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Dr. Sara Sarwari

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Dr. Sara Sarwari
Associate Professor
Stamford University Bangladesh
sarasarwari@stamforduniversity.edu.bd

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of environmentally conscious measures implemented by hotels, along with their digital marketing strategies through social media platforms, in influencing the decision-making process of Generation Z when selecting environmentally friendly hotels. Despite significant global study on sustainability and digital engagement on consumer choices, there is little focus on how these factors affect the hospitality industry in developing countries like Bangladesh. Data were gathered from a sample of 335 generation Z consumers who provided feedback on their experiences with the hotels. 310 respondents were chosen for analysis, assessed by using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The study revealed that the adoption of sustainable management practices has a beneficial impact on Generation Z's preference towards hotels that are environmentally friendly. Social media platforms play an essential part in promoting these practices. Effective promotion of green activities through social media by hotels leads to enhanced reputation and customer retention. The study concludes that sustainable management practices and effective use of social media significantly influence Generation Z's preferences for environmentally friendly hotels, fostering brand loyalty and competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. The practical implications in this research explained that if hotels in Bangladesh applied sustainable management practices into their marketing strategies, they could attract environmentally conscious Generation Z consumers and distinguish themselves in a competitive market, thus promoting long-term loyalty and enhancing brand image through social media. Hotels should leverage social media platforms to actively communicate their sustainability efforts, engaging customers through real-time updates, influencer partnerships, and user-generated content. They should also ensure eco-friendly products and services remain affordable to broaden their appeal while maintaining a strong commitment to environmental conservation. Furthermore, hotels should emphasize transparency and accountability in their sustainability practices to build trust and foster deeper connections with Generation Z consumers.

Keywords: *Sustainable Management practices, Social Media, Generation Z, Bangladesh.*

1.0 Introduction

Hotels are receiving significant attention in the global economy. The growing awareness of their adverse environmental impacts has led to a widespread movement toward environmental consciousness, prompting hotels to adopt eco-friendly practices (Barber, 2012). By integrating sustainable management practices into their operations, hotels can gain positive publicity, achieve cost savings, and conserve resources. In recent years, the service industry has increasingly recognized the importance of sustainability (Myung et al., 2012). Within this sector, hotels have prioritized environmental practices aimed at reducing energy costs, waste, and water usage to address customers' concerns about their environmental footprint (Millar & Baloglu, 2011; Van Rheede & Blomme, 2012). Promoting sustainable management practices in the hotel and tourism industry requires the implementation and use of environmental technologies (Chan et al., 2016). These initiatives can be effectively communicated through social media, enhancing business reputation and encouraging customer engagement in sustainable practices (Gil-Soto et al., 2019). Social media platforms provide users with a virtual space for interaction and connection, making customer-generated reviews—a critical form of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)—highly influential in shaping booking decisions for hospitality products and services (Ballew et al., 2015). Hotel managers must actively communicate their sustainability initiatives while paying close attention to customer feedback regarding these practices.

Social media serves as a powerful medium for hotels to showcase their eco-friendly initiatives and motivate customers to adopt green behaviors. Despite its importance, much of the existing research has focused on guests' environmentally sustainable behaviors, particularly in relation to their ecological concerns and attitudes (Han & Hyun, 2018; Trang et al., 2018). Research indicates that hotels implementing environmentally friendly measures not only reduce their environmental impact but also attract environmentally conscious clients, particularly among younger generations (Bohdanowicz, 2006). Studies by Desai and Lele (2017) reveal that Generation Z exhibits distinct consumer preferences and values compared to previous generations. This cohort is characterized by strong moral and ethical principles and a profound sense of responsibility toward global society and the environment (Vieira et al., 2020). As the first generation of the 21st century, Generation Z has grown up in a society dominated by social media and mobile devices. They tend to select hotels, products, services, and venues based on social media content and online reviews from other guests (Piont & Pakhalov, 2021). Hence, the study was justified by the increasing significance of integrating sustainable management practices into the hospitality industry, particularly in addressing Generation Z's preferences. This demographic, recognized for its environmental awareness and reliance on digital platforms, constituted a substantial portion of the global consumer base (Vieira et al., 2020). Hotels that adopted and communicated their green initiatives effectively were likely to gain enhanced brand loyalty, cost savings, and a competitive edge in the market (Alameeri et al., 2018). The study addressed the need to explore how sustainable practices influenced the decision-making processes of Generation Z, particularly in Bangladesh, where financial and infrastructural limitations often hindered the adoption of such initiatives (Rahman & Reynolds, 2017). By investigating these dynamics, the study contributed valuable insights into how hotels could align their strategies with the values of this environmentally conscious generation. Therefore, the study examined the relationship between sustainable management practices, social media and the preferences of Generation Z in selecting environmentally friendly hotels. Specifically, it sought to identify strategies for effectively conveying sustainable practices via social media, assess the influence of social media marketing on Generation Z's decision-making process, and evaluate the impact of sustainable management practices on their hotel preferences.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

There is a research gap in examining the implementation and efficacy of sustainable practices within the hotel industry in Bangladesh. This gap primarily stemmed from obstacles such as financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of awareness, which hindered widespread adoption (Rahman & Reynolds, 2017). The study sought to address this gap by exploring the relationship between hotels' environmental practices and Generation Z's preferences, while expanding upon prior literature through an evaluation of varying degrees of environmental commitment and an empirical investigation within the context of Bangladesh. Previous research largely focused on advanced nations, leading to limited understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities in Bangladesh. The study aimed to provide strategic recommendations for hotel operators and marketers to align their offerings with the expectations and preferences of Generation Z. It also examined how tourists' experiences as users of online travel platforms influenced their preferences for environmentally friendly hotels. By addressing these aspects, the study facilitated the advancement of sustainable tourism in Bangladesh, offering insights into overcoming regional challenges and adopting sustainable practices to attract this environmentally conscious demographic. The research questions investigated the relationships between sustainable management practices, social media, and Generation Z's preferences within the hotel industry.

The findings provide significant insights for both academic study and practical applications in hospitality management:

1. What strategies could be employed to successfully convey sustainable management practices implemented in environmentally conscious hotels via social media platforms?
2. How did social media marketing influence the decision-making process of Generation Z consumers when selecting environmentally conscious hotels in Bangladesh?
3. What was the effect of sustainable management practices on Generation Z's hotel preferences?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Research on Generation Z in the Hospitality Industry

The term Generation Z is defined as a distinguishable group that shares common birth years, age location, and significant life events during important developmental phases. Dolot (2018) states that studies have proposed several ranges for the birth years of the individuals, ranging from 1995 or later to between 1995 and 2010. They comprising 32% of the global population (Stylos et al., 2021), will progressively ascend the population pyramid and eventually replace the elder generation. They are characterized by their strong adherence to moral and ethical ideals, displaying a profound feeling of duty towards the global society and the environment (Vieira et al., 2020). Compared to other generations, Generation Z is regarded as the most financially astute and budget-conscious travelers. They exhibit an intense preference towards innovation and convenience, which requires hospitality businesses to adjust their strategies in order to sustain their competitiveness. According to Monaco (2018), travel has adopted a comprehensive and intentional attitude among younger generations. More precisely, they perceive travel as a catalyst for personal growth through the exploration of unfamiliar surroundings, immersion in different cultures, and social interaction. This is evidenced by their preferences for hotel and ways of travel, which diverge from conventional tourism (Băltescu, 2019).

The hotel sector is constantly changing as a result of the advent of new trends and technology, as well as changes in social and demographic aspects. The profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel business is generally acknowledged. The pandemic has encouraged generation Z to have a greater awareness of the environment and has influenced their actions towards sustainable consumerism (Valenzuela-Fernandez et al., 2022). To address these

concerns, the industry has taken several measures, such as adopting eco-labels, implementing sustainable practices, establishing ecological management systems, and integrating sustainability into strategic plans (Abdou et al., 2020).

Hotels should prioritize not just the economic dimension, but also the social and environmental dimensions in their operations and activities in order to attain sustainability (Dodds and Kuehnel, 2010). The brand's value proposition now encompasses the hotel's endeavors in promoting environmental sustainability through its goods, services, and campaigns (Ntanos et al., 2019). Customers are increasingly looking for brands that demonstrate a commitment to numerous stakeholders and have a positive environmental image, while also providing true solutions to their demands (Goh & Jie, 2019). This is particularly accurate for Generation Z, who are not just the current but also a forward-thinking consumer group. Williams (2010) found that generation Z exhibit a higher level of environmental consciousness and responsibility compared to previous generations. This particular demographic segment highly cherishes sustainability and frequently bases their buying choices on the environmental and social accountability of hotels. The willingness to pay more for sustainable items is motivated by a want to reduce environmental damage and promote beneficial social transformation (Tan & Trang, 2023).

2.2 Research Model and Hypothesis Development

Tourism with environmentally friendly options have become increasingly significant in recent years. Increasingly environmentally aware Generation Z consumers choose hotels that adhere to processes aimed at safeguarding the environment (Han, 2021). Therefore, the implementation of sustainable management practices can serve as a successful approach for a hotel seeking to alter its position and attain competitiveness within the lodging sector (Erdem and Tetik, 2013; Gil-Soto et al., 2019). While hotels are not considered one of the pioneering businesses to embrace sustainability, researchers in the hospitality field have examined a distinct component of sustainability, namely the environmental and social dimensions (Namkung & Jang, 2016; Martínez et al., 2013). Han et al. (2010) found that a restriction encountered by travelers when selecting environmentally friendly hotels is the limited or challenging availability of information regarding such hotels. The incorporation of sustainable practices into fundamental hotel operations can enhance brand loyalty among environmentally aware consumers, as Generation Z anticipates that companies should not only focus on profitability but also assume accountability for their ecological footprint, as stated by Han, (2021). The preference of Generation Z for eco-friendly hotels is motivated by their consciousness of worldwide environmental concerns and their aspiration to endorse firms that actively contribute to beneficial environmental and social transformation (Gomes et al., 2023). Hotels have multiple benefits to adopt sustainable management practices, which include a sense of social obligation, compliance with government rules, and economic advantages (Alameeri et al., 2018). Reportedly, an increasing number of hotel chains have integrated sustainability into their corporate plans, therefore assuring the continued organic expansion of their business. According to Graci & Dodds (2008), hotels can gain a competitive edge in the hospitality business by adopting environment friendly practices. This not only helps them build a great company image but also sets them apart from competing facilities. Hotel sustainability practices, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, water conservation, and the use of eco-friendly materials, are now indispensable for attracting and retaining Generation Z customers (Abdou et al., 2020). These practices attract specific clients who prioritize environmental commitment and also give hotels a competitive advantage by reducing costs (Llach et al., 2012) and enhancing their image (Jang, 2021). According to various researchers, hotel chains and large hotels are more motivated to adopt these practices compared to small hotels. This is because they already have a higher level of environmental practices in place and therefore can

derive greater benefits from them (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2016). Although travelers expressed a preference for hotels that offered these features, and a significant number of them identified as environmentally conscious customers, they did not necessarily identify as environmentally conscious travelers. Put simply, their environmentally conscious attitudes did not always carry over to proper behavior throughout their travels (Millar & Baloglu, 2011). As hotels progressively embrace environment friendly measures, it become a potent marketing strategy on social media platforms. Environmentally aware consumers, especially generation Z, actively search for hotels that share their values. Several hotels offer their environmental data on the internet in order to meet the needs of their clients (Jenkins & Karanikola, 2014).

Generation Z primarily choose hotels for three main reasons: personal comfort and enjoyment (Miao and Wei, 2013); thorough information on the hotel company's environmental conservation efforts (Hu, 2012); and the credibility of the hotel's green initiatives (Chan, 2014; Kim and Kim, 2013). It is important to prioritize providing of precise and unambiguous information regarding environmental protection measures implemented by hotels. This should be achieved through direct and proactive communication from management to customers, particularly in situations where certain practices may negatively impact the service experience. The intended purpose of this material is to educate and inspire consumers to actively participate in the hotel's environmental initiatives by using normative reasoning (Lee et al., 2016). Indeed, apart from the internal communication within the organization, social media platforms seem to be quite beneficial. The effectiveness of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) as a marketing strategy is seen in the significant influence that comments from other users have on buying decisions made by consumers (Gil-Soto et al. 2019). The findings made by previous researchers establish the significance of how generation Z perceive the environmental information of hotels, underscoring the need to determine the most or least efficient methods and formats of communication. For instance, the findings of Millar and Baloglu (2011), derived from a demographic of guests staying at an ecologically-conscious hotel, emphasize that the most highly esteemed characteristic by customers is the accreditation of the establishment's environmental management system by a recognized certification or standard. Following this are features such as shampoo dispensers that can be refilled, light bulbs that use less energy, and rules that encourage the reuse of towels and linen.

Accordingly, the subsequent two hypotheses were proposed:

H1: *Sustainable management practices used in the environment friendly hotels better be communicated through social media.*

H3: *Generation Z prefer to select hotels that conform to sustainable management standards.*

Social media has emerged as a prominent medium for marketing and fostering customer interaction, especially among Generation Z. Intention to share information on social media can be influenced by various factors, both internal and external: the desire to conform to the majority, the perception of a large audience, emotional and informative appeal, trust in the source, and a tendency to show off oneself (Le, 2022). Within the context of corporate information-sharing behavior, the tendency of an individual to share information is bolstered by their happiness in assisting others and their confidence in their ability to convey knowledge effectively. Thus, their actual information-sharing behavior is derived from this objective (Mustika et al., 2022). Generation Z customers are significantly swayed by digital platforms when it comes to making buying choices, with the content disseminated by influencers and peers playing a pivotal impact.

The survey conducted by Kantar revealed that 44% of customers belonging to Generation Z reported encountering a new brand or hotel through social media platforms (Carlson et al., 2022). Studies indicate that social media plays a crucial role in disseminating information about sustainable practices, molding people's opinions, and impacting their buying habits (Goh et al.,

2012). Effective communication of sustainable practices by hotels through social media can establish strong relationships with Generation Z consumers, who are likely to share favorable experiences among their networks, therefore enhancing the hotel's reputation. This has a dramatic impact on the transmission of information, as the speed of processing and disseminating data and information has continuously risen to the extent that the lives of Generation Z are centered around the internet (Dolot, 2018). The increasing utilization of social media among younger age groups has prompted the search for memorable and genuine locations that evoke strong emotions and highlight the exceptional nature of the experience, especially for subsequent sharing on social media platforms (Stylos et al., 2021).

Hotels seeking to attract Gen Z consumers should give top priority to sustainability practices and utilize social media platforms to actively interact with this generation. Moreover, user-generated content (UGC) is essential in enhancing a hotel's sustainable management practices. Each social medium offers specific advantages that may not be replicated by others (Lin & Rasoolimanesh, 2022). Moreover, Celebrity influencers can direct recommendations, sharing their personal experiences, and featuring products in hotel through their presentations (Garg & Kumar, 2021). Furthermore, Generation Z, who value environmentally sustainable practices are more likely to share their favorable experiences on social media, hash tagging the hotel and enhancing its exposure among those who share similar interests. By engaging in environmental publicity on social media, the hotel enhances its reputation as a socially responsible enterprise, therefore fostering brand loyalty and consumer confidence.

Based on the previous discussion, the subsequent hypothesis was formulated:

H2: *Social media networks communicate information that enhances the hotel selection preferences of generation Z.*

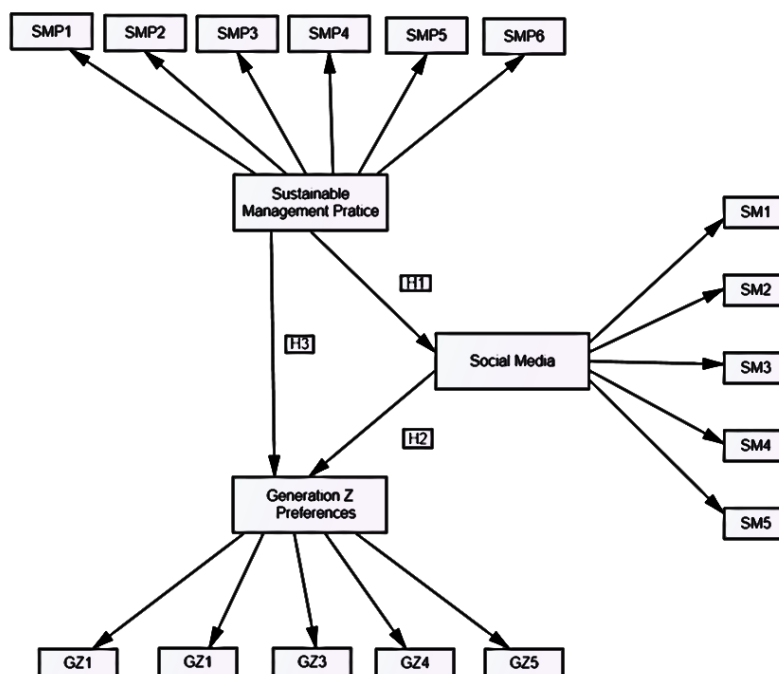


Figure 1: Proposed research model

Source(s): Author's own creation

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire Design

The items were obtained from previous research with certain modifications to conform to the particular framework of hotels in Bangladesh. To improve its overall accuracy and clarity, the questionnaire was subjected to slight modifications. Evaluation of the items was conducted using a seven-point Likert scale, with '1' indicating strongly agree and '7' indicating strongly disagree. The assessment of sustainable management practices was conducted by modifying six items derived from the research of Mutiara Lemy et al. 2019. It employed five items derived from the work of Garg and Kumar (2021) to evaluate social media performance. To assess the preference of generation Z towards selecting an environmentally friendly hotel, five items were modified from the works of Verma and Chandra, (2018) and Wu et al., (2024) (Table 1).

Table 1: Questionnaire Indicators and Sources

Construct	Measures	Source
Sustainable Management Practices	1. Hotel room used energy efficient lighting.	(Mutiara Lemy et al., 2019)
	2. Hotel maintain Low flow of water in the toilet, sink, and shower.	
	3. Installment of water saving signage (in the form of stickers, boards, etc.) around the hotel area.	
	4. Guestroom uses key card power switch thereby automatically turning off electricity when guests are not present in the room.	
	5. Hotel room has recycled bin.	
	6. In the guest bathroom, refillable soap and shampoo dispensers are used.	
Social Media	1. Social media significantly influences my choice of environment friendly hotel.	(Garg & Kumar, 2021)
	2. Transparency in a green hotel's sustainable initiatives on social media enhances consumer trust and encourages environmentally conscious booking decisions.	
	3. I trust sustainable claims made by hotels on green initiatives in social media	
	4. I am likely to share or engage with posts about a hotel's sustainable management efforts on social media.	
	5. I prioritize the promotion of environment friendly hotels by influencers I follow to a significant extent.	
Generation Z Preferences	1. I am very likely to research a environment friendly hotel's sustainable management efforts before making a booking.	(Verma and Chandra, 2018; Wu et al., 2024)
	2. Staying at a hotel with green initiatives would feel like making a good personal contribution to something better.	
	3. Choosing a hotel that offers green products and services seems like the ethically correct choice.	
	4. If I had to choose between environment friendly hotel and conventional ones, I would prefer the environment friendly one.	
	5. I expect to start/continue purchasing environment friendly hotel in the future because of their positive environmental contribution.	

Source(s): Author's own creation

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The proposed model was evaluated in this study by collecting data using a questionnaire survey from 335 customers, predominantly from the Gen Z demographic, staying at 4- and 5-star hotels and resorts in Cox’sbazar, Chattogram, Sylhet, Gazipur, and Bandarban. Data were collected from May, 2024 to July, 2024. In this study, Generation Z is conceptualized as those born between 1996 and 2010 (Monaco, 2018). Prior to conducting the final data collection, a preliminary study was carried out by distributing a total of 15 questionnaires to the twenty-five university researchers. Minimal modifications were implemented in response to suggestions derived from the findings of the pilot research. The survey evaluates the subset of Generation Z, encompassing individuals aged 18 to 27, as they are found to be more likely to independently make buying choices. Furthermore, they possess acute awareness and genuine concern for the escalating environmental issues (Paço et al., 2014). Thus, it is crucial to comprehend their perspective on sustainability practices in hotels, since this knowledge can be valuable in addressing environmental issues. The selected sample method in this study was non-probability sampling. Specifically, purposive sampling was employed, whereby respondents were selected based on their accessibility. While the results produced from the purposive sampling strategy may not be generalizable, they are nevertheless shown to be reliable in the sample of students and younger population (Cheah and Phau, 2011). All participants who willingly agreed to participate in the study were provided with a comprehensive description of the study's objectives and were assured that their remarks would be maintained in an anonymous and confidential manner. The survey was restricted to individuals born post-1995. The survey was divided into two distinct sections. The first portion collected data on the demographic attributes of the participants, whereas the next part included questions related to the topics under investigation. Among the 310 respondents of generation Z, 168 were from males and 142 were from females (**Table 2**). The remaining replies were eliminated due to either missing data in the questionnaire or inadequate completion.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Gender		Age		Education		Monthly Income (BDT)					
Freq.	%	Years	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%			
Male	168	54.19	18–22	132	42.58	High School	84	27.10	Below 25000	146	47.10
									25001–45000	96	30.97
Female	142	45.81	23–27	178	57.42	Graduate	136	43.87	45001–65000	44	14.19
									Above 65000	24	7.74
						Post Graduate	90	29.03			
Total	310	100	Total	310	100	Total	310	100	Total	310	100

Source(s): Author’s own creation

4.0 Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Reliability and Validity Test

The proposed hypotheses were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling. Confirmation of the reliability and validity of the constructs was obtained using CFA. (**Table 3**) demonstrates that both the Cronbach's alpha values and the composite reliability values exceed the minimum criterion of 0.70, therefore proving

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satisfactory measurement reliability. The calculated average variance extracted (AVE) values for the constructs and item loadings exceed 0.50, therefore confirming the convergent validity of the questionnaire (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The objective of this study was to compare the common variance among the constructs with the average variance extracted (AVE) values of the individual items. The square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeded its corresponding inter-construct correlations (refer to **Table 3 & Table 4**), which validated the discriminant validity among the constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3: The results of CFA for the measurement model

Construct	Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR
Sustainable Management Practices	SMP1	.556*	.82	.54	.82
	SMP2	.577*			
	SMP3	.667			
	SMP4	.730			
	SMP5	.751			
	SMP6	.784			
Social Media	SM1	.852	.77	.55	.79
	SM2	.738			
	SM3	.625			
	SM4	.566*			
	SM5	.528*			
Generation Z Preferences	GZ1	.543*	.78	.54	.78
	GZ2	.739			
	GZ3	.744			
	GZ4	.723			
	GZ5	.576*			

Source(s): Author's own creation

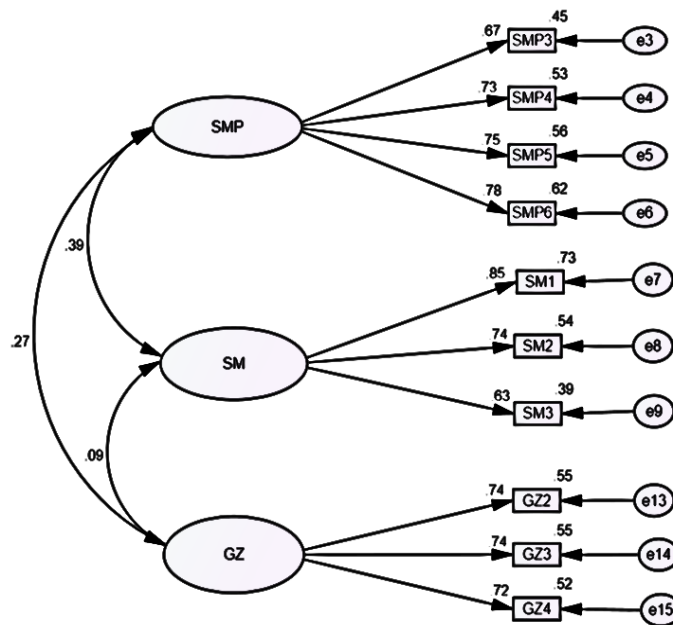


Figure 2: Measurement Model

Source(s): Author’s own creation

Table 4: The constructs' correlations

Latent Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sustainable management practice	Social media	Generation Z preferences	Note:
Sustainable management practice	6.23	.683	.734			The bold values represent the square root of AVE
Social media	6.33	.613	.392	.744		
Generation Z preferences	6.27	.638	.270	.086	.732	

represent the square root of AVE

Source(s): Author’s own creation

4.2 Structural Model

The model fit was assessed using several metrics including the X^2 statistic, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI) (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The proposed model demonstrated an overall fit. Statistical values: $X^2 = 72.203$, $df = 33$, $X^2/df = 2.188$, $CFI = 0.960$, $TLI = 0.946$, $NFI = 0.930$ and $RMSEA = 0.062$ (Hair, 2010). The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that sustainable management practices had a significant positive effect on both social media ($\beta = 0.70$, $t = 17.086$, $p < 0.01$) and generation Z preference for selecting an environmentally friendly hotel ($\beta = 0.32$, $t = 4.460$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, social media also had a positive influence on generation Z preference

for choosing an environmentally friendly hotel ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 2.938$, $p < 0.05$), so providing support for all three hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) (Table 5).

Table 5: Results of the Structural Model

Paths	Hypothesis	Standardized Estimate (β)	t values(t)	P-value (p) Significance	Hypothesis Status
Sustainable Management Practices → Social Media	H1	.70	17.086	$p < 0.01$	Supported
	H2	.14	2.938	$p < 0.05$	Supported
Social Media → Generation Z Preferences	H3	.32	4.460	$p < 0.01$	Supported
Sustainable Management Practices → Generation Z Preferences				$p < 0.01$	

Source(s): Author’s own creation

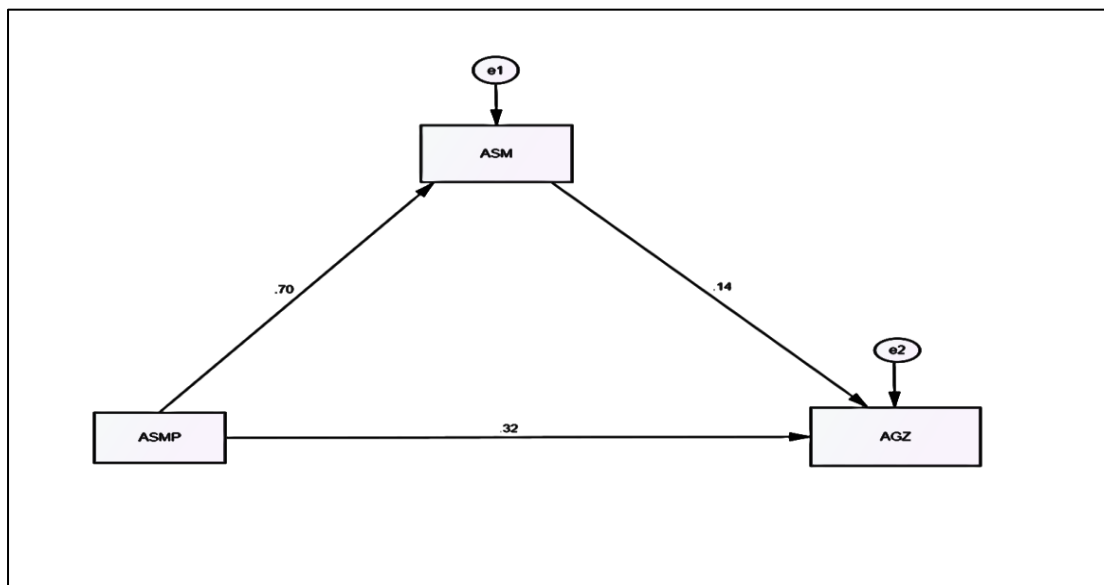


Figure 3: Research model with path coefficient

Source(s): Author’s own creation

5.0 Discussion

The research investigated the correlation between the preferences of Generation Z for environmentally friendly hotels and the significant impact of sustainable management practices. Social media was identified as the primary avenue through which this demographic evaluated and engaged with hotels. Hotels that adeptly integrated sustainability into their operations and proficiently promoted their efforts via social media platforms were more likely to attract and retain consumers from Generation Z.

The main results of the above empirical study are summarized. First and foremost, the data confirmed **hypothesis 1**, which suggested that the implementation of sustainable management practices had a beneficial impact on social media platforms, as they effectively promoted the hotel's emphasis on environmentally friendly products and services. The findings revealed that hotel marketing tactics on social media platforms placed growing emphasis on sustainable management practices, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, water conservation, and the use of renewable materials.

Social media platforms enabled hotels to publish immediate updates on their sustainability initiatives, ranging from the use of renewable energy sources to their support of local community programs. Furthermore, these platforms facilitated interactive marketing, allowing hotels to directly communicate with consumers via sustainability campaigns, hashtag challenges, and user-generated content (Sun & Xing, 2022). Failure of hotels to adequately convey their sustainable management practices on social media could result in a missed opportunity to connect with the environmentally aware generation. Given the transformation of sustainability from an exclusive concept to a basic requirement, the results revealed that hotels must not only adopt environmentally friendly practices but also ensure that these policies were clearly displayed and relied upon in the digital domain.

Secondly, the preference for environmentally conscious products among Generation Z, a digital-native generation, was significantly shaped by social media. They actively sought, shared, and assessed information about brands, including hotels, that aligned with their values of sustainability and environmental integrity (Bolton et al., 2013). The promotion of environmentally friendly activities by hotels through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok not only enhanced brand recognition but also fostered trust and active involvement among Generation Z consumers (Dewi et al., 2022). The integration of social media and sustainability in the hotel sector generated a potent marketing instrument to shape the hotel selection process of Generation Z. Using social media, hotels efficiently conveyed their sustainable initiatives, while Generation Z used these channels to assess whether the hotels fulfilled their sustainability requirements.

Furthermore, social media campaigns showcasing a hotel's environmentally friendly activities had the potential to become widely influential, thereby enhancing the hotel's exposure and attractiveness to environmentally aware customers. However, a significant obstacle encountered by hotels, especially in areas such as Bangladesh, was the constrained infrastructure and financial means to extensively adopt sustainable practices (Rahman & Reynolds, 2017). Notwithstanding these difficulties, the increasing dependence of Generation Z on social media as a way of obtaining information implied that even minor sustainable campaigns, if conveyed effectively, could exert a favorable influence on customer choices, supporting **hypothesis 2**.

Thirdly, it could be asserted that consumers from Generation Z were becoming more conscious of the need to preserve the environment and were ready to actively participate in addressing environmental issues (Wei et al., 2018). A hotel that highlighted its use of solar energy, sustainable food procurement, and environmentally friendly architectural designs attracted positive interest from Generation Z customers (Rahman & Reynolds, 2017). The study's findings indicated that the use of energy-efficient light bulbs (LED) and the installation of energy-efficient appliances in all hotel areas contributed to energy conservation, aligning with previous research in the hospitality sector (Abdou et al., 2020).

This result was consistent with the study conducted by Chan et al. (2016), which identified efficient light bulbs (LED), motion sensors, and key-card systems as the predominant

environmental technologies employed in Hong Kong hotels for energy conservation purposes. To promote widespread knowledge and understanding of sustainable development, the managers under investigation enlightened their guests about the effective environmental measures being adopted. This was done to motivate them to actively contribute to the meaningful reduction of environmental impacts. This discovery aligned with the research results of Eldemerdash & Mohamed (2013), who demonstrated that customers typically served as the primary catalysts for embracing environmentally sustainable technologies and often exerted a greater influence than any other stakeholders. Such efforts enhanced the willingness of Generation Z consumers to spend more on environmentally friendly products, thereby proving **hypothesis 3**.

6.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that sustainable management practices significantly influence social media engagement and Generation Z's preferences for eco-friendly products and services in the hotel sector. The integration of practices such as energy conservation, waste management, and the use of eco-friendly materials into hotel operations has a profound impact on the decision-making process of Generation Z. This demographic, widely recognized for its environmental awareness, actively seeks businesses that align with their values, particularly those committed to minimizing their ecological footprint. Social media was identified as a vital tool for hotels to effectively communicate their sustainability initiatives, as Generation Z heavily relies on digital platforms to evaluate and interact with brands. Features like real-time updates, influencer endorsements, and user-generated content enable hotels to showcase their environmentally friendly attributes, fostering stronger relationships with this demographic. Hotels that successfully leverage social media not only enhance their visibility but also build robust consumer trust and loyalty.

The study also acknowledges the challenges faced by hotels, particularly in developing economies like Bangladesh, where financial and infrastructural constraints limit the adoption of comprehensive sustainable practices. However, even modest achievements in sustainability, when effectively communicated through social media, can positively influence consumer perceptions and preferences. In summary, the study underscores the growing importance of sustainability in the hospitality industry, especially for attracting and retaining Generation Z consumers. Hotels that adopt and transparently promote environmentally sustainable practices are more likely to gain a competitive advantage and foster long-term customer loyalty. Future research should focus on exploring the intersection of regional challenges, sustainability strategies, and digital marketing efforts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the global and local dynamics in this sector.

7.0 Practical Implications

This research has several significant practical implications for hotels. The study recommends several practical measures for hotels to enhance their appeal to environmentally conscious consumers, particularly Generation Z. Hotels should focus on assessing and monitoring travelers' intentions to choose environmentally friendly accommodations. To stimulate guests' willingness to visit such establishments, hotels should avoid charging excessive rates for green products or confining their development to high-income markets. While Generation Z customers are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly options, their enthusiasm may diminish if the price disparity between green and conventional products is too significant (Berger, 2019). Hotels should also demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental conservation and social accountability by supporting local environmental efforts and showcasing achievements such as reduced carbon emissions (Wu et al., 2024). Social media

should be leveraged as a powerful tool for disseminating information about environmentally friendly practices, championing green initiatives, and encouraging sustainable purchasing behaviors (Sun & Xing, 2022). Hotel managers should emphasize the positive emotional experiences provided by eco-friendly accommodations and motivate Generation Z customers to share their experiences through photos, videos, and stories on social media platforms. By implementing social media and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) marketing tactics, hotels can enhance their visibility and foster favorable perceptions among environmentally aware consumers.

Furthermore, the study suggests that hotels in Bangladesh, which often engage in a limited range of green activities, should expand their initiatives and provide more comprehensive information about their sustainability efforts. Marketers should revise promotional strategies to resonate more deeply with consumer values, as suggested by Verma et al. (2019). For example, replacing the generic phrase "choose green hotels" with "choose a green hotel today; the planet will be saved tomorrow" could instill a stronger sense of environmental responsibility among guests. These measures should aim to enhance environmental awareness, cultivate a positive image of eco-friendly hotels, and encourage sustainable consumer behaviors.

8.0 Limitations and Future Research

Although this study made a distinct contribution to the existing literature on sustainable management practices in environmentally friendly hotels, it had certain shortcomings that provided opportunities for future scientific investigation. The hypothesized assumptions were tested using data exclusively obtained from four- and five-star hotels in Bangladesh. Future researchers may compile responses from a wider range of hotel categories to examine variations in findings across different types of hotels. Future studies may also consider including customers from various generations in specific empirical models to determine the responses of individuals from different generational cohorts towards environmentally sustainable business practices. The scope of this study was limited to assessing the intention of young consumers to visit environmentally friendly hotels, without evaluating their actual behavior. An analysis of actual behavior would require the collection of data over a specific time period, leaving this aspect open for further research. Given the political and climatic context of Bangladesh, it is essential to closely connect the development of environmentally friendly hotels with the country's sustainable development strategy and strongly address the environmental policies set by the government. Future studies should investigate the impact of government policies on consumer attitudes and behaviors towards environmentally friendly hotels. Considering the immense challenges posed by climate change, it is imperative for these hotels to adopt more proactive strategies to mitigate their ecological footprint. Further investigations should prioritize the examination of the impact of these measures on consumer decision-making and the financial implications associated with hotel operations. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for environmentally conscious hotels to uphold their environmental obligations while ensuring safety and cleanliness in the tourism sector.

9.0 Author Biography

Dr. Sara Sarwari (Orchid no.0000-0002-4494-8827) earned her Ph.D. in Relationship Marketing in the field of tourism and hospitality management from the Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka. Her research contributions include high-index international articles available on Google Scholar and the Clarivate Web of Science (AAS-6723-2021). She is serving as a peer reviewer for the Emerald Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights, and Journal of Tourism and Services, following an invitation.

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