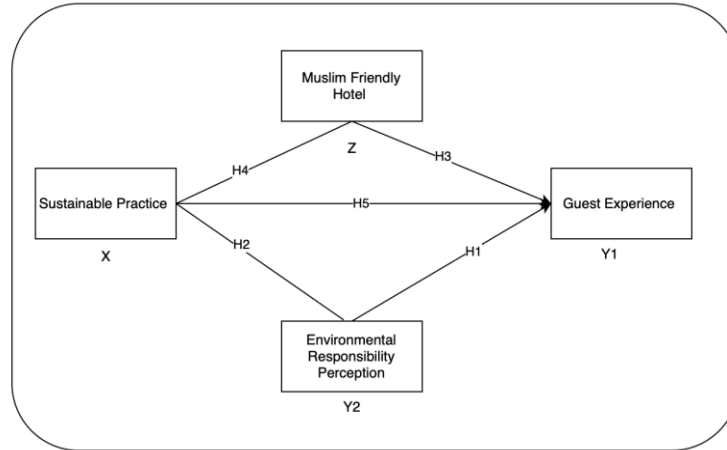


Table 1: Framework

3.1 Hypothesis

- H1 There is significant between environmental responsibility perception and guest experience
- H2 There is significant between environmental responsibility perception and sustainable practice towards guest experience
- H3 There is significant between Muslim Friendly Hotel and guest experience
- H4 There is significant between Muslim Friendly Hotel and sustainable practice towards guest experience
- H5 There is significant between sustainable practice and guest experience

4. Research Methodology

The research design in this study is quantitative and a cross-sectional research design since it looks at the effects of the environmental responsibility perception and sustainable practices on the experience of guests in Muslim friendly hotel environments and their Muslim friendly services. The data were collected in the format of the structured self-reported questionnaire, which was delivered through purposive sampling and oriented at the already experienced respondents who used Muslim-friendly accommodation. Such a non-probability sampling strategy was chosen because of contextual suitability and relevance of data. [Insert sample size, if available] responses were analysed.

To evaluate the presented structural model, the researcher applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS version 4. Such a method was selected because it is quite strong when dealing with complex models that have latent constructs and comparatively small to medium samples. The measurement model was evaluated using two steps: the evaluation of the reliability, convergent and the discrimination validity; the analysis of the structural model to verify the specific hypotheses. To increase the reliability and generalizability of the results, bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) was used to estimate path-coefficients and obtain their statistical significance.

5. Finding and Discussion

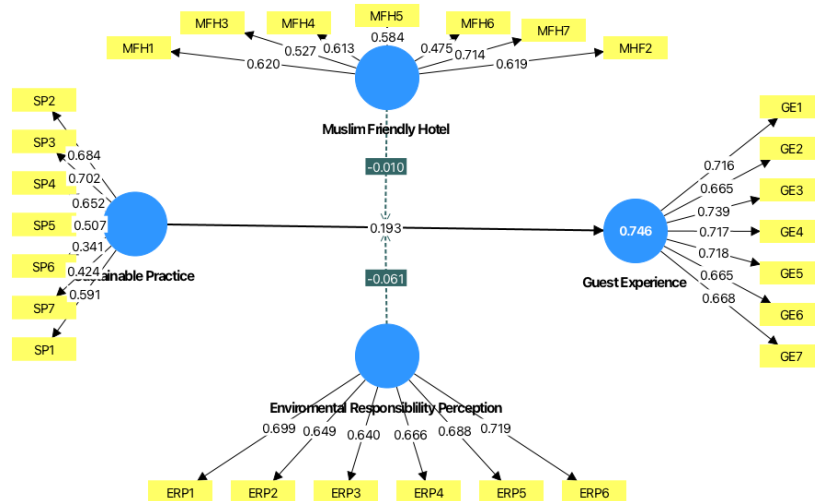


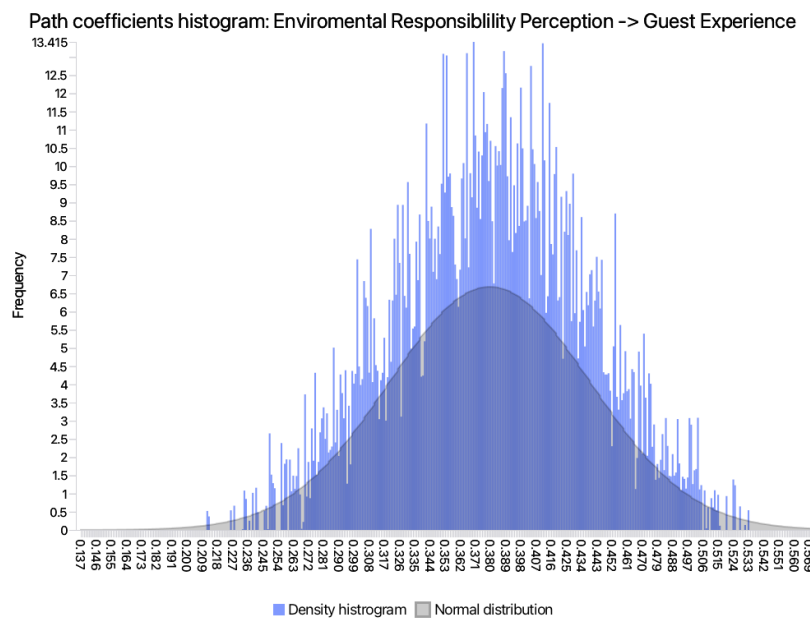
Figure 1 Coefficient

The findings of the structural models are vital to the experience of Muslim-friendly hotels and the perceptions of Muslim-friendly services and sustainable practices contributing to the perception of environmental responsibility and subsequent effects on the guest experience itself. Just as hypothesized, Muslim-Friendly Hotel construct revealed the most significant and strongest impact on Guest Experience (beta = 0.746, t = 5.705, p < 0.001). This establishes that services that capitalize on the Islamic principles, which include the halal-certified food, prayer rooms, and gender-separate facilities, are the key drivers of satisfaction and loyalty among Muslim customers. This conclusion supports the previous studies of Battour et al. (2014) and Razzaq et al. (2016) that intend to underline the significance of cultural-religious assimilation in the hospitality industry. The finding also marks the applicability of the value congruence theory whereby the satisfaction level of guests is heightened in those situations where services provided are in line with their personal and religious principles.

Sustainable Practice, the construct also had the moderate but significant relationship with Guest Experience (beta = 0.193, t = 3.848, p < 0.001), implying the pleasant effects of environmentally friendly practices on the guests, like energy efficiency and waste management. This observation is supported by the fact that Han et al. (2022) and Pulido-Fernandez and Lopez-Sanchez (2019) indicate that environmentally responsible routines have the potential to affect consumer assessment of service quality positively. Nevertheless, its relatively less relative scale to Muslim-friendly services suggests that environmental sustainability serves as an addition (as opposed to a leading factor) of experience in case of faith-driven customers.

Surprisingly, the relationship between Environmental Responsibility Perception and Guest Experience was found to have a negative but insignificant ($\beta = -0.061, t = 1.971, p = 0.049$) effect. Although this conclusion seems counterintuitive, it implies that sustainability messaging will not appear authentic and effective to the guests, unless advertised or visibly practiced. It arouses doubts regarding the credibility disjuncture between the perceived and practiced environmental responsibility and the guest experience, which is a matter that should be addressed further. This can also indicate that there is a gap between intentions of managers and consciousness of guests to understand the importance of open and clear communication approaches in case of green marketing campaigns. Moreover, interaction effect arrived at between Muslim-Friendly Hotel and Sustainable Practice showed it was statistically insignificant ($p = 0.755$) and, thus, these two dimensions of service worked independent of each other in developing the perception of the guests. Such a discovery has refuted the notions concerning the synergy amid religious sensitivity and environmental sustainability. Theoretically, it implies that congruency markers in service delivery across domains of values (spiritual vs. environmental) do not necessarily imply the said synergetic outcomes particularly in culturally characterized market segments. The findings are valued together to provide a more delicate comprehension of value-oriented hospitality experiences. They propose that the overall goal of integrating sustainability practices is good but this should be intended in such a way that there is a clear positioning between the practice and cultural and religious appeasement to ensure that the satisfaction of the guests is maximized. In practice, Muslim-focused hotel management should, on the one hand, ensure the focus of religious service provision and, on the other hand, ensure the sustainability context through its visible, plausible, and relevantly acceptable incorporation.

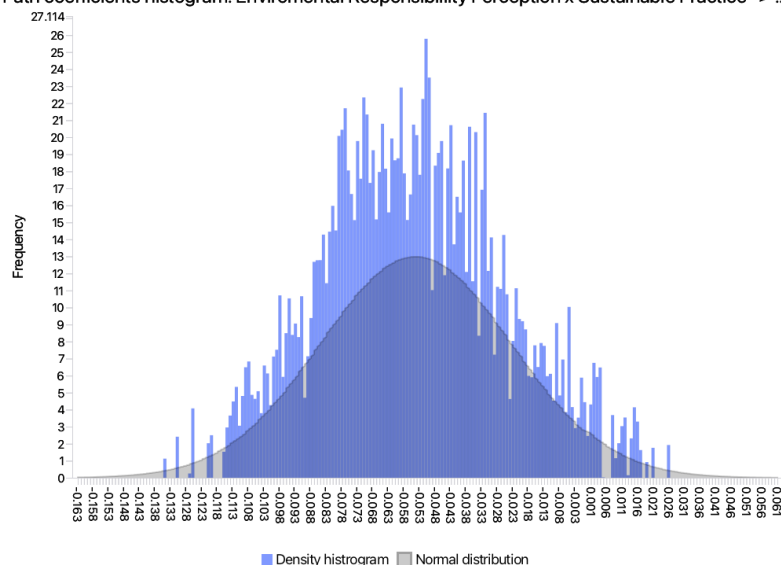
5.1 Normality Test



Histogram 1: path coefficients between Environmental Responsibility Perception and Guest Experience

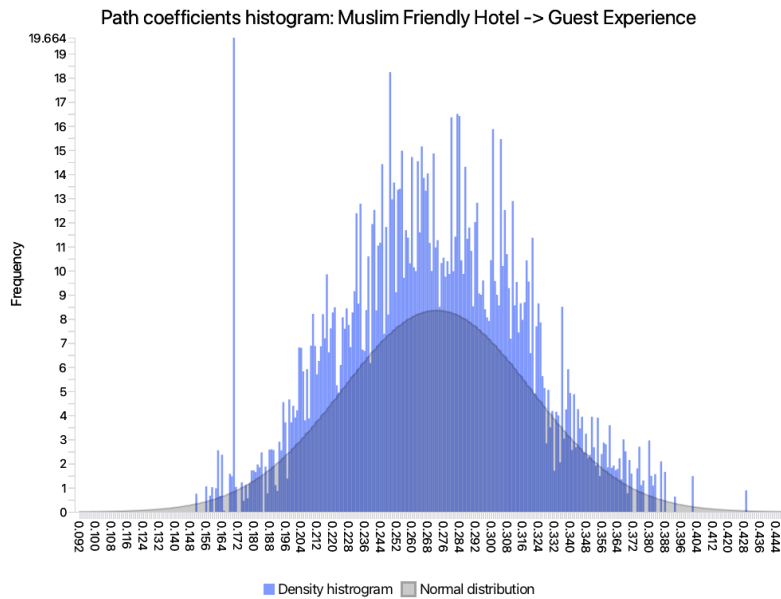
The histogram presents the distribution of the Number of Guest Experience, path coefficient measures among estimates acquired by 5,000 bootstrap samples. With an average of 0.39, the distribution falls in line with a normal curve hence the estimates are Japanese language approximately normally distributed. This implies that the relationship is statistically sound and secure. The consistency of the results is verified at the highest point throughout the original path coefficient (0.391). This shows that the variability is low with the narrow range which increases the confidence level on the model. In sum, the figure confirms that the impression of guests on the environment friendliness of a hotel will greatly and positively affect their overall experience in the hotel as they stay there.

Path coefficients histogram: Enviromental Responsibility Perception x Sustainable Practice -> ...



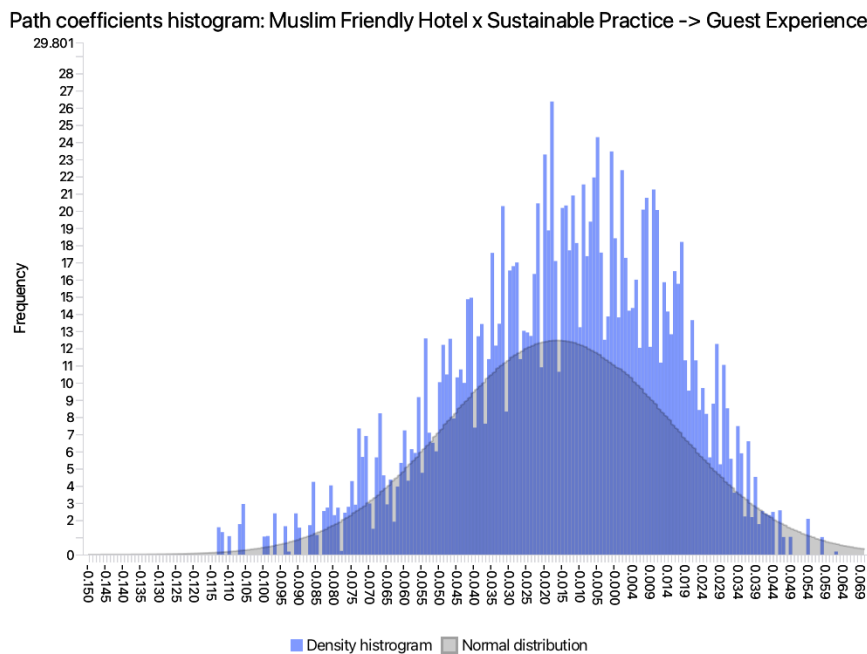
Histogram 2: path coefficients between Environmental Responsibility Perception and Sustainable Practice

The histogram represents a distribution of path coefficients of interaction between Environmental Responsibility Perception and Sustainable Practice to any specific specified outcome. The distribution is highly close to normal distribution as portrayed by the overlay of the gentle normal curve. The data are symmetrically distributed around the mean indicating a homogenous and non-biased estimation of the path coefficients. The fact that the values are concentrated in the mid-ranges with small frequencies at the ends makes this figure to have little skewedness and this favors the assumption of normality. The given distributional pattern increases the plausibility of the statistical inferences, which means that the interaction effect will not be variable and shaky across successive samples.



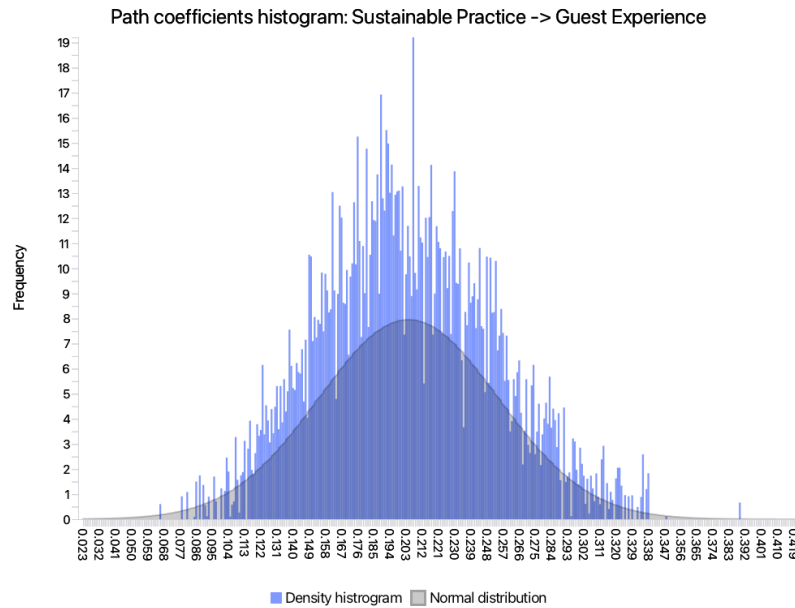
Histogram 3: path coefficients between Muslim Friendly Hotel attributes and Guest Experience

The histogram shows the proportion of the path coefficients of the Muslim Friendly Hotel attributes, and the Guest Experience. The form usually follows the normal distribution wherein the majority of coefficients lie near the central coefficient showing consistency in the effect estimation. Nonetheless, there are some evident spikes especially drastic outliers that indicate slight variations to a perfect normality and that might be because of sampling variability or distortion in the data. These notwithstanding, the global bell model holds together and a supposition of symmetrical distribution of path coefficients. This is beneficial to the statistical superiority of the model and suggests that the predictor can be counted on to play a useful role in the variances of guest experience.



Histogram 4: path coefficients between Muslim Friendly Hotel and Sustainable Practice

The distribution of path coefficients of the interaction of Muslim Friendly Hotel and Sustainable Practice with Guest Experience are depicted using the histogram. It is very close to a normal distribution as indicated by the smooth overlay and the spreading towards the two ends is at an equal and symmetrical rate which is the case with any normal curve. This bell shape trend indicates that normally distributed data, which means that the interaction effect is static and consistent throughout bootstrap samples. The intensity close to the mean and the lack of serious outliers enhances the validity of the statistical inferences. All in all, the histogram justifies the goodness and credibility of the imagined interaction effect of the model.



Histogram 5: path coefficients between Sustainable Practice and Guest Experience

In the figure displayed by the histogram, it shows the distribution of path coefficients between Sustainable Practice and Guest Experience relationship. The form is nearly that of a normal distribution which means that the data is symmetrically set around its mean value with the majority of the coefficients grouping to between 0.18 and 0.26. It implies that the presence of Sustainable Practice positively and historically affects that of Guest Experience with a statistically important result across bootstrap samples. The bell shaped curve has confirmed the assumption of the normality thereby strengthening the applicability of inferential statistical tools involved in the analysis. On the whole, the trend proves the fact that Sustainable Practice has a significant and consistent impact on improving Guest Experience in this model.

5.2 Bootstrapping Analyze

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T-Stat	P-Value	Significance
Environmental Responsibility Perception → Guest Experience	0.391	6.543	0	Significant
Environmental Responsibility Perception × Sustainable Practice → Guest Experience	-0.061	1.971	0.049	Marginally Significant
Muslim Friendly Hotel → Guest Experience	0.272	5.705	0	Significant
Muslim Friendly Hotel × Sustainable Practice → Guest Experience	-0.01	0.313	0.755	Not Significant
Sustainable Practice → Guest Experience	0.193	3.848	0	Significant

Structural path analysis shows that Environmental Responsibility Perception has significant positive influence on Guest Experience (0.391, 6.543, $p < 0.001$). The above finding is in line with Pulido-Fernandez and Lopez-Sanchez (2019), who presented an argument that awareness of tourists about the engagement of a hotel towards environmental sustainability positively influences their overall satisfaction. On the same note, Han et al. (2011) also established that an environmentally conscious guest prefers property with green certification qualities, hence translating to a better stay experience. Such findings support the theoretical assumption that environmental cues work as indicators of credibility supporting the trust and perceived value on the side of the guests. The interaction between the Environmental Responsibility Perception and Sustainable Practices has the marginal significant impact on the Guest Experience (0.061, $t = 1.971$, $p = 0.049$). Since statistically it is on the border, the fact that the negative direction is stronger than predicted is surprising and would indicate possible future dissatisfaction when environmental messages are not adequately backed by real world, observable green efforts. This suggests that sustainable efforts do not necessarily enhance the impact of the environmental responsibility perception unless they are highly distinguished, real, and effectively advertised to underline the essence of sustainable communication strategy in the hospitality environment. Conversely, there is a good, positive and significant influence of Muslim-Friendly Hotel practices on Guest Experience (beta = 0.272, $t = 5.705$, $p < 0.001$). It agrees with the previous literature by Battour et al. (2014) and Razzaq et al. (2016), indicating the high importance of culturally and religiously-adequate services (halal food, praying facilities, and gender-sensitive amenities) when it comes to determining satisfaction among Muslim travelers. These findings highlight the sustained importance of the religious service fit of the faith-based tourism markets and justify implementing the Islamic traditional concept of hospitality in the approaches to guest experience.

Nevertheless, the effect of interactions of Muslim-Friendly Hotel attributes with Sustainable Practices does not result in the significant impact on Guest Experience (0.010, 0.313, 0.755). The given finding implies that these two constructs do not interact, establishing either a synergistic or antagonistic impact that is significant. It contradicts assumptions of value integration meaning that, whereas the dimensions are positive in their own right, a combination of their presence does not necessarily greater effect on the guest experience than the individual dimensions do. Lastly, Sustainable Practices as a single predictor positively affect Guest Experience in a moderate but significant manner (0.193, $t = 3.848$, $p < 0.001$). This outcome corresponds to Pulido-Fernandez and Lopez-Sanchez (2019) who reported that the environment-related operational measures (i.e., certifications in eco-friendly operations, energy conservation, and waste-management) could enhance how guests evaluate hospitality businesses, especially among more environmentally aware customers. When combined, the results indicate that both of the dimensions of the role of religion and environmental services are valuable, but Islamic-friendly services have a greater impact on the experience of guests in this case. This implies that among the Muslim travelers, the cultural-religious alignment might become a priority based on which they at least take the post of sustainability.

6. Discussion and Practical Implications: This paper explored the role of perception of environmental responsibility, sustainable practice and Muslim friendly services in the experience of a guest in Muslim friendly hotel. The results contribute to the theory and practice in the hospitality and sustainable tourism in the following ways. One way in which the analysis became conclusive was on the confirmation of the strongest positive effect of guest experience by Muslim-friendly hotel attributes. This confirms earlier studies concluding that the services related to Islamic values such as halal food provisions, prayer rooms, and gender-specific services are a must to create a satisfying and loyal customer base among Muslim travellers (Battour et al., 2014; Razzaq et al., 2016). These results support the argument on the significance of the concept of religious congruence in the hospitality industry and emphasize the imperative of service design and cultural pragmatism in the contemporary, yet fragmented market world.

Second, sustainable practices were revealed to produce a moderate but positive impact on the experience of guests. The result correlates with the literature that also associates environment-conscious business practices with an increased level of satisfaction among customers and a higher sense of ethical values (Han et al., 2022; Pulido-Fernandez & Lopez-Sanchez, 2019). Nevertheless, the smaller impact in comparison with religiously customized services implies that sustainability is not the main factor, but rather a supplementary one, that drives Muslim travelers. On the practical note, it implies that hotels need to embrace the principles of sustainability not only as a necessity to be environmentally compliant but also to enhance the service ecosystem without denying any religious and cultural sensitivity.

Interestingly, the perception of environmental responsibility was also found out to have a significant influence on the guest experience even though it was weak. This implies that in cases where the guests feel that the environmental activities undertaken by a hotel are genuine and those which they can see, it has positive influence in their assessment of their stay. However, this marginal interaction effect between environmental perception and sustainable practices casts doubts on the credibility of messages and visibility. Unless the sustainable actions are being actively publicized or put in a material form, then it might not support the tenor that is associated with the environment. This explains why hotels must embrace open green-communication on policy, such as postings of certifications, publications of sustainability-ratios, and involving the guests in green-projects. On the contrary, the relationship between the Muslim-friendly services and the sustainable practices could not be qualified as significant. This implies that religious and environmental aspects can be judged separately instead of interactively by guests. Theoretically, this result deepens the premise of value integration which suggests that value integration may not necessarily enhance perceptions of the guest when two services are ethically congruent and thus, need to be explicitly formulated to appear as linked.

7. Managerial Implications: Emphasise Religious Service Matching: Religious matching of service should be core service provision aspect by the hotel operators in those destinations dominated by Muslim or those attending such destinations which is the most influential factor to their guest satisfaction. Green Can Be Strategic, as much as you value green initiatives, make sure they are part of the guest experience, in ways that people can see and be a part of, as opposed to being purely backend processes. This encompasses signages, electronic communications and in room interactions. Don't Assume Synergy, there is a tendency among managers to think that when sustainability is combined with religious services the stronger effect will be created automatically. Rather than dealing with all the value dimensions similarly, it is best that all the dimensions of values are handled differently with a different communication strategy being adopted in respect to the priorities of the guests.

Build Authenticity and Transparency, to fully leverage the effect of environmental responsibility perceptions hotels need to communicate at the appropriate levels of authenticity regarding their sustainability programs and be able to back up talk with action.

Market Segmentation and Branding, the results promote a two-brand approach in which hotels can also place themselves either as a religiously BB and environmentally responsible and target different aspects of motivation in the customer selection process.

8. Conclusion

This research study offers some fresh findings on the individual effects of environmental sustainability and religious sensitivity as a factor that affects guest experience in Muslim friendly hotels. The research helps to have a more differentiated perspective on the transgression of value-based service delivery in the hospitality sector based on the set of integrated dual-path factors that encompass environmental responsibility perception, sustainable practices as well as Muslim-friendly aspects of the service. The results indicate that the most profound effect on the experience of the guests is the Muslim-friendly services, which makes the aspect of religious compatibility more important in the culturally specific tourism destinations. In the meantime, environmental responsibility (as it is perceived) and sustainable practices have a positive effect on the way the guests think as well, albeit a weaker tone. Such findings confirm the notion that ethical as well as spiritual aspects are part of a hospitality experience but perhaps follow different lines of perception. However, the interaction effects remained non-significant indicating that the guests did not always see added value by combining the elements related to sustainability and religious service provision. This conclusion questions the presupposition in the automatic synergy between eco-consciousness and faith-based services, and it indicates the necessity of the specific and strategic positioning of services. This is theoretically important as this study builds the body of knowledge regarding the value congruency and green hospitality by placing them in the context of religious tourism. Authentic communication and the need to have cultural tailoring, in the service design, are also highlighted by it. In practice, the research provides practical implications to hotel managers, who would like to improve guest satisfaction by using service innovations as separate yet related.

Future study may consider the subject of how these relationships are different across different guest groupings, different accommodation categories or regions. Besides, the use of longitudinal or qualitative model could provide more insight on the sustainability understanding and priority that guests give to sustainability and religious services in the long run. Media with a sense of cultural, ethical, and environmental elements is witnessed to be crucial in providing meaningful and memorable events to the guests as the hospitality industry keeps developing.

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