

# **Investigating the drivers of hotel preferences toward minimalist hotels**

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Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration in

Tourism, Hospitality Management and Operations

Submitted to Dr. Richard Hrankai

Sau Ching Chung

1811031

Zaandam, 1 June 2022

## **Affidavit**

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background information**

In recent years, wellbeing, hospitality and travel have launched a new initiative in the industry, namely wellness tourism, which has become one of the latest trends in the world. It emphasizes consumers' consciousness of improving personal health and well-being through experience. Several organizations have transformed or started adopting their products to promote happiness (Kyracos, 2019). However, as new initiatives have also integrated the hotel industry with tourists and travelers, the concept of minimalism has also begun to be introduced as a new type of hotel.

The low-consumption lifestyle is gaining popularity year by year, especially the term minimalism, which provides an opportunity for the consumer to consider the value of things with less possession. It focuses on quality above quantity in our lives, which allows us to use it effectively and efficiently. Nevertheless, the concept of minimalism is a tool to assist human beings in finding freedom and it is more about getting rid of the excesses of life and focusing on important things rather than material possessions (Nicodemus, 2021). Multiple studies consistently show a negative correlation between satisfaction and materialism (Sirgy et al., 1998; Watson, 2021). As well as other life domains, it could have an effect upon interpersonal relationships, emotionalism and independence (Ashton & Lee, 2017; Pieters, 2013). These findings determine the important implication of minimalist backgrounds.

On the other hand, the concept of minimalism has also been integrated into market products in recent years, such as minimalist hotels. Lloyd and Pennington (2020) claim that minimalist hotels tend to satisfy people's needs with autonomy, capability, spiritual space, consciousness and positive emotions. In the hospitality industry, the minimalist hotel is one of the latest trends, especially its interior design, which emphasizes the sensation of space through colors, furniture and materials used in hotel rooms. Compared with sustainable hotels, it is advanced that the minimalist hotels underline the quality and use of the goods, while sustainable hotels emphasize minimizing the impact on the natural environment. Their value proposition is

somewhat different. However, for the purpose of developing a minimalist hotel, it also reflects social awareness, people's attitude toward life and the difference between essential and nonessential uses.

## **1.2 Rationale for the study**

Minimalism is often clarified as the process of continuously optimizing personal consumption and achieving personal growth. However, minimalism has come from a capitalist consumer society with pressure, dissatisfaction and overwork issues (Kang et al., 2021). At the same time, the value of voluntary simplicity (VS) is often compared with the minimalist concept. VS is a belief that opposes consumerism and it is similar to the minimalist ideal of merely simple living, not connected with environmentalism or a back-to-nature campaign (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002). Both concepts also focus on the product's value, instead of quantity or environmental destruction. Although minimalism is a design or style that assists people to maximum usage through the fewest and simplest dimension, voluntary simplicity is somehow about the intention of being simple in quality (Carver, 2014).

By understanding the topic, some knowledge gap that people should clarify in some critical areas and avoid misunderstanding. Ecotourism is a tourism model that is relevant to environmental education, natural-based and sustainability management (Weaver, 2001). Hence, minimalist and comprehensive styles cannot be matched in ecotourism because the minimalist approach hinders the realization of sustainability due to the tendency of maintaining the status quo, satisfying tourists and making money (Weaver, 2005). For example, in order to improve the infrastructure and create minimalist eco-tourism attractions in Taiwan, people are allowed to feed rock monkeys with fruits, but this may give priority to these iconic species while ignoring or destroying the survival characteristics of wild animals and disturbing the living environment of humans and monkeys (Starr, 2018). In contrast, the comprehensive model is oriented towards environmental awareness by conducting in an activist market, which benefits from donations and those people who are keen to participate in volunteer activities (Weaver, 2005). Besides, in the twenty-first century, the

hospitality industry not only faces the challenges of its diversified scope or size, but it also shoulders the responsibility of increasing social awareness and environmental recognition, such as overseeing the environmental commitment of hotel chains (Langgat, 2020). More and more consumers are attracted to hotels because they are willing to pay for sustainable and green practices and simple design has become a new consumer awareness in the market (Goffi & Osti, 2021). Therefore, no matter the hotel is designed with a minimalist concept or operated in a sustainable manner, its facilities are emerging in the tourism industry. Regardless of whether the environment is the main consideration for a minimalist hotel, these consumers are also the target market of the hotel, by proposing the same beliefs in holistic health and personal growth.

By fully understanding the knowledge gap, this thesis will make a new contribution in at least three ways to investigate those aspects that have not yet been studied on minimalist hotels. Firstly, this research identifies the conceptual background of minimalism and the feature in hospitality as this is the focus of further exploration. Next, it determines the distinction between minimalist hotels and other types of hotels, which accurately emphasizes the characteristics of minimalist hotels and the differences between standard hotel development. After that, this research will have in-depth recognition of the popularity and social acceptance of minimalist hotels in recent years. The assumption can emphasize the tendency of minimalist hotels in the hospitality industry.

In addressing the above-mentioned research gap, this research aims to investigate the drivers of hotel preference for minimalist hotels. To achieve the aim of the research, the objectives are:

- To understand the importance of hotel attributes associated with minimalist hotels,
- To examine the relationship between sustainability and minimalist hotel attributes, and
- To understand individual differences associated with preferences toward minimalist hotels



## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Consumer decision-making

Consumer decision-making is relevant to consumer psychology and mainly characterizes their decision for a certain object (Klein & Sharma, 2022). The object can be service, product, website and idea, thereby creating a mental-oriented connection toward consumer decision (Sharma & Klein, 2020). Besides, various decision-making methods are conducted horizontally, considering consumers follow the procedure from need identification, purchase to post-purchase, such as consumer decision-making process (Decrop, 2014). Exploring consumer purchase decisions is also beneficial for companies to capacitate their products and services to sell effectively, as the investigation is tied to the necessary knowledge about consumers. Since the consumer's final purchase is the materialization of decision-making, a distinction is then made by consumer behavior to discover consumer decision-making preferences (Decrop, 2014). Scott (1978) proposed that a consumer's behavior could be shaped by the person's subsequent behaviors and attitudes in a certain period of time. In foreseeing and describing consecutive actions, people come to prominence on their experience but they actually do not respond spontaneously or simply to past behaviors (Mehra & Singh, 2016). This is a complex process of learning from the past. Previous experience depends on many mixed factors, such factors will also influence consumers' perceptions and behaviors in the present and future time frames. Therefore, more and more studies have explored the process of self-cognition and its influence on consumer behavior to clarify the connection between consumer decision-making (Mehra & Singh, 2016).

However, the things that consumer purchased are often well-thought-out decision by their behavior, consumers choose it according to their particular needs or regard it as a decision in product determination. Human behavior is either starts with unplanned progress or no deliberate attention at all, this unconscious target search then affects consumers' thoughts, attitudes and goals without their concentration (Martin & Morich, 2011). As a result, brand reputation, its image, past performance, advertisement and sales effort are an effective way to convince consumers or obtain

their attention through psychological developments (Mehra & Singh, 2016). Besides, price represents a unique role in many product selection processes, which becomes one of the consideration factors for consumers' choice behavior. The price is universal visible when consumers obtain complete information about other product characteristics, thereby creating different perceptions for consumers (Park, 1982). Furthermore, Laplace (1974) indicated that pricing unit can be clarify to consumer buying motivation as well as the influence on the decision-making principles of housewives. Diversified brands usually set higher prices for their products to reduce purchase risk and if customers believe that there is no difference between the brands, they are usually satisfied with all brands (Laplace, 1974). Consequently, price information will also affect consumers' choices, namely their decision-making. For example, people tend to choose the lowest-priced product among various brands.

## **2.2 Factors influencing consumer preferences in choosing hotels**

With the fierce competition in the hotel industry, there are many new competitors entering the hotel market through shared online platforms in recent years and come out various challenges to the industry, such as Airbnb. The unique selling points of hotels have more significantly become their identification, considering their target market expectation and needs become their most challenging works (Kim et al., 2020). Understanding the heterogeneity of customer preferences from a marketing perspective is important for the company in order to adapt and correspond to customers' sophisticated choices (Keane & Wasi, 2013). Meanwhile, preferences toward hotel choice attributes may be linked to consumer characteristics, which are necessary information and important for hotel managers to provide the best products and services (Masiero et al., 2015). Related research found that hotel reputation, service quality, room quality, security, price, cleanliness, location and atmosphere are important factors in explaining hotel preferences (Chu & Choi, 2000; Dolnicar & Otter, 2003; Rhee & Yang, 2015). According to Kim & Perdue (2013), there are three major attributes that will affect customer choices when choosing a hotel, which are sensory (e.g. room quality and atmosphere), cognitive (e.g. price and brand reputation), and

affective (e.g. facility and comfortable) (Kim & Perdue, 2013). Román and Martín (2016) also indicated that hotel choice attributes can divide to three groups, those are cognitive (beach accessibility and food quality), affective (safety and staff friendly) and sensory (hotel decoration and ambience). Moreover, according to Wong (2024), affective attributes are defined as feelings and emotions caused by the object characteristics, that are essential for customer purchase satisfaction and evaluation as well as cognitive attributes are clarified as physical elements, which can meet customer practical needs and provide benefits. Sensory attributes are related to the primary five human senses. The perceived value of customers is determined by the senses, which in turn affects customers' choices, evaluations and purchase intentions (Kidwellet al., 2007).

On the other hand, in order to formulate effective marketing strategies and more accurately identify customer segmentation and preference characteristics, many companies have widely adopted a variety of models in the hotel industry. For example, discrete choice modeling (DCM) is a systematic method of examining alternatives from a set of given attributes (Hoyos, 2010; MacDonald, Anderson, & Verma, 2012). As well as the latent class model (LCM) is used to observe multiple variables based on discrete selection data and modeling, this is conducive to exams in the environment, entertainment, and transportation fields (Greene & Hensher, 2003; Wen & Lai, 2010). Therefore, LCM has used to apply on chain hotel websites, cultural tourists and destination segmentation in different units of the tourism and hospitality industry, such as hotels and tourist destinations (Díaz & Koutra, 2013; Okazaki, Campo, Andreu, & Romero, 2015; Pulido-Fernández & Sánchez-Rivero, 2010; Wong & Chi-Yung, 2002). As a result, there are different approaches to understand consumer preferences. For example, analyzing customer feedback through an active research stream, which is also strongly correlated with consumers preferences when describing their experiences, makes it easier and more accurate for hotels to understand their preferences and composition (Ante et al., 2022).

### **2.3 Minimalism concept in hotel**

Minimalism refers to the architecture of residence in structure and texture as defined by Strickland (2020), which began as a movement in the field of architecture and gained importance in the 20th century. The simple lines and shapes expression and minimal visibility of architecture have featured the aphorism of “Less is more”. This phase is adopted by a German-born architect Mies van der Rohe, who is an influential and iconic architect in minimalist design and was intent on the characteristics of “skin to bones” on the building through reducing the structure to transparent, elegant and firm skin Obendorf (2011). Thereby, the structure of minimalist is aimed to reduce decoration and distraction through striking a balance of inner composition and the quality of the artwork.

In people’s lives, the minimalism approach has begun to become an important phenomenon in various fields in recent years (Shoji, 2017). Through uncluttered style interior design inspired by the Japanese traditional Zen Buddhism, the minimalist movement runs counter to Japan's modern consumerism, insisting on naked nature and keeping life simple and tidy (Minerva Creative, 2019). Consequently, more and more people feel favorably disposed toward experiencing minimalism and realizing its essence simplicity, especially the young generation (Harveston, 2018). Meanwhile, the “less is more” phase has gained prominence and swept the hotel industry as a design trend, which is not only emphasizing the simplicity of use in space and objects but also promoting a sense of serenity and satisfaction in strict geometric shapes (Travel & Hospitality Awards, 2020). On the other hand, the accelerated pace of life and business makes people be under pressure in capitalist consumer societies, while minimalist design is one of the fields that can help people to aware of physical and mental wellness through their own possessions. People choose a minimalist lifestyle because they shift their attention from material wealth to a more fulfilling life, so minimalist design hotels have therefore become a gateway to achieve personal growth, such as helping people realize the loss of autonomy in the consumerist culture (Kang et al., 2021). Minimalist preference is conceptually more oriented towards valuations of a low quantity of possessions, instead of one possessions valuation (Richins, 2004).

Besides, some particular concepts about minimalism assist minimalist aesthetic design to take part in hotel design. Considering Nielsen's 10 Usability Heuristics for interaction design, aesthetic and minimalist design are one of the principles that can ensure that the focus is placed on content and visual design (PRIBEANU, 2017). By attracting attention to a few used elements and enhancing the sense of space, hotels often include concrete, natural features and glass to create a dramatic sense of simplicity in the building structure (Hunter, 2020). The shining sunlight pours into the hotel, creating a refreshing and calm atmosphere for the guests. Moreover, since minimalist design hotel has fewer furniture and decorations, this approach is cost-effective by reducing the consumption of earth resources (Hunter,2020).

Table 1 introduces some basic concepts to better understand minimalist hotels. All of these elements are usually involved in minimalist hotel design in order to show the difference compared with other types of hotels. By applying minimal color palettes, consistent shape in establishments can create amazing visual appeal or even become the object of conversation. By incorporating simple and natural clean aesthetics into the design, it effortlessly attaches the outdoor environment to the room's interior texture and structure (Hunter,2020). Therefore, the emphasis of minimalist hotels is connected with maximizing the use of space by reducing clutter and creating more spacious interiors, which is inseparable from the "less is more" phase of minimalism.

**Table 1.** Minimalist concept in hospitality

Concept	Minimalist hotel
Color selection	Soft colors and most binary color palette, such as black and white
Furniture design	Simple geometric shapes and monochromatic tones  Natural texture (e.g. greenery, wood furniture and stone flooring)
Space	Open plan, no partitions and often smart storage solutions
Quality over quantity (Less is more)	Live simple without unnecessary possessions
User experience	Keep it simple, cozy and attractive

Adopted from: Travel and Hospitality Awards (2020); Hunter (2020)

## 2.4 The connection between minimalist hotels and sustainability

Extended minimalism is usually defined as a sustainable lifestyle because its practice and mindset enable people to achieve environmental protection by reducing unnecessary consumption (Hüttel et.al., 2020). When people strive for minimalism and tend to purchase less, it assists them to know what they do buy and maintain it for as long as possible, thereby evolving environment-friendly and sustainable way while reducing consumption and waste (Harveston, 2018). Therefore, the minimalism concept has the potential to make positive impacts on the environment in a sustainable way. However, minimalism is certainly not a revolution to solve environmental destruction, but it can modify people’s perspectives through lifestyle changes and ultimately influence the market economy system to become more ecological and sustainable (Karunungan,2017).

Minimalist hotels have almost the same perception of sustainability as they can reduce the carbon footprint and the environmental impact on human beings (Harveston, 2018). To be a minimalist hotel is not only a tool to help guests in finding freedom and reduce their waste indirectly but also a way for them to reduce the consumption of fewer products, thereby reducing waste. The Sustainable Development Goals and the minimalist emphasize joint resolutions to solve different problems, they actively improve environmental conditions and reduce commodity consumption for various reasons (Zafar, 2020). There is no doubt that sustainability goals may hinder achieving the minimalist approach (Weaver, 2005). However, minimalism draws on mostly consumer-oriented motivations, values and practices in order to reconstruct the spiritual experience idea in building a sustainable lifestyle (Kang et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the composed concept of sustainable hotels and minimalist hotels is unlike. Sustainable hotels tend to advocate environmental protection by focusing on management, community and economic quality, while the design of minimalist hotels emphasizes guest experience through simple structure and texture (Abdel-Maksoud et al., 2016). In addition, sustainable hotels focus on lowering the hotel's environmental impact in the operation, but minimalist hotels pursue unique design and retain amenities while reducing clutter (TOPHOTELNEWS, 2019). Notably, sustainability is always related to the planet, profit and people, and these elements are taken as a whole (Zafer, 2020). Even though interior design is the major consideration for minimalist hotels rather than the impact on the environment, the combination of the efficiency of minimalism and the pillar of sustainability is a force that can bring tremendous changes to society.

## **2.5 Minimalist hotel trend in hospitality market**

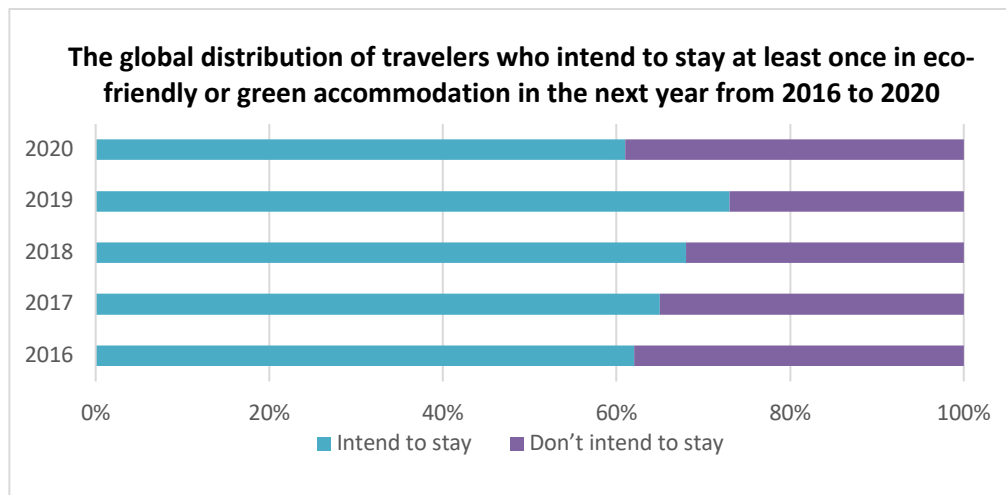
Global Greenfield investment trends are involved seven aspects, such as infrastructure, greenfield projects, tourism. According to the Tourism Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) project, the accommodation industry remains the largest subsector of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), accounting for 56.19% of all

projects in the greenfield investment trends cluster (Global FDI Greenfield Investment trends in Tourism, 2020). Compare with Eco-friendly hotels, minimalist hotels have a wide range of impacts on sustainability as well, it shifts in consumer behavior by creating a sense of calm and simplicity, which is also a factor leading to the development of more such hotels (Kang et al., 2021). Furthermore, the hotel industry is modernizing through fundamental innovation capabilities as well as its competitiveness indicates whether practices and organizational cultures are correct (Pascual-Fernández et al., 2021). If hotels aim to get ahead of their competitors and differentiate themselves in the market, adopting a culture of innovation may help them capture new market demands more effectively (Fraj et al., 2015; Hurley & Hult, 1998). Despite the hotel industry having a severe crisis of coronavirus and subsequent restrictions in 2020, consumer awareness of sustainability has increased, leading to some new benchmarks for hotel companies in the post-pandemic fallout. Consequently, the experience economy and essentialism are one of the top 10 hospitality industry trends in 2021, personalized and distinctive experiences have become new customer needs and thus minimalism indirectly revives the phrase "less is more" and becomes a new hotel trend (EHL Insights et al., n.d.). Travelers are diminishing in luxury wealth display but more partial to spend purposefully and wisely, thereby matching the minimalist hotel concept to have a positive impact on society and the environment.

Figure 1 represents an overview of global travelers' willingness for next year to stay once in eco-friendly or green accommodation from 2016 to 2020. There is 62% of people who would like to stay in these types of accommodation in 2016, which number also increases continuously every year till 2019. However, according to the data, there is a drop in 2020, the number of people who intend to stay it is decreased by 12%. These could be affected by several reasons, such as the global pandemic of Covid-19. More and more people tend to stay in hotels where have a reduced environmental impact in the process of operation and management. As a result, hotel developers are prompted to operate more in accordance with growing demand, such as minimalist hotels.



**Figure 1.** The willingness of global travelers to live in environmentally friendly or green residences at least once next year from 2016 to 2020 (Statista, 2020)



Renovations are costly and this fact often makes hotel management reluctant to strengthen the interior of its buildings for certain types of hotels, however, minimalist and natural designs are one of the hot hotel design trends in the coming years (Bradley, 2018). Minimalist hotels tend to pursue a simplistic and congenial guest experience as their philosophy, so as to get rid of any form of restraint and worries inside its building (Black & Cherrier, 2010). The refurbishment of a minimalist hotel is not difficult to some extent, its design and operation concept emphasizes the interior of the hotel. As a result, they would rather leave the essential things in a minimalist hotel than focus on a large-scale transformation (Bradley, 2018). The unique color selection and simple lines of the interior design create the cozy atmosphere of a minimalist hotel, which can give guests a homely feel but also satisfying the needs of guests. In particular, the use of personalized strategies focusing on comfort and domesticity is the latest trend in hotel design (Riewoldt, 2002). Besides, the increasing popularity of minimalism in hotels has clearly pointed out that the object is not the importance, but the experience, meaning and purpose of life (Winters, 2009). Since the well-being trend in hospitality continues to surge, hotel organizations cannot simply provide additional well-being services and expect effective competition, such as Spa (Gallan et al., 2021). Therefore, by the concept of clearing the clutter on life's path, minimalist hotels constantly enhance their popularity and extend to a bright future in the hospitality industry.

## 2.6 Hypothesis development

In hospitality industry, the success of the hotel is relevant to the efforts of brand management and the elements of service exposure consideration, which in turn have a corresponding influence on customer brand evaluation (Erkmen & Hancer, 2015). Additionally, investigating customer perspective not only helps the company gain valuable insights into the performance of their product and service but also highlights the customer experience as a way for brands to differentiate themselves from competitors. Andaji Garmaroudi et al. (2021) stated that employees' behavior and manners of the company are seen as tangible displays of belief systems that demonstrate brand credibility from customer perspective. Therefore, leveraging brand social cues can be used to improve customer evaluation of hotel brands. This research proposes that the travel preferences, loyalty intentions and customer satisfaction influence preferences toward hotel attributes. This leads to the following hypothesizes:

H1a: Service qualities influence hotel attributes.

H1b: Brand usage experiences influence hotel attributes.

H1c: Travel preferences influence hotel attributes.

Minimalist design hotels are one of the latest hotel design trends in recent years, especially in the design of implementing less possessions on the property, presenting simplistic feeling to their customers as well as satisfying customer needs (Bradley, 2018). Finding the balance between cost and benefit is very important in the hotel industry, depending on the hotel asset management and its unique selling point. Compare with standard design hotels, although minimalist design hotels have some limitations on facilities and amenities, they usually require less material and money investment. There is no doubt that it has become an advantage of minimalist design hotel marketing. Minimalist hotel design strives to be connected with simplistic, emphasizing customer experience through psychology, so thus leading to less possession of items in the hotels (Black & Cherrier, 2010). Consequently, this is a

cheaper way of furnishing and building in hospitality space as well as the cost of regular cleaning. This research proposes that by comparing customers' preferences in hotel choices, which could highlight the particular characteristic of minimalist design hotels. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2a: Customer lifestyles influence preferences for minimalist hotel attributes positively.

H2b: Customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels influence preferences for minimalist hotel attributes positively.

Mitigating the environmental impacts of products and services is one of today's social responsibilities. The hotel industry must provide eco-friendly services to meet customer needs, thereby helping hotels fulfill their social responsibilities and improve organizational reputation, performance and customer loyalty (Latif et al., 2020; Merli et al., 2019). In research from Tuan (2021), the author's study measured 84 managers and 519 employees working in hotels in Vietnam through structural equation modeling, which results demonstrated a positive behavioral relationship between green participation of customer and green service innovation of employee as well as the hotels have the motivation to promote the green information management. The green involvement of customer and green service provision have become key innovations in the hotel industry because many people tend to consume products or services that have less impact on the environment during the operation and management (Statista, 2020). Therefore, many companies must strengthen the allocation and participation of green behaviors in society and industries, minimalist design hotels help people consume and use more purposefully and wisely, thereby impacting the sustainable development goals positively. As a result, this research proposes that customer perspective will stimulate sustainability in hotels development. This leads to the following hypothesizes:

H3a: Environmentally friendly hotel practices influence minimalist hotel attributes.

H3b: Environmentally friendly hotel practices influence customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Theory development and research impact are the major consideration of research design. Theory expresses information as structure and interrelationships, which are then presented with explicit interpretation and predictive capabilities (Wacker, 2008). It provides knowledge and significance through a particular time and place and thus extracts insights and transcends a specific research context (Melnik & Handfield, 1998). Besides, there are three controversies that can drive design research impact, lack of predictive power, lack of consensus on understanding the impact of scientific design research and the subsequent confrontation about how the field should progress (Cash, 2020). However, adopting quantitative or qualitative research are usually intended to develop more in-depth research results and thus the content is influenced by the theory and practice of the research question being studied (Lo et al., 2020).

There is a total of three research methods in studies, namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed method (Strijker et al., 2020). Qualitative research is one of the alternatives methods that helps find causal processes in regression analysis (Miller, 1987). This method uses a fluid research design and holistic approach to examine the phenomena, thus resulting in rich and persuasive narratives (Polit & Beck, 2012). In contrast, quantitative research determines the relationship between variables and outcome by offering standardized experiments or questionnaires (Rutberg & Christina, 2018). A structured investigation within this research method often allows the author to exercise a greater control over the research question, variables, and environment (Rutberg & Christina, 2018). The third research type is mixed methods research, which focuses on developing a general cognition from quantitative methods and creating generalizable results from qualitative methods as well as often applies to the field of social science on useable results of interventions and policies (Strijker et al., 2020).

Moreover, this research will use a quantitative research approach to conduct investigations to gain an understanding the drivers of hotel preferences toward minimalist hotels. In order to have a specification variable and outcome on the survey, quantitative research restricts the survey and clearly gives a comprehensive data result. At the beginning of the survey, the topic and the purpose of the survey will be clarified, so as to design a questionnaire to guide the respondents to understand the concept of minimalism and help them easily answer the following questions.

### **3.2 Survey Development**

The questionnaire constructed for this research is used to further understand populace perception of minimalist hotels through their preference in the hospitality industry. The survey is also be used to find answers to research questions by testing the developed hypothesis.

In order to promote deep understanding of this topic, the survey had consisted of 38 questions divided into three parts (seven sections) to test hypotheses with data sorting and testing in the results. Two main constructs were included in the questionnaire and a total of 38 questions in the survey. 11 questions were related to minimalist hotel attributes and 18 questions were related to customer preferences toward hotel choice attributes. The remaining questions in the survey consisted of 9 demographic questions. In the first part (Section 1 and 2), the author aimed to assess the importance of people's preferences for multiple attributes when choosing a hotel. Both sections contained 9 questions each and were asked the same hotel attributes. Based on previous research (Heo & Hyun, 2015 ; Phillips et al., 2016), questions listed hotel attributes associated with different types of hotels, for example location, hotel facilities and environmental commitment. Meanwhile, there was a brief introduction to the basic concepts of minimalist hotels before Section 2. Consequently, asking participant about their preferences in two ways provided a more effective comprehension of the difference between the former and the latter (after recognizing the minimalist hotel concept). Besides, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each attitude on a 5-point Likert scale in the questionnaire (1: Not at

all important; 2: Somewhat important; 3: Important; 4: Very important; 5: Extremely important) according to their preferences when choosing a hotel.

In the second part (Section 3 to 6), the survey aimed to know the customer intentions of choosing a minimalist hotel and the influence of customer lifestyles by presenting some minimalist hotel photos around the world. There were four minimalist hotels with attributes for respondents to rate by showing the photos of each hotel. These photos showed different aspects of a minimalist hotel while responders were asked to rate attributes on a 5-point Likert scale (1: Not at all important; 2: Somewhat important; 3: Important; 4: Very important; 5: Extremely important) in terms of their importance. In order to measure and integrate respondents in a larger scope of research, the questions were also linked to some characteristics shown in the first part, such as hotel facilities. However, to avoid misunderstandings and to be fair, the photos of each hotel were also selected from the same hotel presented in the question and chosen based on the attributes. For example, if the attribute is about interior design, the question will show some photos of rooms in that hotel.

Nevertheless, customer lifestyles assessment contained the images that were adopted from Muji Hotel Japan (Hara, 2021) in section 4. Additionally, some images from The Schgaguler Hotel (Artemest, 2021) in Italy and the Amanemu Hotel in Japan (Spreckley, 2016) were presented in sections 3 and 6, which aimed to investigate customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels. Therefore, those questions were all related to respondents' psychology and emotions, such as their preference of colour pattern, simplicity sense of the hotel and texture design. Besides, in order to analyze the environmentally friendly hotel practices with regard to customer perspectives, sections 5 and 6 presented some photos from Greenhost Boutique Hotel in Indonesia (Greenhost Boutique Hotel, 2016). This is an eco-conscious boutique hotel with minimalist and modern design. Consequently, the questions were designed from an environmental perspective, such as the level of sustainability from the customer's point of view. Lastly, the third part (Section 7) was aimed at understanding the demographic information of the respondents. Questions were presented in multiple-choice format, some related to loyalty programs and typical channels for

hotel bookings, thereby providing a brief framework to understand respondents' preferences for hotel selection.

### **3.3 Data collection and analysis**

In order to obtain different people's perceptions in different cultures around the world, the survey was conducted in English and collected online through Google Form. The questionnaire link was published on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, respondents could participate in the research by clicking on the link. This survey is not limited to the background of the respondents, everyone could do it. Therefore, the author posted the survey link on social media platform, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, which could also obtain larger sample sizes and more diverse participants. Meanwhile, posting on social media was also a convenient and low-cost method to gain accurate data from international people.

In addition, it was decided to analyze the data for this research as descriptive statistics in Microsoft Excel and regression analysis in RStudio. Microsoft Excel was used to summarize the data with descriptive statistics and thus represented as tables. On the other hand, RStudio is an Integrated Development Environment (IDE), especially with R programming language in the R community, which is used to work with the open-source project while combining various R's components, such as source editing, graphics and history (Allaire, 2012). The statistic was evaluated using Regression coefficient in RStudio regarding hypothesis testing. This method can analyze if the two variables are covariant, as one variable increases, does the other variable tend to increase or decrease. The following chapter would contain tables and figures to demonstrate the data by constructing dependent and independent variables.

The questionnaire was launched online on February 7, 2022 and ended on March 7, 2022, a total of 100 responses were received. All participants were confidential and would not be shared with any other third parties. Additionally, the survey design involved forcing respondents to answer each question without exception. Therefore, it was beneficial for the author to access the data comprehensively, but respondents may be limited in answering each question.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Respondent Profile

The current chapter discusses the background of 100 respondents and the results of respondents’ travel history and hotel choosing requirements. Respondents’ demographic information and employment status are shown in Table 2 below and respondents’ preferences for travel and hotel selection are shown in Table 3.

Regarding to the age of respondents in Table 2, more than 60% are aged 24 or younger and a quarter are aged between 25 and 34, meaning 90% of participants are younger than 35. In terms of gender, 75% of respondents are female, far more than males. The majority of respondents employment status are students, with nearly 75%, and 20% of other respondents being Full-time employed.

**Table 2. Demographic information and employment status of the respondents (n=100)**

<b>Age</b>	Percentage	<b>Employment status</b>	Percentage
24 or younger	65%	Student	73%
25 - 34	25%	Self-employed	0%
35 - 44	7%	Part-time employed	4%
45 - 54	3%	Full-time employed	20%
65 or older	0%	Currently unemployed	3%
		Retired	0%
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	25%		
Female	75%		

In the remaining demographic questions in the survey, respondents were asked to express their preference for travel and hotel choices, which also included several possible answers for them to choose from. In terms of hotel choice preferences, more than 75% of participants tend to stay in a hotel 1 to 3 times a year and more than 10% stay from 4 to 6 times a year. Also, more than 75% of respondents do not participate in any hotel company’s loyalty program. However, nearly 60% of respondents



frequently book hotels using online travel agents' channels, while nearly 35% book hotels directly through hotel websites. Meanwhile, nearly 55% respondents typically book 3-star (Mid-scale) hotels for travel and nearly 40% mostly book 4-star (Upscale) hotels. Besides, in terms of travel preferences, more than 70% of respondents generally travel for leisure purposes and more than 15% are related to visiting friends or family. For their travel companion, more than 30% of respondents travel with family (including children or parents). 30% of respondents travel with friends, relatives or colleagues, while nearly 30% travel with a partner or spouse.

**Table 3.** Travel information and hotel preferences of the respondents (n=100)

<b>Number of hotel stays in a year</b>	Percentage	<b>Travel purpose</b>	Percentage
0 time	8%	Business	4%
1-3 times	78%	Leisure	71%
4-6 times	11%	Both business and leisure	9%
7-9 times	2%	Visiting friends or family	16%
10 times or more	1%		
<b>Join any loyalty program</b>		<b>Travel companion</b>	
Yes	22%	Alone	10%
No	78%	Partner or spouse	29%
		With family (including children or parents)	31%
		With friends, relatives or colleagues	30%
<b>Channels for booking</b>		<b>Hotel's service level</b>	
Hotel websites	34%	1-2 star (Economy)	7%
Online travel agents (e.g. Expedia, Booking.com)	57%	3 star (Mid-scale)	53%
Travel agents	5%	4 star (Upscale)	37%
Social media (e.g. Facebook)	4%	5 star (Luxury)	3%

## 4.2 Descriptive statistics

This part is presented descriptive statistics in the survey. The data of hotel preferences is presented in Table 4 as well as minimalist hotel preferences in Table 5. The data of those four hotels showing different minimalist hotels photo are also presented in Table 6, Table 7, Table 8 and Table 9 correspondingly. Respondents answered the following questions on a 5-point Likert scale according to the importance of the attribute to them.

In Table 4, five hotel attributes tend to be emphasized on by the response patterns to the higher rating (i.e., Important, Very important and Extremely important) from 71% to 97%. Particularly, more than 96% of respondents rated a high level on several individual attributes, such as Price (97%), Location (96%) and Online rating (96%). However, nearly 60% of respondents assess the Hotel brand as less important out of the nine factors and Eco-friendly Development is 36% of the second-lowest customer preference.

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics of hotel preferences.

Items	1 (Not at all important)	2	3 (Important)	4	5 (Extremely important)
Location	1%	5%	23%	35%	36%
Price	0%	3%	21%	30%	46%
Online rating	1%	5%	29%	47%	18%
Hotel brand	17%	42%	26%	13%	2%
Hotel facilities (e.g. restaurant, spa)	3%	19%	39%	31%	8%
Hotel brand's environmental commitment	8%	21%	41%	19%	11%
Eco-friendly Development	10%	26%	41%	13%	10%
Room amenities (e.g. coffee machine, slippers)	7%	25%	28%	25%	15%
Hotel room interior design (e.g. colour palette)	8%	23%	29%	26%	14%

Table 5 shows that seven hotel attributes have been scored on a higher level (i.e., Important, Very important and Extremely important), ranging from 73% to 96%. Three of these attributes are rated over 90% by respondents, Price (96%), location (95%) and Online Rating (94%). Nevertheless, two factors are rated as low importance, more than 50% respondents rating Hotel Brand lower than the important option, followed by Eco-friendly Development with only 67% of respondents making it a point of importance.

**Table 5.** Descriptive statistics of minimalist hotel preferences.

Items	1 (Not at all important)	2	3 (Important)	4	5 (Extremely important)
Location	1%	4%	22%	36%	37%
Price	0%	4%	22%	33%	41%
Online rating	0%	6%	33%	46%	15%
Hotel brand	13%	39%	28%	14%	6%
Hotel facilities (e.g. restaurant, spa)	2%	18%	40%	27%	13%
Hotel brand's environmental commitment	6%	17%	44%	20%	13%
Eco-friendly Development	9%	24%	32%	25%	10%
Room amenities (e.g. coffee machine, slippers)	8%	19%	29%	23%	21%
Hotel room interior design (e.g. colour palette)	6%	17%	33%	22%	22%

However, comparing the following two tables with the same hotel attributes provided, no matter the subject is either standard hotels or minimalist hotels, Price is always rated as the most important factor by participants, while Hotel brand and Eco-friendly development are often the least important among the nine hotel attributes.

Table 6 presents preferences based on the photos displayed by Hotel 1 in the survey. The majority of respondents give a high priority to the “Spacious interior design in this hotel” (90%), while around 75% of respondents rank the “The exterior design of this hotel” and “Colour pattern design” from important to extremely important.

**Table 6.** Descriptive statistics of Hotel 1 preferences.

Items	1 (Not at all important)	2	3 (Important)	4	5 (Extremely important)
The exterior design of this hotel	5%	21%	32%	26%	16%
Colour pattern design	6%	18%	37%	26%	13%
Spacious interior design in this hotel	2%	8%	31%	39%	20%

Table 7 is about the people's preferences based on the photos displayed by Hotel 2. Over 80% of respondents rated the importance of “Functionality in this hotel” as high, while “The hotel physical attractiveness” is rated close to 70%. However, less than 60% of participants agreed that “The number of furniture in this hotel room” is important.

**Table 7.** Descriptive statistics of Hotel 2 preferences.

Items	1 (Not at all important)	2	3 (Important)	4	5 (Extremely important)
The number of furniture in this hotel room.	15%	27%	39%	11%	8%
The hotel physical attractiveness.	2%	31%	37%	18%	12%
Functionality in this hotel.	2%	15%	23%	32%	28%

Table 8 represents the preferences of respondents based on the photos displayed by Hotel 3. Nearly 90% of respondents rated “Number of services or products provided” of hotel attributes as a higher important level, but only around 70% of participants prefer “The carbon footprint of this hotel” has higher importance.

**Table 8.** Descriptive statistics of Hotel 3 preferences.

Items	1 (Not at all important)	2	3 (Important)	4	5 (Extremely important)
Number of services or products provided.	2%	11%	44%	28%	15%
The carbon footprint of this hotel.	7%	24%	41%	18%	10%

Table 9 shows the preferences of respondents according to the photos displayed by Hotel 4. More than 80% of respondents rated “The sustainability level of this hotel” as a higher level of importance, followed by “The hotel texture design”. Besides, 75% of participants agreed that “A sense of simplicity in this hotel architectural structure.” is significant important in minimalist hotels.

**Table 9.** Descriptive statistics of Hotel 4 preferences.

Items	1 (Not at all important)	2	3 (Important)	4	5 (Extremely important)
A sense of simplicity in this hotel architectural structure.	6%	19%	21%	29%	25%
The hotel texture design.	6%	17%	29%	26%	22%
The sustainability level of this hotel.	3%	16%	34%	31%	16%

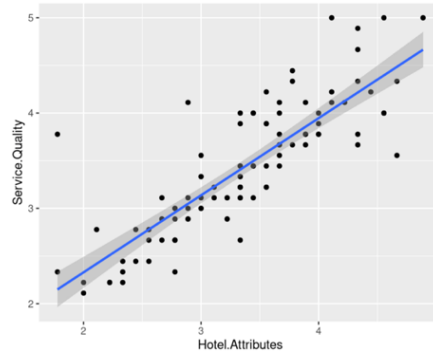
With regards to summarizing different aspects of four different minimalist hotels’, it can be observed that the importance of the hotel interior design (90%), number of service or product provided (87%), functionality (83%) and a sense of simplicity of its architectural structure (81%) are drawn more attention by respondents, all of which have achieved more than 80% of participants' preference from important to extremely important level rating.

### **4.3 Hypothesis test**

This section reports regression analysis conducted to test the proposed hypothesis in Chapter 2.6 by providing evidence. The input variable of the testing was service quality, brand usage experiences, travel preferences, customer lifestyles, customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels and environmentally friendly hotel practices. The outcome variable was hotel attributes and minimalist hotels. This research tested the extent of influence between hotel attributes and service quality, brand usage experience and travel preference, as well as between minimalist hotels attributes and customer lifestyles, customer intentions and environment attributes. There are 100 responses in total for each variable, the mean of each corresponding variable was between 1.78 to 3.41, while the standard deviation was from 0.42 to 1.07. Apart from every single variable, regarding the regression analysis result, certain variables also influenced minimalist hotel attributes in the overall hypothesis by changing most constructs. The following figures 2, figure 3, figure 4 and figure 6 represent the five accepted hypothesis with the regression line between two constructs measured with the same individual. There is a positive linear association in each figure where the value increases and is often accompanied by another value.

Each variable contains different questions from the survey. In the first hypothesis testing, two different variables are involved. The service qualities variable contains the nine items mentioned in the Minimal Hotel Attributes, another variable in H1a also includes nine Hotel Attribute items but corresponds to standard hotels. However, each of the nine hotel attributes is combined to obtain an average, thus becoming one single variable. According to Figure 2, the impact of service qualities variable on hotel attributes variable has a positive relationship with a positive coefficient (0.87793), indicating an important linear regression assumption. The higher the importance of hotel attributes, the higher service qualities. Therefore, H1a was accepted.

**Figure 2.** The regression line onto the scatter plot between service qualities and hotel attributes. (H1a)

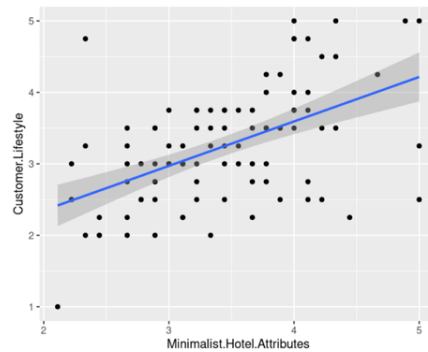


Brand usage experience is contained the question of “Have you participated in any loyalty program of any hotel companies (e.g. Hilton Honors or Marriott Bonvoy)?”. Besides, travel preference is measured by the question “What is your most common purpose of travel?” and “When you are looking for a hotel, which hotel star rating do you usually choose?”. Through different questions combination, each single variable implies the average number of the result. However, the influence of brand usage experiences variable on hotel attributes variable has a 90% significancy level in regression results (coefficient = 0.3895). Meaning that the data is too scattered, so H1b was rejected. Meanwhile, the impact of travel preference variable on hotel attributes variable also show a low significancy level at 90% (coefficient = 0.11494), thereby rejecting H1c from the regression analysis result as well.

Furthermore, customer lifestyles are included the question of “The number of furniture in this hotel room”, “The hotel physical attractiveness”, “Functionality in this hotel” and “Number of services or products provided” with using 5-point Likert scale format. This variable is calculated as the mean of the four questions. On the other hand, minimalist hotel attributes have the same variables as service qualities, it is asked after a short description of minimalist hotel concepts with text and photos. However, the analysis of the impact of customer lifestyles on minimalist hotel attributes also performs in Figure 3, the positive relationship with high significancy level at 99% indicates that minimalist hotel attributes do

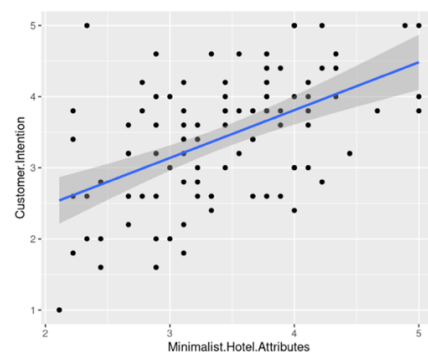
affect by the customer lifestyles in the regression assumption (coefficient = 0.54099). Therefore, H2a was accepted.

**Figure 3.** The regression line onto the scatter plot between customer lifestyles and preferences of minimalist hotel attributes. (H2a)



After that, H2b involved two variables, namely customer intentions and minimalist hotel attributes. Customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels is involved the question of “The exterior design of this hotel”, “Colour pattern design”, “Spacious interior design in this hotel”, “A sense of simplicity in this hotel architectural structure” and “The hotel texture design”. This variable is calculated as the average of the five questions as well. Figure 4 shows the customer intentions variable influences minimalist hotel attributes variable with a positive relationship and 99% high significancy level from the regression analysis result (coefficient = 0.47275). Therefore, minimalist hotel attributes are also affected by customer intentions and thus H2b was accepted.

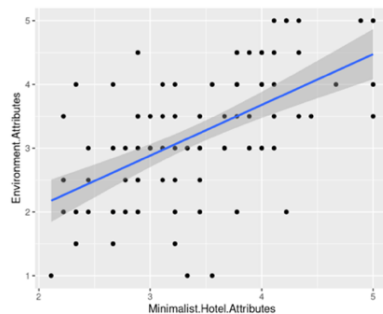
**Figure 4.** The regression line onto the scatter plot between customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels and preferences of minimalist hotel attributes. (H2b)





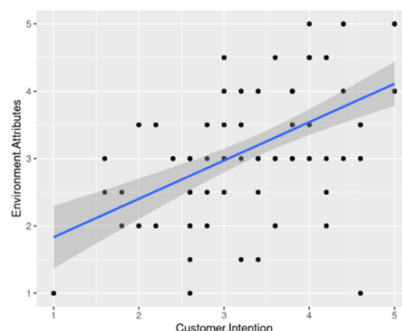
There are two variables involved in H3a, namely environment attributes and minimalist hotel attributes. Environment attributes is related to environmentally friendly hotel practices and contained the question of “The carbon footprint of this hotel” and “The sustainability level of this hotel”. This variable is calculated as the mean of the two questions. Regarding the regression analysis result in Figure 5, it shows the impact of environment attributes on minimalist hotel attributes, which have a positive relationship with high significance level at 99% (coefficient = 0.48017). Therefore, environmentally friendly hotel practices do affect minimalist hotel attributes simultaneously and thus H3a was accepted.

**Figure 5.** The regression line onto the scatter plot between preferences of minimalist hotel attributes and environmentally friendly hotel practices. (H3a)



Lastly, Figure 6 represents that the influences between the variable of environmentally friendly hotel practices and customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels with a positive relationship and a high significance level at 99% from the result (coefficient = 0.56136). Meaning that environment attributes are also affected together with customer intentions of choosing a hotel and then H3b was also accepted.

**Figure 6.** The regression line onto the scatter plot between environment attributes and customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels. (H3b)



**Table 10.** Summary statistics of hypothesis tests

Hypothesis	Regression coefficient	Hypothesis
<i>H1a: Service qualities influence hotel attributes.</i>	Intercept: 0.33777 * coefficient: 0.87793 ***	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>H1b: Brand usage experiences influence hotel attributes.</i>	Intercept: 2.6105 *** coefficient: 0.3895 *	<b>Rejected</b>
<i>H1c: Travel preferences influence hotel attributes.</i>	Intercept: 2.75874 *** coefficient: 0.11494 *	<b>Rejected</b>
<i>H2a: Customer lifestyles influence preferences for minimalist hotel attributes positively.</i>	Intercept: 1.64466 *** coefficient: 0.54099 ***	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>H2b: Customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels influence preferences for minimalist hotel attributes positively.</i>	Intercept: 1.77460 *** coefficient: 0.47275 ***	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>H3a: Environmentally friendly hotel practices influence minimalist hotel attributes.</i>	Intercept: 1.84704 *** coefficient: 0.48017 ***	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>H3b: Environmentally friendly hotel practices influence customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels.</i>	Intercept: 1.59490 *** coefficient: 0.56136 ***	<b>Accepted</b>

\*\*\*, \*\*, and \* indicate significance levels at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

## **5. Discussion and conclusions**

### **5.1 Summary of the thesis**

This research was aimed to investigate the minimalist hotel's preference drives through evaluating hotel attributes association and the relationship between sustainability toward minimalist hotels. The objectives were achieved by examining the difference and relationship between service quality, customer intentions, customer lifestyles, environment attributes, brand usage experience and travel preference.

In order to examine the difference of customer decision making in standard hotels and minimalist hotels more efficiently, the survey was designed with the same hotel choice attributes between two hotel types at the beginning. No matter what types of the hotel, location, price and online rating were the top three major consideration of respondent when choosing a hotel. According to the research by Barsky (2013), among 40,000 US, European and Asian respondents, the location was the leading factor in hotel selection as well as the price and past experience were the second and third most important considerations. In research from Dickinger and Mazanec (2008), online review, location and price had also become significant as the top three hotel attributes when choosing a hotel. Compared to the hotel choice attributes and service quality relationship, those data had a similar result, strong mutual impact and showed an upward slope on the graph. However, brand usage experiences and travel preferences had been hypothetically rejected with hotel choice attributes respecting the assessment of low coefficient number and low significancy level. It was also indicated that hotel attributes were highly important with minimalist hotels as it could greatly influence each other and thus answered the first research objectives.

In addition, minimalist hotel attributes had been assessed with customer lifestyles as well as customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels. Due to the exemplary concept in Muji Hotel Japan (Hara, 2021), which adopts a minimalist concept and features exterior and interior design, recycling policy and waste management. Therefore, regarding to hotel choice preferences, it was more effective to examine

the customer's lifestyle in terms of selection, comparison and past experience. Through the results, it also showed a mutual positive influence between minimalist hotel attributes and customer lifestyles. After that, two hotels were evaluated in the research, each representing a different objective. The Schgaguler Hotel in Italy, which pursues simplicity, essence and tranquility throughout the transparency of the high window design in the entire hotel (Messina, 2018). Another one was Amanemu Hotel in Japan, which approaches a sanctuary of restored peace through a natural hot spring ritual. The material details of its construction are executed with consistent precision and high refinement across the pavilion, wood-lined interior and refined furniture to sculpt and define the ambiance and function of the interior spaces (Bruhn, 2017). Looking into the characteristics of these hotels, this study also put more emphasis on the willingness of customers to stay in minimalist hotels. The hypothesis test results showed that there was indeed a positive association influence with minimalist hotel attributes. Meaning that customer preferences were also influenced by the minimalist hotel attributes, thus answering the second research question that individual differences are associated with preferences toward minimalist hotels.

Besides, the variable of environmentally friendly hotel practices was also investigated with the Greenhost Boutique Hotel in Indonesia. Agritecture is their main core design through minimizing any ecological impact at all stages such as procurement and operating systems by working with farming and craftsmanship under one roof (Greenhost Boutique Hotel, 2016). This hotel in particular pursues a movement of minimalism, allowing for a more effective comparison of interrelationships. The results showed that environmentally friendly hotel practices had a significant impact on the characteristics of minimalist hotels and customer intentions of staying in minimalist hotels. Therefore, it also answered the last research objective, namely that the relationship between sustainability and minimalist hotel attributes does have mutual influence, and that customers' choice intentions in hotels are also influenced by environmentally friendly hotel practices.

## **5.2 Significance of research**

The purpose of this study is to investigate hotel attributes associated with the minimalist hotel concept and how minimalist hotel attributes influence customers' decision-making of choosing a hotel. Not only the distinction of the product or company is important to demonstrate its attractiveness, but also the process of customer self-cognition influences their preferences and thus the decision-making process (Mehra & Singh, 2016). This study emphasizes customer perceptions and sustainability levels toward minimalist hotels. Through quantitative questionnaires on minimalist concepts, global data was successfully collected, providing a comprehensive understanding of customers' changing needs and preferences and their motivations for choosing a hotel.

There are two major factors that have been examined in this study, hotel choice attributes and minimalist hotel attributes. These assessments also contain six subtopics to examine, namely service quality, brand usage experiences, travel preferences, customer lifestyles, customer intentions and environmentally friendly hotel practices. Regarding the testing result, service qualities are the only element that has a great impact on minimalist hotel attributes, which also certifies that there is indeed a significant influence between them. For example, because of the minimalist concept, the hotel has a limited number of furniture and thus the service qualities are different from others, which also varies the customers' preferences for hotel choices in terms of hotel attributes. Besides, several studies have shown that a minimalism philosophy can help society, environment and economy to be more sustainable and ecological (Kang et al., 2021; Karunungan, 2017; Weave, 2005). The result also indicates that environmental attributes do influence customer intentions in a moderate way when choosing a hotel. For example, the environmental development of a hotel can affect the motivation of customers to choose the hotel. On the other hand, minimalist hotels also highlight the sustainability aspect actively by helping the guest reduce waste by providing fewer possessions in a hotel and thus improving environmental conditions and reducing commodity consumption for various reasons (Harveston, 2018; Zafer, 2020). Nevertheless, the finding also indicates that minimalist hotel attributes do have a mutual influence with

environmental attributes. Apart from the environmental aspects, individual differences have also been hypothesized in this study, which have also been clarified to two-sector, customer intentions and customer lifestyles. Due to the minimalist hotels' objectives being based on customer experience, purpose and meaning of life, the above factors allow the researcher to comprehensively investigate the association between the personal preferences of customers and minimalist hotels (Winters, 2009). According to the result, both customer preferences also have a positive impact on minimalist hotel attributes. Although the design of the hotel strives for the concept of minimalism, the lifestyles and preferences of customers are also factors that they consider, so as to operate with the characteristics of minimalist hotels and the needs of customers as the starting point and promoting the concept of minimalism at the same time. Such as providing a simple and attractive user experience through a soft colour palette in interior and furniture design, offering limited products with emphasizing on quality over quantity. Those approaches also put customer willingness at the forefront and are therefore more identifiable and appealing to target consumer groups.

At present, minimalist hotels are still a new hotspot type in the hospitality industry, this study is suggested as a reference to enhance the value, credibility and desirability of this unique concept. The overall objectives of the research were investigated with the result and most of the assumptions were accepted, the minimalist concept had a significant positive impact on hotel attributes, customer individual differences and sustainability aspects, thereby escalating the quality and future prospects of the hospitality industry. Furthermore, the philosophy of minimalism creates a findable, accessible and usable user experience in the society, economy and environment nowadays. Obviously, the expectations and perceptions of the target market are the most challenging things about this concept, especially when it comes to the customer's personal experience (Kim et al., 2020). Therefore, the construction of the minimalist hotel must be on par with the market as well as the conceptual character. The study examined similarities in hotel attributes between standard and minimalist hotels, and participants also responded positively to the characteristics asked in the

survey. Consequently, this research also represents a positive outlook for minimalist hotels in the hospitality industry from the customer perspective.

### **5.3 Managerial implications**

The study has been demonstrating those characteristics of minimalist hotel from the customer perspective. If the hotel manager implements the following recommendations based on the research investigation, it will enhance the awareness and acceptance of minimalist hotels particularly. The hotel managers can be proactive and become the mainstay, bringing a new trend of minimalism centered on the customer's lifestyle and strengthening its popularity. In recent years, consumers have become accustomed to all their material conveniences, so many businesses are still promoting materialism in the hospitality industry, which allows them to profit efficiently. On the contrary, minimalist hotels emphasize quality over quantity, which is the opposite of the current society's belief. So it may be difficult to implement nowadays as it is not broadly accepted by society. The public undergoes different service qualities in minimalist hotels through possessions, which is the transition from materialistic to minimal lifestyle. As a result, hoteliers can use results of this thesis in educating and promoting minimalist ideas to their guests, rather than catering to societal notions. For example, doorless bathrooms or low-slung furniture can maximize space and present its unique architectural aesthetic with a minimalism style. Aiming to allow guests to experience in a minimalist hotel as well as its belief in lifestyle, and then realize it physically and mentally. For example, promoting "Minimalist hotels provide a room for discretion and focus on intrinsic value to discover that their well-being is no longer dependent on material things."

Regarding the result, the spacious interior design and the hotel functionality emerged as the top concerns for participants in minimalist hotel attributes as well as location, price and online rating are the top concerned among customer decision-making of minimalist hotels. Therefore, if the hotel underlines the business beliefs to the guests, such as concept implementation and design background, then customer expectation and cognitive will be simultaneously affected. Improving the efficiency of business operations is also possible when hotels are on the proactive side and customers are

reactive side, especially minimalist hotels currently still require a strong character in the industry and society.

#### **5.4 Limitation**

The study also contained some limitations, which prevented it from being able to depict a complete picture of the minimalist hotel industry. This research assesses the minimalist concept in terms of customer perspective, the data must be as diverse as possible to spot the trend in the hospitality industry. However, the data collection acknowledged differences in the age and characteristics of the participants, with 73% of respondents being students and 90% being 34 years old or younger. Therefore, this study could not present data source diversity comprehensively. Furthermore, there are different types of minimalist hotels in the hospitality industry, those also operate with another concept in the business, such as whether the priority in hotel design is luxury or functionality. Most of the hotels surveyed involved minimalist concepts, but some were also related to their own design philosophies or environmental concerns. As such, it limits this research subject that only pre-emphasizes the concept of minimalism. Therefore, this approach undermines the importance of researching minimalist hotel trends in the hospitality industry in the study, which cannot primarily highlight differences in the concept of minimalism.

Nevertheless, it is unable to assess all minimalist hotel attributes in the study through the hypothesis while there was only generally mentioned the environmental aspect and some minimalist hotel attributes, instead of the specific minimalist hotel characteristic, such as space and furniture design. Besides, this study mentioned some minimalist hotels example by showing photos, which may also have influenced participants' choices. The photos and example hotels shown were randomly selected by the researcher and thus they may not fully represent hotel preferences of the population with regards to influential hotel attributes. Future research would be recommended to find minimalist hotel information that is popular or unique in the hospitality market, making it easier to generate participant acknowledgment and increase the credibility of the study.



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## **Appendix**

### **Questionnaire**

Dear participant,

I am Cheryl and currently writing my bachelor thesis at the Modul University Vienna. My thesis aims to examine the trend of minimalist hotels in recent years from the perspective of customers.

The survey will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes. It is my pleasure to have you participating in this survey. Your participation will help to provide insights into the consumer preferences toward minimalist hotels. All responses will remain confidential and will not be shared with any other third parties.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire for my research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Chung

1811031@modul.ac.at

**Part 1**

**Section 1**

**The following statements are about your preferences when choosing a hotel. Please rate the importance of these factors on a scale of 1-5.**

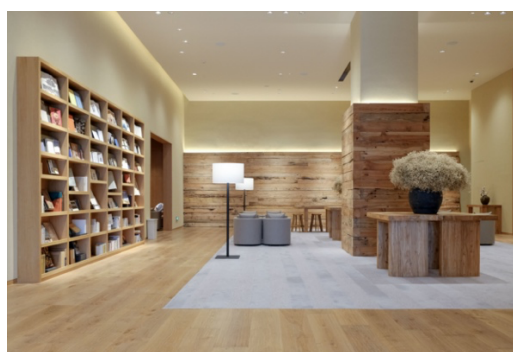
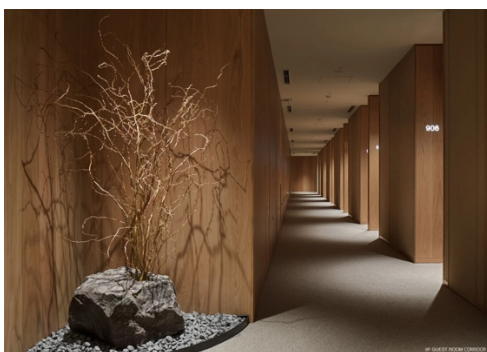
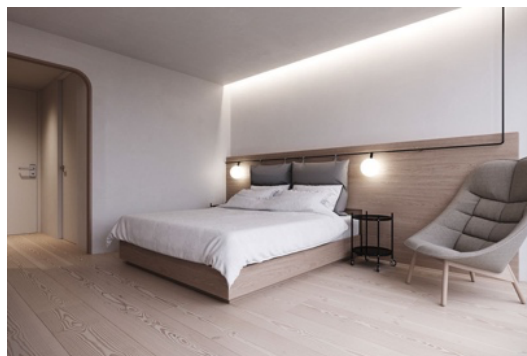
**(1: Not at all important; 2: Somewhat important; 3: Important; 4: Very important; 5: Extremely important)**

	Not at all important	←		→	Extremely important
Location	1	2	3	4	5
Price	1	2	3	4	5
Online ratings	1	2	3	4	5
Room amenities (e.g. towels, slippers)	1	2	3	4	5
Hotel room interior design (e.g. colour palette)	1	2	3	4	5
Hotel facilities (e.g. restaurant, parking area)	1	2	3	4	5
Hotel brand's environmental commitment	1	2	3	4	5
Hotel brand	1	2	3	4	5
Eco-friendly design	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 2**

**Minimalist hotels emphasize quality over quantity and reduce clutter through colour selections, furniture design and user experience, thereby creating more spacious interiors.**

**The following photos show some examples of different minimalist hotels. Its design emphasizes natural wood textures and uses a simple grey and white colour palette to provide a simple vibe. There is also very little furniture in the room, giving guests a sense of spaciousness.**



**Please rate the below attributes on a scale of 1-5 in terms of their importance for you.**

**(1: Not at all important; 2: Somewhat important; 3: Important; 4: Very important; 5: Extremely important)**

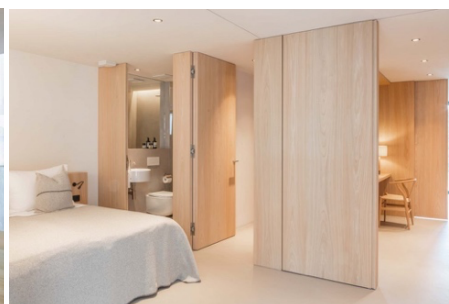
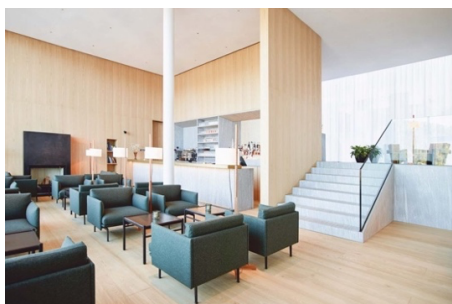
	Not at all important	←	→	Extremely important
Location	1	2	3	4 5
Price	1	2	3	4 5
Online ratings	1	2	3	4 5
Room amenities (e.g. towels, slippers)	1	2	3	4 5
Hotel room interior design (e.g. colour palette)	1	2	3	4 5
Hotel facilities (e.g. restaurant, parking area)	1	2	3	4 5
Hotel brand's environmental commitment	1	2	3	4 5
Hotel brand	1	2	3	4 5
Eco-friendly design	1	2	3	4 5

**Part 2**

**Section 3**

**The following photos show different aspects of a minimalist hotel. Based on the photo, please rate the below attributes on a scale of 1-5 in terms of their importance for you.**

**Hotel 1**



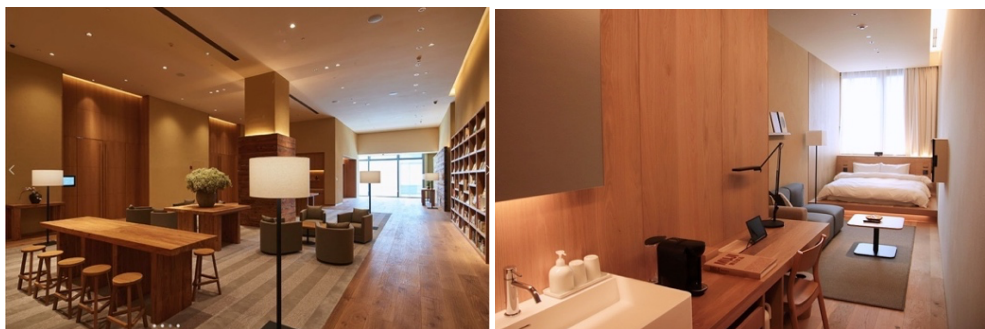
**(1: Not at all important; 2: Somewhat important; 3: Important; 4: Very important; 5: Extremely important)**

	Not at all important	←		→	Extremely important
The exterior design of this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
Colour pattern design.	1	2	3	4	5
Spacious interior design in this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 4**

**The following photos show different aspects of a minimalist hotel. Based on the photo, please rate the below attributes on a scale of 1-5 in terms of their importance for you.**

**Hotel 2**



**(1: Not at all important; 2: Somewhat important; 3: Important; 4: Very important; 5: Extremely important)**

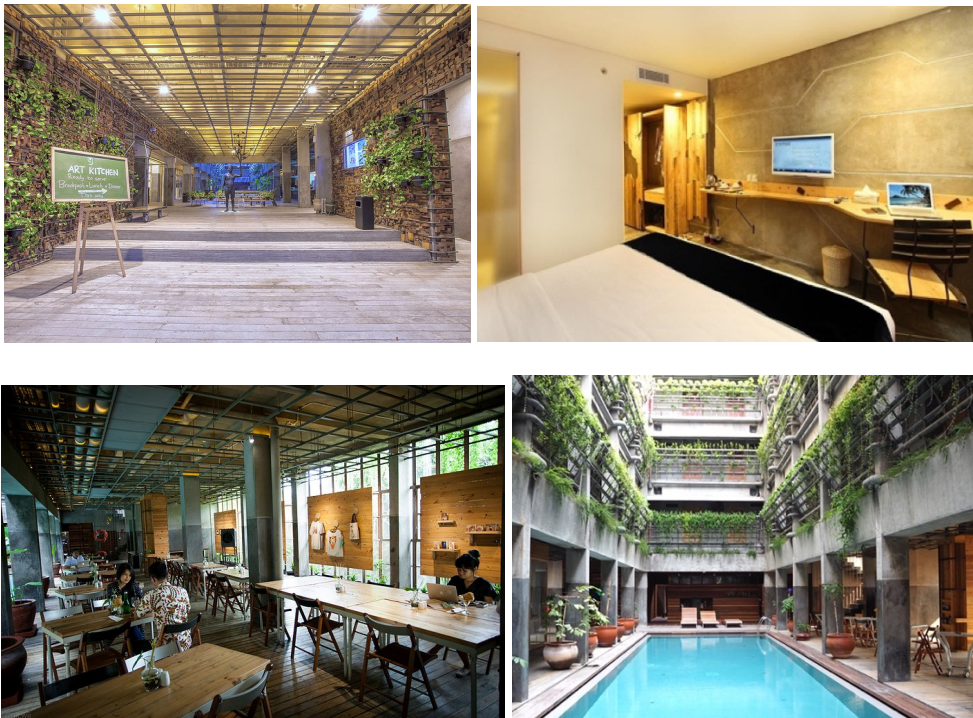
	Not at all important	←		→	Extremely important
The number of furniture in this hotel room.	1	2	3	4	5
The hotel physical attractiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
Functionality in this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5



**Section 5**

**The following photos show different aspects of a minimalist hotel. Based on the photo, please rate the below attributes on a scale of 1-5 in terms of their importance for you.**

**Hotel 3**



**(1: Not at all important; 2: Somewhat important; 3: Important; 4: Very important; 5: Extremely important)**

	Not at all important	←		→	Extremely important
Number of services or products provided.	1	2	3	4	5
The carbon footprint of this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 6**

**The following photos show different aspects of a minimalist hotel. Based on the photo, please rate the below attributes on a scale of 1-5 in terms of their importance for you.**

**Hotel 4**



**1: Not at all important; 2: Somewhat important; 3: Important; 4: Very important; 5: Extremely important)**

	Not at all important	←	→	Extremely important
A sense of simplicity in this hotel architectural structure.	1	2	3	4 5
The hotel texture design.	1	2	3	4 5
The sustainability level of this hotel.	1	2	3	4 5

**Part 3**

**Section 7**

**Personal information**

1. What is your age?
  - 24 or younger
  - 25-34
  - 35-44
  - 45-54
  - 55-64
  - 65 or older
  
2. What gender are you?
  - Male
  - Female
  
3. What gender are you?
  - Student
  - Self-employed
  - Part-time employed
  - Full-time employed
  - Currently unemployed
  - Retired
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How often do you stay in a hotel room in a year?
  - 0 time
  - 1-3 times
  - 4-6 times
  - 7-9 times
  - 10 times or more

5. Have you participated in any loyalty program of any hotel companies (e.g. Hilton Honors or Marriott Bonvoy)?
- Yes
  - No
6. What is your most common purpose of travel?
- Business
  - Leisure
  - Both business and leisure
  - Visiting friends or family
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. When you travel, with whom do you typically travel?
- Alone
  - Partner or spouse
  - With family (including children or parents)
  - With friends, relatives or colleagues
8. What channel do you use most frequently for hotel booking?
- Hotel websites
  - Online travel agents (e.g. Expedia, Booking.com)
  - Travel agencies
  - Social media (e.g. Facebook)
9. When you are looking for a hotel, which hotel star rating do you usually choose?
- 1 -2 star (Economy)
  - 3 star (Mid-scale)
  - 4 star (Upscale)
  - 5 star (Luxury)

***Thank you for your participation!***