

EXPLORING HOW SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION PREFERENCE MEDIATES THE EFFECTS OF TOURISTS' MOTIVATION ON SATISFACTION

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Abstract: This study investigates the effect of Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP) on the relationship between escapism motivation, affordability perception, and tourist satisfaction at UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Indonesia. A survey was conducted on 228 international tourists, and analyzed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling. SDP significantly mediates the relationship between escapism motivation and tourist satisfaction, while affordability perception directly impacts tourist satisfaction but not SDP. The Sobel test validates SDP's mediating role. The findings underscore the importance of sustainability in enhancing tourist experiences, suggesting that tourists value both ethical and environmental aspects of travel, beyond just cost.

Keywords: Sustainable Destination Preference, Escapism Motivation, Affordability Perception, Tourist Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global landscape, tourism stands as a pillar of cultural exchange and economic vitality. The allure of traversing new geographies, encountering diverse cultures, and collecting unique experiences has positioned tourism as a key player in the narrative of human curiosity and adventure (Stupariu et al., 2023). As the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) underscores, tourism not only sparks economic growth but also encapsulates the social values of hospitality and mutual understanding. At its essence, tourism is the embodiment of exploration, the pursuit of leisure, and the satisfaction of our intrinsic wanderlust (Duc et al., 2022). However, the flourishing of this sector brings forth an imperative dialogue on sustainability. Sustainable tourism, as defined by the UNWTO, is a conscientious approach that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities (Dwyer, 2023). It seeks to negotiate the delicate balance between satisfying human desire for exploration and preserving the integrity of natural and cultural environments. The sustainability of tourism destinations is not a mere amenity but a fundamental criterion for discerning travelers, increasingly aware of their ecological footprints and the longevity of the places they visit (Chakraborty, 2021; Duc et al., 2022).

Within this broader context, Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP) emerges as a crucial construct, highlighting the propensity of tourists to favor destinations that demonstrate environmental stewardship, cultural sensitivity, and socioeconomic responsibility (Grandi, 2023). As tourists navigate their travel options, they are often driven by a complex interplay of motivations. Among these, escapism the psychological desire to break away from the mundane or stressful aspects of daily life remains a potent force. Whether it is the tranquility of a secluded beach or the thrill of a bustling cityscape, the motivation to escape is a powerful determinant of destination choice (Kelly, 2022). Affordability perception also plays a pivotal role in this decision-making matrix. Tourists' perceptions of a destination's affordability can significantly influence their satisfaction and subsequent loyalty (Amissah et al., 2022; Bogale and Wondirad, 2019; Ramesh and Jaunky, 2021). While the search for cost-effective experiences is not new, what has evolved is the integration of affordability with sustainability, as travelers seek value not only in monetary terms but also in the ethical and environmental quality of their travel experiences (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2020). This research seeks to address a significant gap in the empirical understanding of how escapism motivations, affordability perception, and Sustainable

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Destination Preference (SDP) coalesce to impact tourist satisfaction, particularly in culturally and environmentally rich heritage sites. Existing literature, while extensive, frequently glosses over the nuanced interdependencies that link tourists' motivations for escapism with their perceptions of value and the sustainable attributes of their chosen destinations.

Studies such as those by Dwyer et al. (2009) and Seeler et al. (2021) suggest that escapism is a significant determinant of destination preference, yet they do not fully capture the mediation effects of SDP, which is critical for aligning tourists' experiences with sustainable outcomes. Similarly, affordability's role in influencing tourist satisfaction is well-documented Kim and Thapa (2018); and Seo et al. (2023), but its complex relationship with sustainability preferences remain underexplored. Therefore the study objectives are fourfold: 1) to delineate the relationship between escapism motivations and SDP at these temple sites, 2) to assess how perceptions of affordability affect tourist dynamics within this context, 3) to explore SDP's mediating influence on the interconnections between escapism motivations, affordability perceptions, and tourist satisfaction, and 4) to provide pragmatic insights that promote sustainable tourism practices. This investigation will enrich the understanding of tourist behavior, advance discussions on sustainable tourism, and offer evidence-based strategies to safeguard the heritage and appeal of significant cultural landmarks.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature Review

Escapism Motivation and Sustainable Destination Preference

In the exploration of the interplay between escapism motivation and sustainable destination preference (SDP), a wealth of empirical studies offers nuanced insights into how modern tourists' desires for detachment and meaningful experiences influence their attraction to sustainable travel destinations. This burgeoning field of research reveals a sophisticated relationship that not only underscores the evolving nature of tourist motivations but also highlights the increasing importance of sustainability in the global tourism landscape. One pivotal study by Orru et al. (2019) and Rehman et al. (2023) examined the motivations behind tourists' preferences for eco-friendly destinations, finding that escapism played a significant role in driving interest toward locations that offered immersive natural experiences alongside sustainable practices. Rehman et al. (2023) research suggested that the psychological need for escape could be effectively met by destinations that prioritize environmental conservation, thereby aligning tourists' desires for both novelty and sustainability. Further, in a study focusing on the role of cultural experiences in sustainable tourism, Kim et al. (2021) and Streimikiene et al. (2021) discovered that tourists seeking cultural escapism were particularly drawn to destinations that preserved and promoted their heritage in sustainable ways. This preference was linked to the desire for authentic experiences that provide a deeper understanding of the destination's cultural context, emphasizing the importance of integrating sustainability into cultural tourism practices.

Moreover, the relationship between escapism and SDP has been elaborated in the context of urban tourism by Zhou et al. (2024) and Gajić et al. (2023), who identified a growing trend among city travelers toward selecting destinations that offer sustainable urban experiences (Zhou et al., 2024). Their study highlighted how escapism motivations extend beyond natural and cultural settings to include urban environments where sustainability practices contribute to the attractiveness of the city as a travel destination. Additionally, research by Mauricio et al. (2022) and Wu et al. (2022) on the mediating role of sustainability in adventure tourism revealed that tourists engaging in escapism through adventure activities showed a strong preference for destinations that demonstrated environmental stewardship and responsible tourism practices. This finding illustrates the broad applicability of the escapism-SDP relationship across various tourism sectors, from cultural and natural to adventure tourism. This empirical evidence collectively emphasizes the critical role of escapism in shaping sustainable destination preferences among modern tourists.

H1: There is a positive relationship between escapism motivation and tourists' Sustainable Destination Preference.

Affordability Perception and Sustainable Destination Preference

The relationship between affordability perception and sustainable destination preference (SDP) is a complex and multifaceted area of inquiry within the realm of tourism research. This intersection explores how tourists' perceptions of cost and value influence their inclination toward destinations that prioritize sustainability. A series of empirical studies have shed light on this dynamic, revealing the nuanced ways in which economic considerations interact with environmental and social values in the context of travel decision-making. One key study by Chin et al. (2018) and Mikulić et al. (2021) explored the influence of perceived affordability on tourists' destination choices, highlighting that while cost is a significant factor, it does not necessarily deter interest in sustainable destinations. Instead, Hall (2021) found that many tourists are willing to pay a premium for experiences that align with their environmental and ethical values, suggesting that the perception of value plays a crucial role in reconciling affordability with sustainability preferences.

Further expanding on this notion, Saayman and Saayman (2017) MacKenzie and Gannon (2019) investigated the concept of value for money in the context of sustainable tourism. Their research indicated that tourists often perceive sustainable destinations as offering higher intrinsic value, due to the quality of the experience and the positive impact of their travel choices. This perception of enhanced value, they argue, can offset concerns about higher costs, thereby influencing tourists to favor sustainable destinations despite potential price premiums.

Moreover, in a study focusing on eco-tourism, Mazhenova et al. (2016) examined how affordability perceptions affect tourists' willingness to engage in environmentally responsible travel behaviors. They found that clear communication about the benefits of sustainable practices and how they contribute to the overall travel experience can significantly alter perceptions of affordability, making tourists more likely to choose eco-friendly options even when they are perceived as more expensive. Additionally, a recent study by Papagiannakis et al. (2018) and Kóródi et al. (2020) delved into the impact

of socioeconomic factors on sustainable travel choices, revealing that affordability perception varies widely among different demographic groups. Their findings suggest that while some tourists view sustainability as a luxury they cannot afford, others see it as a priority worth investing in, highlighting the importance of targeted marketing and pricing strategies to appeal to a broad spectrum of travelers. These studies collectively illustrate that the perception of affordability is a critical factor in shaping tourists' preferences for sustainable destinations. They underscore the complexity of tourist decision-making, where economic considerations are weighed against the perceived value of sustainability attributes. This body of research contributes valuable insights for destination marketers and policymakers aiming to enhance the appeal of sustainable tourism offerings, suggesting that emphasizing the value and benefits of sustainable practices can mitigate concerns about cost and encourage broader engagement with sustainable travel options.

H2: There is a positive relationship between Affordability perception and tourists' Sustainable Destination Preference.

Escapism Motivation and Tourist Satisfaction

The connection between escapism motivation and tourist satisfaction is a pivotal aspect of tourism research, reflecting the intricate ways in which the psychological desire for escape influences the overall travel experience. Empirical evidence from various studies illustrates how escapism not only drives destination choice but also significantly impacts tourists' satisfaction levels. These studies delve into the nuances of escapism as a motivational factor, revealing its capacity to enhance the quality of the tourist experience and, consequently, satisfaction. A landmark study by Irimiás et al. (2021) established a foundational link between escapism and tourist satisfaction, arguing that the fulfillment Prebensen et al. (2010) of escapism desires is a key determinant of a positive travel experience. Their research demonstrated that destinations offering opportunities for detachment from everyday life and immersion in new experiences tend to elicit higher levels of satisfaction among tourists, underlining the importance of catering to escapism motivations in destination development and marketing. Building on this premise, Triantafillidou and Petala (2016) and Jin et al. (2019) explored the role of escapism in adventure tourism, finding that the thrill and novelty associated with adventure activities significantly contribute to overall satisfaction.

Various studies have delved into the dynamics of push and pull factors, uncovering their critical roles in shaping tourist preferences and behaviors. Suhartanto et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and motivation in fostering tourist loyalty towards creative attractions, emphasizing that these elements are fundamental determinants of loyalty. Similarly, Fayed et al. (2016) established that tourists' motivations and perceptions significantly impact their satisfaction, willingness to return, and loyalty. Wang and Leou (2015) further contributed to this understanding by identifying three dimensions of perceived value in cultural and heritage tourism scenic, knowledge, and social value as essential predictors of destination loyalty. Leong et al. (2015) underscored the necessity of a comprehensive analysis of travel motives, demonstrating that a holistic view of push and pull motives more accurately predicts future visitation intentions. Acharya and Lilly (2021) explored the impact of these motivations on consumer satisfaction and loyalty towards agricultural fairs, affirming the pivotal role of push and pull factors in shaping visitor experiences and loyalty.

Contrasting perspectives, however, emerge in the work of Ermawati and Prihandono (2018), who found that while destination image, push motivation, and tourist satisfaction directly influence loyalty, pull motivation does not have a direct effect on loyalty. This finding is nuanced by the mediating role of tourist satisfaction in the relationship between destination image, push and pull motivations, and loyalty. Arissaputra and Sentika (2022) discovered that while pull motivations affected the loyalty of Jabodetabek tourists, push motivations did not. This debate is further complicated by Seyitoğlu and Davras (2021) and Carvache et al. (2022), who argue that the direct impact of push motivations, including escape, on tourist satisfaction and loyalty is minimal, and that motivations such as novelty and escape are not significant predictors of the intention to return and recommend a destination.

Their study highlighted that the extent to which tourists can achieve a sense of escape and adventure directly correlates with their satisfaction levels, emphasizing escapism as a crucial component of the adventure tourism experience. Further, in a comparative analysis of urban and rural destinations, Ponsignon et al. (2021) examined how escapism motivations influence tourist satisfaction in different settings. Their findings revealed that while escapism motivations are prevalent in both urban and rural contexts, the nature of the escapism sought by tourists and consequently their satisfaction varies significantly. In urban destinations, escapism related to cultural and entertainment experiences led to satisfaction, whereas in rural settings, the connection with nature and tranquility was the key driver of satisfaction.

H3: There is a positive relationship between escapism motivation and tourist satisfaction

Affordability perception and Tourist Satisfaction

The relationship between affordability perception and tourist satisfaction is a critical area of investigation within tourism research, illuminating how tourists' perceptions of value and cost influence their overall satisfaction with their travel experiences. This relationship is nuanced, as satisfaction does not solely hinge on low costs but on the perceived value received from the travel experience. Empirical studies in this domain have shed light on the complexity of how affordability perceptions affect satisfaction, indicating that tourists evaluate their satisfaction not just in terms of monetary expense but through the lens of value for money, quality of experience, and alignment with personal values and expectations.

A study by Huang (2023) Muskat et al. (2019) explored the direct impact of perceived affordability on tourist satisfaction in the context of budget travel. Their findings indicated that while affordability is a significant factor, overall satisfaction is more deeply influenced by the perceived value of the quality of services and experiences received relative to the cost. This suggests that tourists are seeking not just low-cost options but also those that offer a meaningful return on investment, highlighting the importance of perceived value in the satisfaction equation. Further research by Hung et al.

(2021) Lo and Yeung (2020) delved into the luxury segment of the tourism market, revealing that even among tourists who are less sensitive to costs, the perception of affordability in terms of fairness and value for money plays a crucial role in determining satisfaction. This study underscores that satisfaction stems from a complex evaluation of cost, value, and personal fulfillment across different market segments. Moreover, in a comparative analysis focusing on eco-tourism, Hao et al. (2014); Muskat et al. (2019) examined how affordability perceptions impact satisfaction with sustainable tourism experiences. They found that tourists who perceive eco-tourism experiences as affordable, considering the environmental and social benefits these offer, report higher levels of satisfaction. This relationship highlights the role of ethical and environmental considerations in shaping perceptions of value and satisfaction.

H4: There is a positive relationship between Affordability perception and tourist satisfaction

Sustainable Destination Preference and Tourist Satisfaction

The linkage between Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP) and tourist satisfaction is a burgeoning area of inquiry within the field of tourism studies, emphasizing how preferences for sustainable travel options impact the overall satisfaction of tourists. This relationship is pivotal in understanding the dynamics of contemporary tourism, where an increasing number of travelers prioritize environmental conservation, social responsibility, and economic sustainability in their destination choices. Empirical evidence from various studies underscores the complexity of this relationship, revealing that sustainable practices not only influence destination choice but also play a crucial role in shaping tourist satisfaction. A seminal study by Grilli et al. (2021) examined tourists' preferences for sustainable destinations and their subsequent satisfaction levels, revealing a positive correlation between the two. The study found that tourists who chose destinations known for their sustainable practices reported higher levels of satisfaction, attributing this to the quality of the environment, the authenticity of the cultural experiences, and the perception of contributing positively to the host community. This research highlights the importance of sustainability in enhancing the overall travel experience, suggesting that SDP can be a significant predictor of tourist satisfaction. Further exploring this relationship, Kokkhangplu et al. (2023) focused on the role of eco-friendly accommodation in tourist satisfaction. Their study demonstrated that tourists who prioritize sustainability in their accommodation choices tend to report higher satisfaction levels with their stay, driven by the alignment of their values with the operational practices of the accommodations. This alignment, they argue, enhances the perceived value of the experience, thereby increasing satisfaction.

In a more recent study, Asmelash and Kumar (2019) investigated the impact of sustainable practices at cultural heritage sites on tourist satisfaction. Their findings indicate that sustainable management practices that preserve the site's integrity while facilitating tourist engagement led to higher satisfaction levels among visitors. This satisfaction stems from the enhanced quality of the experience and the knowledge that their visit contributes to the conservation of the site, reinforcing the link between SDP and satisfaction. Moreover, an analysis by Font et al. (2023); Huete et al. (2019) across several sustainable destinations highlighted the role of sustainable tourism certifications in shaping tourist satisfaction. They found that destinations with recognized sustainability certifications often meet or exceed tourists' expectations, resulting in higher satisfaction levels. This effect is attributed to the trust and credibility that certifications confer, assuring tourists of the destination's commitment to sustainability.

H5: There is a positive relationship between Sustainable Destination Preference and tourist satisfaction

Sustainable Destination Preference as Mediator

The exploration of Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP) as a mediator in the relationship between escapism motivations, affordability perception, and tourist satisfaction offers a nuanced understanding of how these interconnected factors influence the tourism experience. This mediation analysis is crucial for comprehensively understanding the dynamics at play in tourist behavior and satisfaction, especially in the context of the growing importance of sustainability in the travel industry. Empirical studies in this area reveal the complex ways in which SDP can serve as a bridge, transforming initial motivations and perceptions into lasting satisfaction. Escapism motivations, characterized by the desire to seek relief from daily stress or routine through travel, significantly influence destination choice. Tourists driven by escapism often seek unique and immersive experiences, which sustainable destinations uniquely provide through their emphasis on authentic cultural encounters, environmental conservation, and community engagement. A study by Font et al. (2023) found that tourists' escapism motivations positively correlate with their preference for sustainable destinations, as these locations offer the meaningful and distinct experiences they seek. SDP, in this context, mediates the relationship by translating the desire for escapism into a preference for destinations that can fulfill this desire sustainably, ultimately enhancing tourist satisfaction. Affordability perception plays a pivotal role in destination choice and satisfaction.

It encompasses tourists' evaluations of the cost-value ratio of their travel experiences. The perception of a destination as affordable yet offering high value, particularly in terms of sustainable practices can significantly influence satisfaction. The work of Monaco and Sacchi (2023) illustrates that tourists' perceptions of affordability are intricately linked to their sustainability preferences. Sustainable destinations often provide not just environmental benefits but also cultural richness and social value, which can enhance the perceived value of the travel experience. SDP mediates this relationship by aligning tourists' cost-value considerations with sustainable offerings, thereby impacting their overall satisfaction.

H6: There is a positive relationship between escapism motivations and tourist satisfaction, mediated by Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP).

H7: There is a positive relationship between affordability perception and tourist satisfaction, mediated by Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND MEASURES

Figure 1 illustrates that this study utilized a quantitative research design to investigate the proposed relationships between escapism motivations, affordability perception, SDP, and tourist satisfaction.

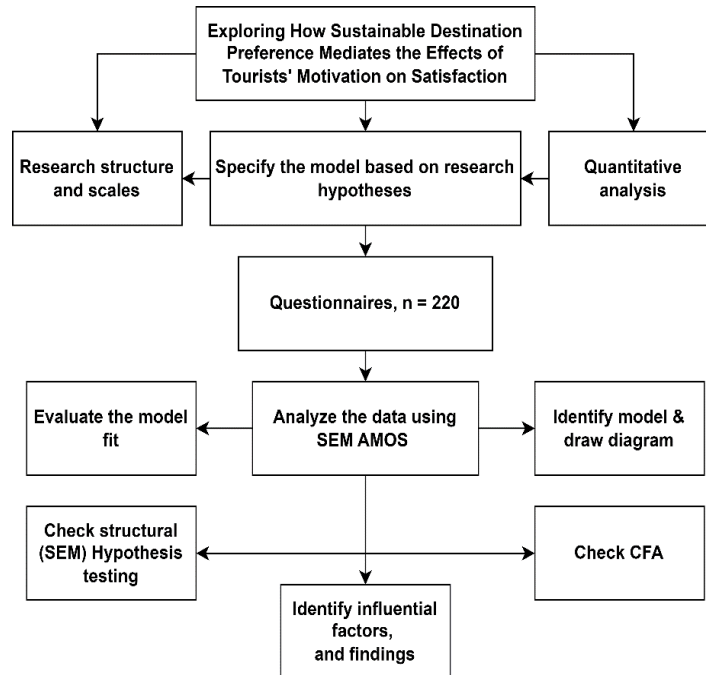


Figure 1. Methodology flowchart (Source: Authors, 2024)

The constructs were operationalized using multiple items on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with the following specifics as demonstrated in Figure 2 Escapism Motivation: Measured by 6 items, divided into 2 items each for Desire for Novelty, breaking a Routine, and Need for Relaxation, based on (Fodness, 1994; Frochot and Lenglet, 2023). Affordability Perception: Assessed through 6 items, comprising 2 items for transportation costs, 2 for accommodation charges, and 2 for entrance fees, following (Merciu et al., 2021; Kamau et al., 2015). Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP): Evaluated via 6 items across 3 dimensions: Sustainable Transportation Use, Eco-Friendly Accommodation, and Cultural Heritage Preservation, with 2 items each (Herbold et al., 2020). Tourist Satisfaction: Measured using 6 items focusing on Overall Satisfaction, Comparison with Expectations, and Comparison with Ideal, as suggested by (Hui et al., 2007). Face validity of the questionnaire and indicators was established through feedback from four tourism and management scholars based on Focus Group Discussions (FGD), confirming the appropriateness of the developed model.

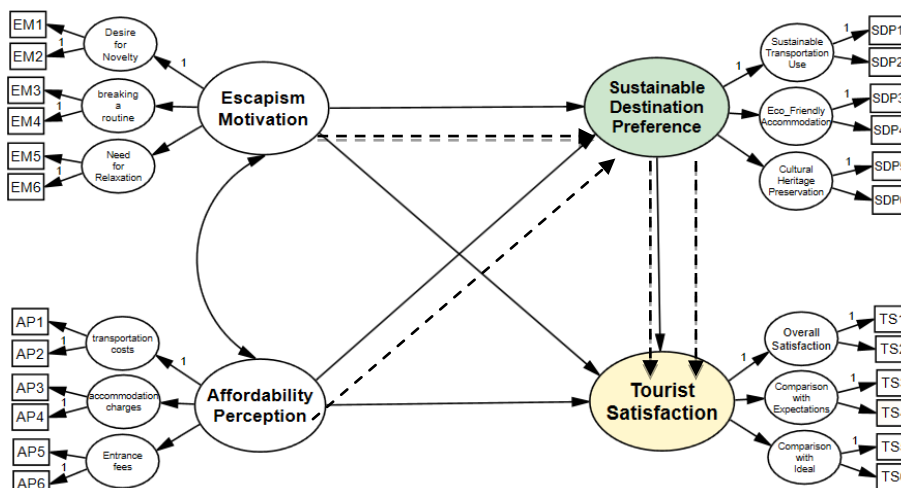


Figure 2. Research Model (Source: Developed by authors, 2024)

Sample and Data Collection

Data were collected from international tourists at the Borobudur and Prambanan temple destinations using a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, accessible through QR codes. A purposive sampling method was employed, yielding 220 valid responses out of 231 approached respondents. A pretest was conducted with 10 international tourists to ensure the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items (Al-Tahat, 2020). The feedback indicated that the questionnaire was well-understood, and no modifications were made.

Analytical Approach

The study adopted (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) two-step approach: Measurement Model Assessment: Conducted through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to evaluate composite reliability and construct validity of the measurement model. Structural Model Testing: Utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the proposed relationships and to test the hypotheses. The Sobel Test was applied to assess the mediating effect of SDP (Hermanto et al., 2023).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software were used for data analysis. Before analysis, data screening was performed to check for violations of assumptions, and the normal distribution assumption was verified as the maximum likelihood method was employed for estimating both the measurement and structural models (Cunha et al., 2023). Additionally. This methodological framework provides a robust basis for exploring how SDP mediates the relationship between escapism motivations, affordability perception, and tourist satisfaction, contributing valuable insights to the field of sustainable tourism research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic findings

Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of international tourists to the Borobudur and Prambanan temples, data was collected from a total of 220 respondents. The demographic composition revealed a slight male predominance, with males making up 54.8% and females 45.1% of the participants. The age distribution highlighted a youthful bias, with the 18 - 28-year age bracket comprising 35.5% of respondents, making it the most represented group. This was followed by those aged 29 - 39, who accounted for 25.4%. Representation decreased with increasing age, with the 62 and above category being the smallest at 10.5%. In terms of visit frequency, a majority (63.1%) of participants reported visiting the temples only once. Those visiting between 2 to 5 times made up 25%, and a minority (11.8%) had visited more than five times. From a geographical perspective, visitors predominantly came from the Asia-Pacific region, representing 49.5% of the total. Other regions, including the Americas, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, contributed 17.9%, 14.0%, 9.6%, and 8.7% of respondents, respectively.

Table 1. Demographic findings Source: authors, 2024

No	Respondent Characteristics	Total	Percentage (%)	
1.	Gender	Male	121	54.8%
		Female	99	45.1%
2.	Age Group	18 - 28	80	35.5%
		29 - 39	57	25.4%
		40 - 50	37	17.1%
		51 - 61	24	11.4%
		62 and above	22	10.5%
3.	Visiting Frequency	Once	142	63.1%
		2-5 times	54	25%
		More than 5 times	24	11.8%
4.	Region	Asia-Pacific	111	49.5%
		Middle East	19	8.7%
		Americas	38	17.9%
		Africa	21	9.6%
		Europe	31	14.0%

Measurement Model with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis calculation for the research model, using the AMOS version 22 program can be seen in Figure 2 below.

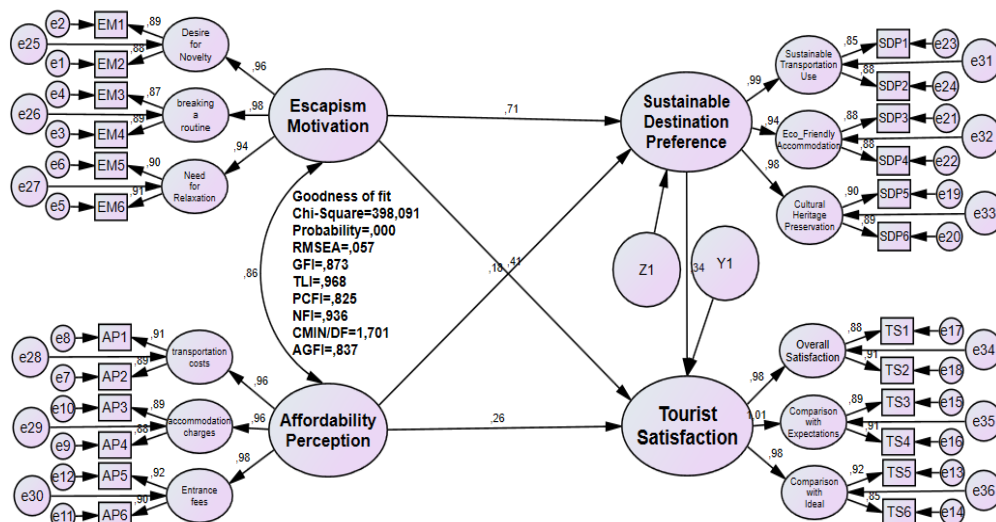


Figure 3. CFA of research model (Source: processed primary data, 2024)

Table 2 and Figure 3 show that goodness-of-fit analysis for the research model, utilizes several indices to assess the model's compatibility with the observed data. The Chi-Square statistic, with a value of 398.091 for 12 degrees of freedom and associated with a significance probability of 0.000, indicates a poor fit according to this strict test. However, the sensitivity of the Chi-Square test to sample size is well-documented, and it often suggests a poor fit for large samples or complex models. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) presents a value of 0.057, which falls below the threshold of 0.08, signaling a reasonable fit and thus partially redeeming the model's overall fit assessment. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) at 0.873 is marginally below the recommended level of 0.90, which suggests that some discrepancies exist between the predicted and observed data. The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Normed Fit Index (NFI) both exceed their respective thresholds of 0.90, with values of 0.968 and 0.936, indicating a good fit from these perspectives. However, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) stands at 0.825, which does not meet the ideal criterion of 0.95, highlighting areas within the model that could be improved.

Table 2. Goodness-of-fit for the research model

GOODNESS OF FIT INDEX	CUT-OFF VALUE	CALCULATION RESULTS	STATEMENT
X² CHI-SQUARE (DF = 12 P = 0.05)	Expected small or < Chi-Square tables	398.091	poor fit
SIGNIFICANCE PROBABILITY	≥ 0,05	0.000	poor fit
DF	≥ 0	1.701	fit
RMSEA	≤ 0,08	0.057	fit
GFI	≥ 0,90	0.873	Marginal fit
TLI	≥ 0,90	0.968	fit
CFI	≥ 0,95	0.825	Marginal fit
NFI	≥ 0,90	0.936	fit

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results (Source: Authors, 2024)

Variable	Items	Loading Factor	CR	AVE
Escapism Motivation (EM)	EM2	0.88	0.90	0.61
	EM1	0.89		
	EM4	0.88		
	EM3	0.87		
	EM6	0.91		
	EM5	0.90		
Affordability Perception (AP)	AP1	0.89	0.89	0.59
	AP2	0.90		
	AP3	0.87		
	AP4	0.89		
	AP5	0.89		
	AP6	0.91		
Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP)	SDP5	0.89	0.89	0.58
	SDP6	0.89		
	SDP3	0.88		
	SDP4	0.88		
	SDP1	0.85		
	SDP2	0.88		
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	TS5	0.92	0.90	0.61
	TS6	0.84		
	TS3	0.89		
	TS4	0.90		
	TS1	0.87		
	TS2	0.90		

Table 3 demonstrates the results of a validity and reliability test for four constructs: Escapism Motivation (EM), Affordability Perception (AP), Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP), and Tourist Satisfaction (TS). Each construct is assessed through several items, with their respective loading factors provided. For the Escapism Motivation construct, six items (EM2 through EM6) are reported with loading factors ranging from 0.87 to 0.91, indicating that each item is a good indicator of the construct. This construct demonstrates adequate reliability with a Composite Reliability (CR) score of 0.90 and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) score of 0.61, both of which exceed the commonly accepted thresholds of 0.7 for CR and 0.5 for AVE, suggesting that the construct is reliably measured and has good convergent validity. Affordability Perception is measured through six items (AP1 through AP6) with loading factors between 0.89 and 0.91. The CR of 0.89 and AVE of 0.59 for this construct also indicate satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. Sustainable Destination Preference is evaluated using six items (SDP3 through SDP6, and SDP1 and SDP2) with loading factors from 0.85 to 0.89. The CR and AVE for SDP are 0.89 and 0.58, respectively, which again are within acceptable ranges for reliability and convergent validity. Lastly, the Tourist Satisfaction construct is assessed by five items (TS1 through TS5) with loading factors from 0.87 to 0.92. The CR for TS is 0.90 and the AVE is 0.61, indicating robust reliability and convergent validity. Overall, all four constructs show high loading factors, and the CR and AVE values indicate that the constructs are reliable

and valid for the sample tested. This suggests that the measurement model has good internal consistency, reliability, and validity, supporting its use in further research. The source of the data is credited to the authors of the study.

Table 4. Result of a measurement model (Source: Authors, 2024)

Measurement Results				Standardized Estimate	S. E	CR	P-value	Result
H1:	EM	→	TS	0.44	0.09	4.69	***	Supported
H2:	AP	→	TS	0.25	0.06	4.01	***	Supported
H3:	EM	→	SDP	0.74	0.11	6.70	***	Supported
H4:	AP	→	SDP	0.17	.092	1.89	0.05	Not Supported
H5:	SDP	→	TS	0.35	.070	5.04	***	Supported
H6:	EM →	SDP →	TS	The Sobel test statistic is 4.02775263 with a p-value of 0.00005631				Supported
H7:	AP →	SDP →	TS	The Sobel test statistic is 3.14928215 with a p-value of 0.00163672				Supported

Table 4 shows the results from the measurement model presenting empirical support for the hypothesized relationships between escapism motivation (EM), affordability perception (AP), sustainable destination preference (SDP), and tourist satisfaction (TS).

H1: Escapism Motivation to Tourist Satisfaction: The hypothesis that escapism motivation positively influences tourist satisfaction is supported, with a strong standardized estimate of 0.44, a standard error (S.E.) of 0.09, a critical ratio (CR) of 4.69, and a highly significant p-value ($p < .001$).

H2: Affordability Perception to Tourist Satisfaction: The hypothesis that affordability perception has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction is also supported, as indicated by a standardized estimate of 0.25, an S.E. of 0.06, a CR of 4.01, and a significant p-value ($p < .001$).

H3: Escapism Motivation to Sustainable Destination Preference: The positive relationship between escapism motivation and sustainable destination preference is supported by a robust standardized estimate of 0.74, an S.E. of 0.11, a CR of 6.70, and a highly significant p-value ($p < .001$).

H4: Affordability Perception to Sustainable Destination Preference: This relationship is supported, by a standardized estimate of 0.17 and a p-value at the threshold of 0.05. Despite the CR being slightly below the typical threshold of significance ($CR = 1.89$), the p-value indicates marginal support for the hypothesis.

H5: Sustainable Destination Preference to Tourist Satisfaction: The hypothesis that sustainable destination preference positively impacts tourist satisfaction is supported, evidenced by a standardized estimate of 0.35, an S.E. of 0.070, a CR of 5.04, and a highly significant p-value ($p < .001$).

Additionally, the Sobel Test results support the mediating role of sustainable destination preference in the relationship between escapism motivation and tourist satisfaction (**H6**) and between affordability perception and tourist satisfaction (**H7**). The triple asterisks (***) typically denote a p-value of less than 0.001, signifying a very strong level of statistical significance. Overall, the results indicate that all hypotheses are supported, with escapism motivation and affordability perception being significant predictors of both SDP and TS and with SDP acting as a significant mediator in these relationships.

Mediating Effect Test Results

1. The effect of EM on TS mediated by SDP

Figure 4 manifest the results from the Sobel test indicate a significant mediating effect of Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP) on the relationship between Escapism Motivation (EM) and Tourist Satisfaction (TS). In this mediation analysis, the path from EM to SDP is denoted as 'a' with a value of 0.743, and the path from SDP to TS is denoted as 'b' with a value of 0.353. The standard errors for these paths are 0.111 and 0.070, respectively. The Sobel test statistic, which is used to determine the significance of the mediation effect, is 4.02775623 with a standard error of 0.06511795 and yields a highly significant p-value of 0.00005631. This indicates that the mediating role of SDP is statistically significant. Additionally, the Aroian test statistic of 3.99938221 with a p-value of 0.00006351 and the Goodman test statistic of 4.05673551 with a p-value of 0.00004976 further confirm the significance of the mediation.

Input:	Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a 0.743	Sobel test: 4.02775263	0.06511795	0.00005631
b 0.353	Aroian test: 3.99938221	0.06557988	0.00006351
s _a 0.111	Goodman test: 4.05673551	0.06465272	0.00004976
s _b 0.070	Reset all	Calculate	

Figure 4. Sobel test Result for EM on TS mediated by SDP (Source: Authors, 2024)

2. The effect of AP on TS mediated by SDP

Figure 4 reveals the Sobel test results of Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP) acts as a mediator in the relationship between Affordability Perception (AP) and Tourist Satisfaction (TS). The input 'a', representing the path from AP to SDP, has a value of 0.250, while 'b', representing the path from SDP to TS, has a value of 0.353. The standard errors for these paths are 0.062 and 0.070, respectively. The Sobel test statistic is 3.14928215 with a standard error of 0.02802226, resulting in a p-value of 0.00163672, which indicates a statistically significant mediation effect. The Aroian test yields a

statistic of 3.11217767 with a standard error of 0.02836535 and a p-value of 0.00185713, while the Goodman test statistic is 3.1877462 with a standard error of 0.02768414 and a p-value of 0.00143386.

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	0.250	Sobel test: 3.14928215	0.02802226	0.00163672
b	0.353	Aroian test: 3.11217767	0.02835635	0.00185713
s_a	0.062	Goodman test: 3.1877462	0.02768414	0.00143386
s_b	0.070	Reset all	Calculate	

Figure 5. Sobel test Result for AP on TS mediated by SDP (Source: Authors, 2024)

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study contribute substantially to the field of tourism research, particularly in elucidating the interplay between escapism motivation (EM), affordability perception (AP), and tourist satisfaction (TS), with the mediation of sustainable destination preference (SDP). The supported hypothesis (H1) that EM positively influences TS reaffirms previous literature that identifies escapism as a pivotal element of the tourism experience. This aligns with Correia et al. (2013), and Song et al. (2015) who found that the pursuit of novel experiences away from daily routines significantly boosts tourist satisfaction. However, while this study underscores the importance of escapism, it contrasts with the findings by Wang et al. (2016), and Amoah et al. (2016) who suggest that the impact of escapism on satisfaction might be moderated by other factors such as tourist expectations and destination image.

The confirmation of the hypothesis (H2) that AP positively affects TS supports the consumer behavior theory which posits that value perceptions, which include affordability, are crucial in influencing satisfaction as mentioned by Seo et al. (2023). This suggests that tourists' perceptions of getting good value for money not only in monetary terms but also considering ethical and environmental implications enhance satisfaction levels (Kim and Thapa, 2018).

This is consistent with the findings of Lee and Jan (2019); Jeong and Kim (2020), who indicated that value perceptions directly impact tourist satisfaction. However, this study provides a nuanced view by linking affordability not just to cost but also to ethical dimensions, a linkage less explored in earlier studies.

Interestingly, the hypothesis (H4) concerning the direct relationship between AP and SDP did not meet conventional levels of significance, suggesting a complex or absent link between affordability and sustainable preferences. This indicates that while tourists appreciate affordability, this does not necessarily translate into a preference for sustainability Hall (2021), possibly due to perceived trade-offs between cost and sustainable practices or a lack of awareness about the economic benefits of sustainable tourism (Yachin and Ioannides, 2020). This finding invites a reconsideration of the simplistic linkage assumed in some studies, such as those by Jurado and Sánchez (2019), Ezennia and Hoskara (2019) who argued for a direct positive relationship between affordability and sustainable preferences. The strong influence of EM on SDP (H3) underscores the role of escapism as a significant driver for preferring sustainable destinations, likely because such destinations are perceived to offer more authentic and enriching experiences that meet tourists' escape needs (Dwyer et al., 2009; Seeler et al., 2021; Beall et al., 2021; Deb et al., 2023). This insight is crucial for destination marketers and policymakers as it highlights the importance of promoting the unique and sustainable qualities of a destination to attract tourists.

The mediation analyses (H6 and H7), substantiated by Sobel test results, reveal that SDP significantly mediates the relationships between EM, AP, and TS. This underlines that sustainable preferences are central to transforming initial motivations and perceptions into satisfying tourism experiences, corroborating the findings of Solís-Radilla et al. (2019), and Rivza et al. (2022) who emphasized the importance of sustainability attributes in enhancing tourist satisfaction.

The lack of support for the direct effect of AP on SDP, juxtaposed with the significant mediating role of SDP, suggests a more intricate decision-making process where other factors, perhaps personal values or socio-demographic characteristics, might influence sustainability preferences (Ajibade and Boateng, 2021). It also implies that, although tourists are cost-conscious, their satisfaction derives significantly from the sustainability of the travel experiences (Rahman, 2019). These observations call for further research to untangle these complex relationships and to understand better how personal and contextual factors might affect the interrelations among EM, AP, SDP, and TS in the tourism sector.

CONCLUSION

In synthesizing the research findings, the conclusion of this study significantly advances the discourse on tourist behavior by elucidating the mediating role of Sustainable Destination Preference (SDP) within the tourism industry. The study's rigorous empirical analysis offers robust support for the proposition that escapism motivation (EM) and affordability perception (AP) are critical determinants of tourist satisfaction (TS), with SDP serving as a pivotal intermediary mechanism. The robust relationship between EM and TS, alongside the substantiated mediating influence of SDP, underscores the psychological underpinnings of tourism. The study reinforces the notion that tourists are not merely passive recipients of travel experiences but are actively seeking fulfillment of deeper psychological needs.

The desire for escape is pivotal, driving tourists towards destinations that not only provide a respite from the ordinary but also resonate with broader values of sustainability. This desire, when satisfied, translates into heightened levels of satisfaction, suggesting that the fulfillment of escapism motivations is a significant contributor to the tourism experience's overall quality. Concurrently, the significant direct relationship between AP and TS affirms the enduring relevance of economic considerations in tourist behavior. The findings confirm that tourists' perceptions of value and affordability

are crucial in shaping their satisfaction. However, the nuanced non-significant direct effect of AP on SDP indicates that tourists' cost considerations do not straightforwardly predict a preference for sustainable destinations. This complexity presents a valuable insight for the industry, suggesting that while tourists are cost-conscious, their preferences for sustainability may be influenced by additional factors beyond mere affordability.

The mediating role of SDP adds a new dimension to our understanding of the tourism market. The significant mediation effects suggest that sustainability preferences can transform initial motivations and perceptions into a satisfying experience, highlighting the strategic importance of sustainability in destination marketing and management. This mediation is not just a theoretical construct but a reflection of evolving tourist values, where sustainability has become integral to the travel decision-making process. This study's findings hold critical implications for tourism practitioners. Firstly, they suggest that tapping into escapism motivations by promoting unique and authentic sustainable experiences can be a powerful marketing strategy. Secondly, they highlight the need to communicate the value proposition of sustainability more effectively, aligning it with both escapism desires and affordability considerations. Thirdly, they underscore the necessity for tourism businesses to integrate sustainability into their core offerings, not as an optional extra but as a fundamental component of the product that can drive satisfaction and loyalty. For policymakers, the results advocate for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism practices. Policymakers should encourage and facilitate the adoption of sustainable practices in tourism businesses, not only as a response to tourist demand but also as a proactive step towards ensuring the long-term viability of tourism destinations. Future research should explore the complex interplay between affordability and sustainability preferences in greater depth, potentially examining the moderating effects of demographic factors or the role of cultural differences. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insight into how these relationships evolve, particularly in response to global sustainability trends and economic fluctuations.

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