



Impact Of Green Destination Brand Experience on Tourist Economic and Behavioral Outcomes: The Moderating Role of Green Innovation in Urban Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Emerging trends on experiential value and climate change have led to a new kind of competition between tourism destinations in modern markets. This study examines the impact of green destination brand experience on tourist economic and behavioral outcomes, while assessing the moderating role of green innovation in the context of urban tourism to evaluate whether these relationships vary under certain conditions. Data were gathered by a structured questionnaire through online platforms, from young tourists who had visited major metropolitan cities of Pakistan in the last year, with 325 usable questionnaires retained for analysis. Data were analyzed using SPSS 24 for preliminary analysis, AMOS 24 for confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling, and Hayes PROCESS Model 1 to assess moderation. The results indicate strong positive implications of green destination brand experience on willingness to pay a price premium and green word of mouth. This means that fruitful green destination experiences can provide economic dividends and positive spillover behavioral advocacy. In addition, with visible green innovation supporting positive experiences, tourist are more willing to pay higher prices for their experiences as a consequence of the stronger association between green destination experience and willingness to pay a price premium. In addition, green innovation does not show moderating effect on green WOM. This study extends the literature on destination branding and sustainable tourism by showing that experience driven outcomes differ depending on environmental conditions. Practical implications are emphasized for integrating experiential design with green innovation into the destination competitiveness of urban tourism.

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1. Introduction

Tourism industry is known for its role in driving the global economy; contributing significantly to GDP, jobs and cross cultural interactions (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2024). Latest projections suggest tourism accounts for more than 10% of global GDP and provides more than 330 million jobs, playing a significant role in driving global economic growth. Additionally, international tourist arrivals have exceeded pre-pandemic levels, signifying a robust recovery and a growing appetite for tourism experiences. It is estimated to reach around USD 12.3 trillion by 2032, with key emerging trends including digitalization, sustainability, and personalized experiences (Pakistan Business Council, 2025). This is particularly true for emerging tourism destinations like Pakistan. Pakistan is increasingly recognized as a potential tourism destination with its varied scenery, cultural relics and infrastructure development. Tourism accounted for nearly USD 19.8 billion (5.8% of GDP) and millions of jobs, suggesting its increasing economic importance (Green Tourism, 2025). Additionally, recent efforts in policy reform, online initiatives, and enhanced security measures have led to a revival in tourism (Pakistan Business Council, 2025). Specifically, urban tourism in Pakistan (primarily in large cities and provincial capitals) provides a vibrant milieu for tourists to engage with various cultural, social and service factors, enhancing the dynamics of tourism.

In the current era, where everything is experienced. Tourism is no longer merely about service consumption, it has evolved into an experiential industry. Tourism consumption is shifting away from transactional interactions to focusing on tourists' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses, which play a key role in determining their response to host destinations (Junaid et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2024). This focus on the experiential incorporates sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral interactions and creates perceptions as well as evaluations of destinations (Torres-Moraga & Barra, 2023). As a result, destinations are now viewed as brands offering comprehensive experiences to tourists, making destination brand experience a critical factor in shaping tourists' perceptions and behaviors. In parallel, sustainability has become a pivotal issue in today's tourism industry due to rising environmental consciousness and acknowledgement of tourism's environmental and social footprint. This transition has affected tourist demands for sustainable tourism choices, with global data showing that a significant number of tourists increasingly value sustainability. A recent survey reveals that 84% of travelers prioritize sustainable travel, demonstrating a trend towards more ecologically responsible travel (Giacomo Piva, 2023; Statista Research Department, 2024). Moreover, an increasing number of tourists are now considering the impacts of tourism on local communities and the environment, reflecting a broader recognition of sustainability that goes beyond environmental considerations. This shift is in line with global sustainability goals, such as "Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)", which focuses on sustainable use of natural resources and consumption patterns within different sectors, including tourism (Adnan, Rashed, & Ali, 2025; United Nations, 2015). As a result, tourists have gained expectations for this industry to less environmental impact.

Brand experience has become a focus within tourism and branding research due to the fact that today's tourists expect more than just efficient service delivery from tourism destinations they visit (Chhabra et al., 2025). In recent studies, along with other industries, tourism research has also developed increasing attention to green destination perceptions. Studies of green destination brands suggest destinations that market environmental values and practices may strengthen their image differentiation and brand positioning (Insch, 2011). Likewise, the use of green marketing tactics in sustainable tourism destinations may increase green consumption intentions, satisfaction, and WOM effects (Akram et al., 2024). Also, immersive digital experiences can promote attachments towards green destination brands (Huang & Liu, 2021). In sustainability-focused hospitality studies, there have been reported associations between positive evaluations and premium price willingness (Yang et al., 2024).

Yet, few studies have examined these relationships in the context of destination branding in urban tourism. Recent tourism research shows that technology and innovation can enhance the tourist experience and enhance destination competitiveness (Chhabra et al., 2025). These trends suggest that destination brand experience can be extended towards a green destination brand experience paradigm. The present study is extending the current knowledge of literature to green destination experience by examining how it destinations in terms of sustainability can lead towards premium packages and green WOM in the conditional role of green innovation in urban settings of Pakistan. This research contributes to both theoretical and practical knowledge by building on existing literature on destination experience. This sheds light on whether green innovative practices influence the role of destination experiences on tourist outcomes. This extends further insight into the interplay between perceptions of sustainability and branding in urban tourism. Pragmatically, the research may help destination managers, urban planners and marketers create unique destination experiences in coordination with green practices that enhance destination competitiveness and word-of-mouth. The structure of the present study is as follows. Following the background notes in the introduction, the literature review and the hypotheses are discussed. Following this, the methodology section describes the research design, sampling methods, scales and methods used for empirical analysis. The next section presents the findings on the measurement model, structural relationships (hypothesis testing), and moderation. Finally, the discussion section outlines the key results, clarifies the theoretical and practical implications, initially points out the limitations of the study, and finally, offers suggestions for future research in the area of destination branding, sustainable tourism, and tourist behavioral consequences.

1.1. Research Background and Hypothesis

In recent years, tourism markets have shifted towards an experience economy, necessitating new ways for destinations to compete based on memorable experiences rather than just physical assets or services. Modern tourists expect emotional resonance, credibility, personalization, and user engagement during their trips, which has led to a strong emphasis on experience as a key element of destination competitiveness (Chhabra et al., 2025). In addition, with growing environmental concerns, there has been an increased focus on sustainable tourism decision making and green destination strategies (Yang et al., 2024). In this dynamic environment, destination brand experience can serve as a helpful perspective to guide our understanding of tourists' interpretations and assessments of destinations as brands. To extend the literature, destinations in terms of pro-environmental behaviors can gain more attention. In line with this, this section explores the theoretical underpinnings of destination brand experience and proposes the links between variables in this study.

2. Theoretical Background

The present study is grounded within "Experience Economy Theory", which suggests that modern consumers are not only buying products and consuming services, but also experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Increasingly competitive markets prompt firms to differentiate themselves by offering experiences that define experiences as a value for the consumer. This approach is relevant to tourism as tourists do not travel for utilitarian reasons. Visitors seek pleasure, novelty, learning, escape, and connectedness to places. As such, destinations that offer more experiential value and memorable experiences might lead to greater value perceptions and post-trip reactions. Further, Bernd (1999); Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) defined brand experience as consumers' personal responses to brand-related stimuli, including sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral aspects.. Tourism destinations are assessed by interactions with cultural, environmental, human, physical, and symbolic elements. Chhabra et al. (2025) observed that contemporary tourism has evolved from the consumption of travel to the consumption of experiences; that is, tourists expect to create memorable experiences in their destinations. This implies that

destinations can be branded and their value is shaped by experiences rather than mass communication.

Experience theory can also help to explain post-consumption economic and behavioral effects. Favorable experiences may enhance value perceptions, foster emotional engagement and lower price sensitivities, leading to premium price perceptions. In other service industries, positive brand experiences have been demonstrated to affect consumers' readiness for the premium prices (Farzin et al., 2023). Likewise, in some cases, positive experiences inspire a consumer to share positive perceptions via word-of-mouth or e-recommendations. In addition, green innovation may also influence tourists' perceptions of destination experiences. When tourists can see or sense green innovation efforts in a destination, the experiential value produced may be enhanced. Therefore, the combination of destination brand experience and green innovation represents a relevant framework to understand current tourist behaviors in urban destinations. In tourism settings, visitors evaluate destinations based on the extent to which they experience enjoyment, education, aesthetic, and escapist experiences, setting the experience at the core of competitive advantage. Recent research has shown that enhanced experiential encounters have positive effects on tourist satisfaction, emotional connection, and post-trip responses. In glamping tourism research showed the positive impact of aesthetic, educational, and escapist experiences on tourists' wellbeing and loyalty intentions (Aslan & Bekar, 2026; Junaid et al., 2024). Similarly, heritage tourism found that entertainment, esthetics, education and escapism positively influence tourist satisfaction with the overall attitude towards the destination (Zhu et al., 2025).

The value of experience economy has become more pronounced in an era when technological innovation is infused in tourism experiences. Digital technologies, interactive services, and augmented reality help destinations offer a more personalized and immersive experience and enhance tourists' cognitive and emotional experiences. Experiences integrated with technology enhance satisfaction, enhance memory formation, and make the tourism offering more attractive (Lee, Zhang, & Au, 2025; Urul & Holmes, 2025). In the context of cities whole as destinations, where tourists are exposed to a variety of cultural, social, and sensory cues the destination brand experience may therefore be a key driver of these outcomes. Destinations offering unique and unforgettable experiences are likely to be viewed as valuable, leading to greater persuasion for a higher price, and motivating positive word-of-mouth. With this in mind, this study takes a lens of experience economy approach to understand the links between green destination brand experience and tourism economic and behavioral outcomes.

2.1. Green Destination Brand Experience

Early work in the "experience economy" argued that offerings become more valued as they shift from products and services to staged "experiences". Although goods and services are "external to the buyer", experiences are inherently personal that existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Brand Experience measures consumers' responses to brand interactions consisting of sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral reactions (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). Barnes, Mattsson and Sørensen (2014) expanded the concept of brand experience in tourism destinations, building on the conceptualization created by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) and subsequently used by Kumar and Kaushik (2018). Therefore, the four experiential dimensions should be sensory, emotive, behavioral, and intellectual responses (Cetin et al., 2019; Torres-Moraga et al., 2021). Destination brand experience is an important concept in tourism studies because today's tourists assess destinations based on their experiences, not just images. Much of the previous research on destinations focused on cognitive image, perceived quality and satisfaction.

However, recent research proposes that tourists want to visit destinations that can provide enriched, emotional and meaningful experiences. This aligns with the rise of experiential consumption, where the value is delivered through experience, immersion, and interaction with the environment, rather than solely functional features (Chhabra et al., 2025). Destinations are thus no longer just places, but are seen as brands with multiple touchpoints for visitors to interact with. Today's branding studies acknowledge loyalty towards eco-friendly brands is built on symbolic messages, as well as experiential encounters. In the case of green consumption, brand encounters may stimulate more trust and loyalty, given that people assess environmental claims through their own observations and experiences, not simply through advertising and marketing communications (Hue, 2024). This view echoes the role of the behavioral, emotional and sensual in creating positive attitudes toward sustainability oriented brands. This form of thinking is extremely applicable to tourism destinations, where tourists evaluate sustainability based on actual experience with urban transport infrastructure, cleanliness, city greening, parks, and sustainable offering for visitors. Once sustainability is apparent to visitors over these destination touchpoints, visitors' experiences may take on additional symbolic and emotional significance. Therefore, this study conceptualized the notion of destination brand experience as a green destination brand experience, in which purposeful branding experiences are enhanced by trusted sustainable practices and visible green innovation.

Destinations that visitors consider to be authentic, exciting, emotionally fulfilling and a stress-free environment may secure a competitive advantage over their physical counterparts. As such, favorable experiences can potentially become a point of parity and consumer preference. Customers who enjoy superior experiences often indicate higher readiness for greater price and have higher intention to promote a positive perception (Farzin et al., 2023). The importance of designing service environments to evoke positive post-consumption reactions. A recent study in Pakistan's mega malls found service design to have a positive influence on customer experience, which in turn positively affected intentions to return and stay longer in the consumption environment (Junaid et al., 2024). As such, the present study suggests that green destination brand experience is a precursor of tourists' willingness to pay a premium price and green word-of-mouth. When tourism experiences are meaningful with eco-friendly efforts, it is more likely to foster positive perceptions and psychological attachment that helps in distinguishing destinations to enhance their positioning in the market.

2.2. Green Destination Brand Experience and Willingness to Pay a Price Premium

In light of literature, WPP is based on a tourist's willingness to pay for a product/service/experience that is perceived to be superior, unique or of greater value than other comparable offerings. In the tourism industry, WPP is crucial as destinations typically offer intangible and experiential value rather than tangible goods. Earlier studies suggest tourists are more likely to pay premium prices when they feel the value, satisfaction and experience with service are higher (Yang et al., 2024). Similarly, positive destination attitudes through positive tourism experiences may increase perceived value perceptions and willingness to pay extra amounts when making travel-related choices (Cavalcante, Coelho, & Bairrada, 2025). As such, destinations which offer superior experiences might increase chances to transfer for readiness to pay a price premium. Academic literature on branding typically infers experiences as a potential source of value creation in economies. If a brand appeals to consumers by providing positive experiences, emotional engagement, and memorable interactions, this can enhance the desirability of purchasing the offer at a higher price. Farzin et al. (2023) found that a positive brand experience increases consumers' willingness to pay higher prices for products and services in competitive environments. This is especially important in tourism, given that destinations (e.g., brands) are assessed via experiential consumption. A destination offering interesting and memorable experiences could be valued as more valuable than another destination offering the same services.

Breakthroughs in city branding also show that city experiences that are both emotionally appealing and memorable lead to a stronger positive reaction towards urban destinations, including place attachment among visitors and positive intention to engage with a city (Ghorbanzadeh, 2024). Based on the above arguments, this study proposed a direct hypothesis;

H1: Green destination brand experiences positively influence willingness to pay a price premium.

2.3. Green Destination Brand Experience and Green WOM

WOM is still a critical outcome in tourism because destination decisions can be influenced by information communicated via social and online communities. Tourism is a high-involvement purchase decision, where uncertainty, risk, and expectations for future satisfaction are involved. Positive WOM communication from previous tourists can enhance destination credibility and visibility, and more effectively impact tourism intentions than many other marketing communication methods (Karim, Rabiul, & Arfat, 2024). Since green destination brand experience refers to tourists' psychological response to stimuli associated with a destination. These can be sensory, emotional, cognitive, or behavioral. Positive experiences tend to result in tourists' positive recollection and perception of the destination. Previous evidence from city branding shows that memorable experiences play an important role in improving relational outcomes and that affection toward the destination is positively related to recommendations and advocacy (Ghorbanzadeh, 2024). Green WOM has gained attention as a significant type of consumer advocacy in sustainable tourism, as it expresses tourists' intent to advocate for green destinations, services, or brands to others. It is also a cost effective promotional vehicle for tourists to voluntarily share positive sustainability messages within their social circles. In terms of behavior, green WOM is typically triggered when visitors feel genuine, environmentally responsible, and enriching experiences at the destination. Tourists who perceive green practices (e.g., waste management, energy conservation and sustainable resource use) are more likely to extend positive reviews to others. Therefore, green WOM is an important post-consumption outcome that bridges tourists' experiences with destination competitiveness and sustainable tourism growth (Tao et al., 2024). The recent tourism literature offers evidence for the value of sustainable perceptions in the creation of positive tourist responses for economic and other strategic objectives. Visitors' attachment, memory, and positive evaluation of destinations can increase due to good sustainability perceptions (Cavalcante, Coelho, & Bairrada, 2025). Similarly, research in sustainable hospitality environments suggests that sustainable practices increase customer satisfaction and pro-environmental consumer behavior (Yang et al., 2024). Tourist perceptions of a destination associated with memorable experiences and positive green meanings are likely to promote positive word-of-mouth advocacy. According to the above, the following hypothesis is proposed;

H2: Destination Brand Experience positively influences Green WOM.

2.4. Moderating Role of Green Innovation

Considering the growing trend of research in tourism and destination marketing, this involves the integration of sustainable service processes, technologies, and services to enhance both environmental outcomes and customer experience (Hu, Dang-Van, & Wang, 2025). Green service innovation can go beyond being an operational practice; it can influence tourists' assessments and reactions to destination experiences. In this sense, it can potentially function as a moderator to enhance the benefits of destination brand experience. Destination brand experience is based on the sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions of tourists derived from experiences with a destination. Good experiences can lead to positive evaluations, but the size of the effect may be moderated by other cues of value. Green service innovation may provide such a signal, as it may convey to tourists that a destination is

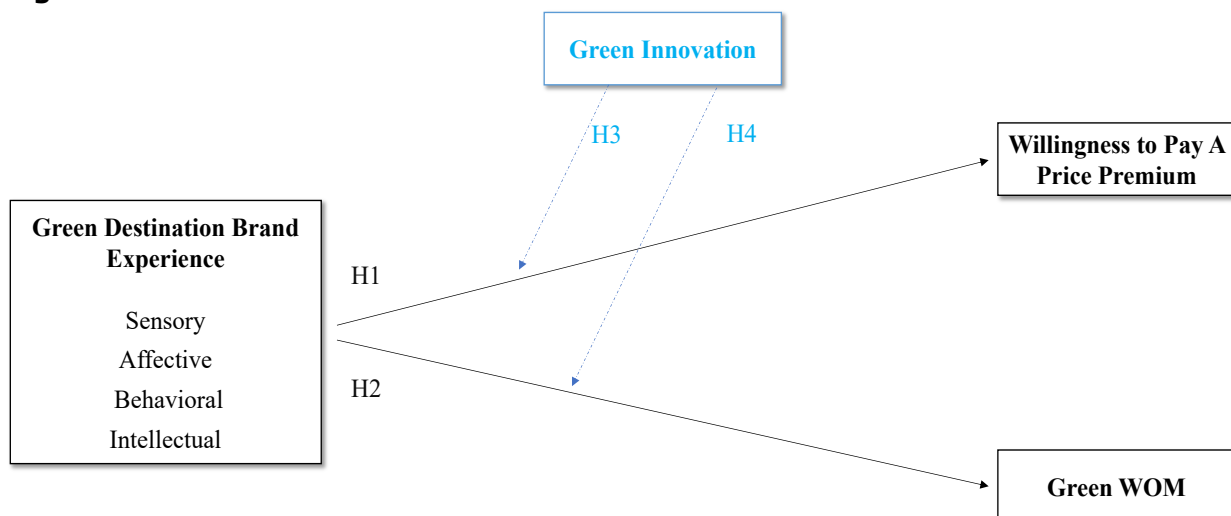
modern, socially aware and maintains high service quality. As a result, tourists may perceive higher value from a positive destination experience if the innovative green initiatives are perceived to be valid. When there's a premium value associated with service, visitors consider to proceed for premium.

Green service innovation may increase the perceived acceptability of price premiums in the sense that tourists might view the innovative sustainability measures as indicators of superior infrastructure, healthy environment, high-quality operations and corporate social responsibility. Green hospitality studies show that eco-innovative offerings have a positive impact on consumer attitudes and willingness to pay more (Yang et al., 2024). Therefore, with positive experiences, stronger perceptions of green service innovation should amplify its impact on premium price intentions. The same can be said for green word-of-mouth. When tourists like a place, they recommend. But communication is enhanced when encounters are rich in socially distinctive features. Green service innovation offers tourists content to share, such as smart waste management, renewable energy generation, green transportation or sustainable tourism services. These elements help tourists to not only promote the destination as a good choice for travel, but also as a sustainable and innovative choice. Hu, Dang-Van and Wang (2025) discovered that green service innovation helps achieve positive psychological and behavioral outcomes, suggesting it can enhance post-consumption marketing efforts. The same can be said of green WOM. Tourists often are inclined to recommend destinations based on enjoyable experiences. But sharing is enhanced when an experience has unique and socially relevant features. Green innovation offers tourists unique material for sharing, such as smart waste management, the use of renewable energy, green transport, or green tourist services. These elements enable tourists to promote not only a great travel experience, but also a sustainable and cutting-edge one. This boundary effect may be particularly strong for green innovation in urban destinations due to high levels of environmental challenges and competition. Cities offering good experience have positive outcomes. Therefore, green service innovation is likely to enhance the effect of brand experience on willingness to pay a premium and green word-of-mouth. In light of the literature, the following two moderating hypotheses are proposed;

H3: Green Innovation positively moderates the relationship between green destination brand experience and willingness to pay a price premium.

H4: Green Innovation positively moderates the relationship between green destination brand experience and green WOM.

Figure 1 Theoretical Farmwork



3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

The data was gathered by structured questionnaire using Microsoft Forms. The survey was distributed across online platforms over social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, and Gmail), and the alumni network channel, because the target respondents considered for the survey were young tourists and they are active in participating in web-based questionnaires. In addition, online distribution gives wider access. The target population of the current study consists of tourists who have travelled to major cities of Pakistan, such as Rawalpindi/Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta, between December 2024 and 2025. These cities were selected because they represent important tourism hubs characterized by cultural attractions, hospitality infrastructure, and increasing sustainable initiatives to handle climate change. A total sample of 365 responses was obtained, and 325 were retained after the screening process to clear outliers. This sample size is deemed sufficient for SEM in line with the recommendations by prior research (JR JFH & WC, 2010; Kline, 2023). The present study employed a purposive sampling to target tourists with relevant experience, as indicated by Sekaran (2016).

Table 1: Demographics

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	213	65.50%
	26-30	86	26.50%
	31-35	23	7.10%
	36-40	01	0.30%
	40 Above	02	0.60%
	Total	325	100
Gender	Female	95	29.20%
	Male	230	70.80%
	Total	325	100
Marital Status	Single	279	85.80%
	Married	44	13.50%
	Other (Divorced, Widowed, etc)	02	0.60%
	Total	325	100
Educational Background	High School or equivalent	17	5%
	Bachelors	197	60.60%
	Masters	101	31.10%
	Doctorate / PhD	08	2.50%
	Other	02	6.00%
	Total	325	100
Occupation	Corporate Professional	85	26.20%
	Govt. Employee	36	11.10%
	Entrepreneur/Small Business Owner	19	5.80%
	Retired	01	0.30%
	Student	174	53.50%
	Homemaker	08	2.50%
	Other	02	0.60%
	Total	325	100
Income (PKR)	Below 29,999	119	36.60%
	30,000-49,999	57	17.50%
	50,000-99,999	71	21.80%
	1,00,000-1,49,999	33	10.20%
	More than 1,50,000	45	13.80%
	Total	325	100

The sample reflected in Table 1 shown details of demographics, mostly young and economically active tourists. The average age of respondents was approximately 65.5% (18-25 years), 26.5% (26-30 years), which shows that the travel segment is dominated by the youth. Gender-wise, 70.8% of them were male and 29.2% were female. In terms of

education, 60.6% of the respondents were bachelor's with 31.1% having master's degrees, which indicates a highly educated respondent population. Students were the most numerous occupationally (53.5 percent), then were corporate professionals and government employees. The sample of respondents comprised individuals with diverse income backgrounds in terms of income, which indicated that it represented both dependent and independently earning travelers. In general, the demographic portrait describes a digitally connected urban tourist with active participation in traveling.

3.2. Measurement Instruments

Following the brief introduction, the questionnaire was structured into three sections. The first section holds with screening question, the second section captured the study's constructs by structured measurement items, and the final part gathered demographic information of respondents. Each construct was measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 7 ("Strongly Agree"). Measurement of all the constructs used multi-item scales, which were previously tested and with slightly contextualizing modifications to tourism destinations. Green destination brand experience (DBExp) was assessed through twelve items adapted from Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), and included sensory, emotional, intellectual, and behavioral aspects. green innovation (GIN) was measured with six items adapted from Hu, Dang-Van and Wang (2025) which reflect tourists' views of the destination's green innovations. willingness to pay a price premium (WPP) was measured by five items, three adapted from Farzin et al. (2023) and two items from Sarkar et al. (2021). green word-of-mouth (WOM) was assessed with four items adapted and transform from Kokatnur et al. (2025). A seven-point Likert scale was used for all items. Measurement items are given in Table 2. Before hypothesis testing, IBM SPSS Version 24.0 was used for descriptive statistics, correlation, and normality tests. Skewness and kurtosis values were within acceptable limits (-2,+2), which suggests no severe departure from the normal distribution, and the use of parametric analysis methods. A step-wise analysis was conducted. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in IBM AMOS Version 24.0 was conducted to evaluate measurement model fit using reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity (Jr. et al., 2010). Second, direct hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). Lastly, moderation analysis was conducted using Hayes PROCESS Macro Model 1 (Hayes, 2022).

4. Results

Normality of data was checked by IBM SPSS Version 24.0 via skewness and kurtosis. The skewness values ranged from -1.44 to -0.27, whereas kurtosis values ranged from -0.99 to 1.83, which are within an acceptable range ± 2 , suggesting no significant departure from normality. Therefore, the data satisfied the assumption of approximate normal distribution. Thus, it is assumed that the data are normally distributed (Field, 2009; George & Mallery, 1999; Trochim & Donnelly, 2001). The confirmatory analysis and proposed hypotheses were tested under SEM via IBM AMOS Version 24.0. In Figure 2, the measurement model showed all the observed indicators were significantly associated with latent constructs, with standardized factor loadings between 0.712 and 0.931, above the acceptable cut-off value of 0.50, and indicate satisfactory indicator reliability. The model fit statistics indicated that the measurement model fit the data well. Specifically, the model produced acceptable fit values ($\chi^2/df = 2.40$, NFI = .914, IFI = .948, TLI = .940, CFI = .948, RMSEA = .066), all of which satisfy widely accepted thresholds for structural models (Hu & Bentler, 1999; JR JFH & WC, 2010). The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are presented in Table 2 along with the measurement scales of the study constructs. All retained items exhibited standardized factor loadings above 0.50. There is no validity concerns. The composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.869 to 0.944, which is higher than the suggested threshold of 0.70 and suggests that the items in the measurement scales are highly consistent with each other. Likewise, the average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.573 to 0.808, exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.50, and establishing convergent validity

(Fornell & Larcker, 1981; JR JFH & WC, 2010). In addition, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were above 0.70, confirming acceptable internal consistency with no significant validity concerns. Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations and correlations among the study variables they are presented. The findings demonstrate positive correlations among the key constructs providing initial support for the hypothesized relationships. Discriminant validity is measured by HTMT ratios which are shown in Table 4. As recommended, all HTMT were below the adequate level of 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), which further confirms that our constructs of study are empirically distinct and reflect an acceptable discriminant validity.

Figure 2: Measurement Model

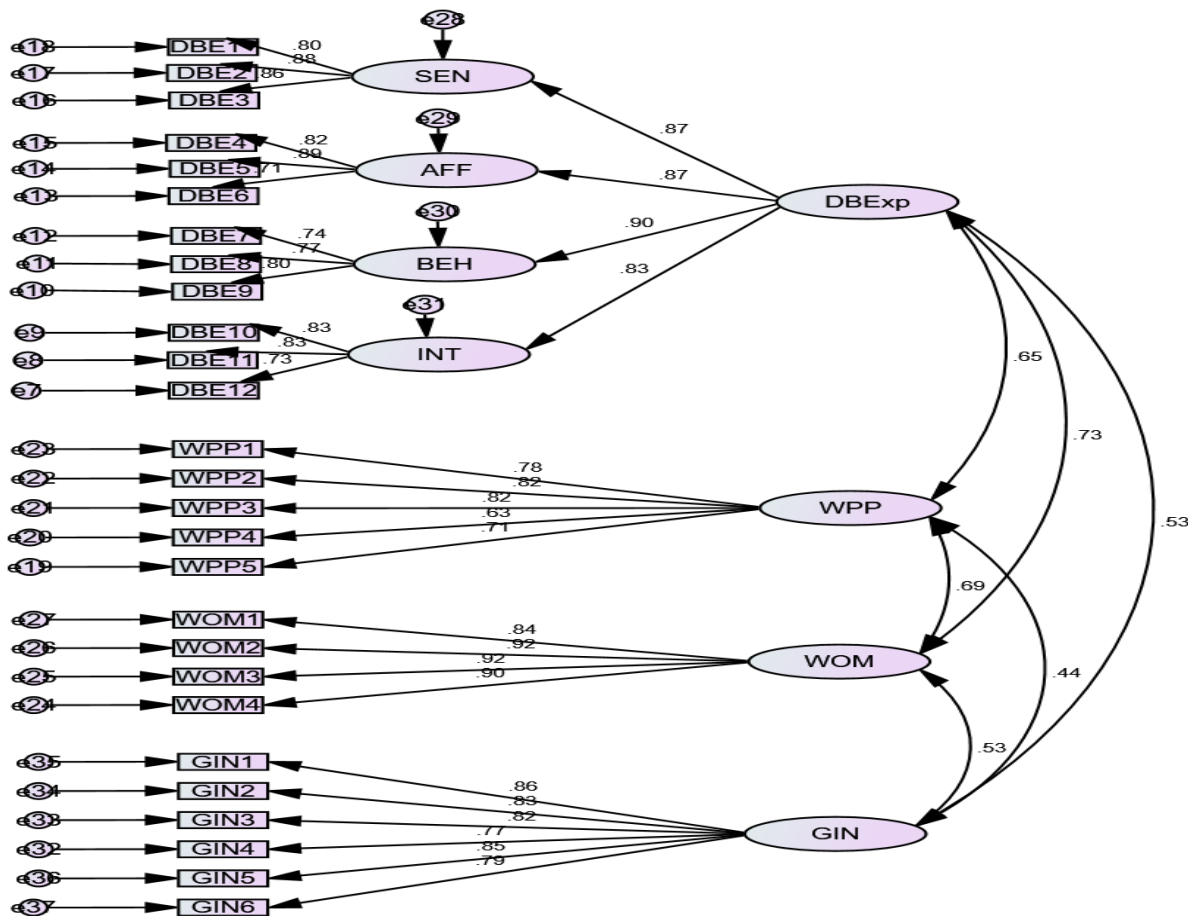


Table 2: CFA Results

Constructs	Measurement Items	Loadings	Cronbach's α	C.R	AVE
Green Destination Brand Experience (DBExp)			0.926	0.925	0.756
Sensory	This destination makes a strong impression on my senses, visually and in other ways.	0.874			
	I find this destination interesting in a sensory way.	0.797			
	This destination appeals to my senses.	0.879			
		0.864			
Affective	This destination induces feelings and sentiments.	0.866			
	I have strong emotions for this destination.	0.818			
		0.885			

	This destination is an emotional place.	0.71			
Behavioral		0.902			
	I engage in physical activities and behaviors when I am in this destination.	0.743			
	This destination gives me bodily experiences.	0.77			
	This destination is activity oriented.	0.795			
Intellectual		0.834			
	I engage in a lot of thinking when I am in this destination.	0.825			
	This destination makes me think.	0.828			
	This destination stimulates my curiosity and problem-solving.	0.726			
Willingness to Pay a Price Premium (WPP)			0.868	0.869	0.573
	I am willing to pay a higher price to visit this destination than for other destinations.	0.783			
	I am willing to pay a premium for the sustainable practices in this destination to be able to visit again.	0.822			
	I am willing to pay more to experience the sustainable initiatives of this destination compared to others.	0.82			
	I prefer to visit destinations that prioritize sustainability, even if it costs a little more.	0.633			
	I am willing to pay more to visit this sustainable destination over other destinations with fewer green initiatives.	0.711			
Green WOM (WOM)			0.943	0.944	0.808
	I strongly recommend this destination to others based on its positive environmental reputation.	0.842			
	I recommend this destination to others based on its environmental benefits.	0.923			
	I would motivate others to visit this destination because of its environmental friendliness.	0.922			
	I would promote positive messages about this destination due to its environmental impact.	0.905			
Green Innovation (GIN)			0.925	0.926	0.674
	This destination extends services based on its concern for the environment.	0.857			
	This destination creates and establishes new services based on its concern for the environment.	0.829			
	This destination offers new practices that focus on environmental sustainability.	0.825			
	This destination offers eco-friendly practices after a visitor's stay, like sustainable follow-ups or green souvenirs.	0.773			
	This destination offers innovative practices in service development based on its environmental concerns.	0.854			
	This destination proposes new practices related to operations and management based on its environmental concerns.	0.786			

Note: Diagonal bold values represent square root of AVE. Off-diagonal values indicate inter-construct correlations. CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; MaxR(H) = Maximum Reliability.

Table 3: Correlations

Variables	Mean	S.D	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00
1. WPP	4.86	1.37	0.76			
2. WOM	4.96	1.60	0.688***	0.90		
3. DBExp	5.06	1.21	0.649***	0.731***	0.87	
4. GIN	4.11	1.51	0.440***	0.532***	0.529***	0.82

Note: ***p < .001. WPP = Willingness to Pay a Price Premium; WOM = Green WOM; DBExp = Green Destination Brand Experience; GIN = Green Innovation

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Constructs	1	2	3	4
DBExp	0.76			
GIN	0.54	0.90		
WPP	0.63	0.49	0.87	
WOM	0.72	0.51	0.58	0.82

Note: HTMT values below 0.85, satisfactory discriminant validity

Figure 3 shows a structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis that was conducted to test the proposed direct effects of the proposed framework. The final SEM model with standardized path coefficients. Statistical results of the direct hypothesis are shown in Table 6. The results showed that destination brand experience had a significant positive impact on willingness to pay a price premium ($\beta = .69$, $p < .001$), thus supporting H1. This indicates that when tourists perceive greater sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral experiences at the destination, they are more likely to pay a price premium for the destination. Green experiences seem to increase perceived value and willingness to pay a premium price. Likewise, green destination brand experience was positively related to green word-of-mouth ($\beta = .76$, $p < .001$), and hence H2 was supported. This suggests that positive green destination experiences stimulate tourists to convey positive sustainability-related attitudes and to recommend sustainable destinations to others. Destination brand experience accounted for 48% of the variance in willingness to pay a price premium and 58% of the variance in green word-of-mouth, thus suggesting good predictive power.

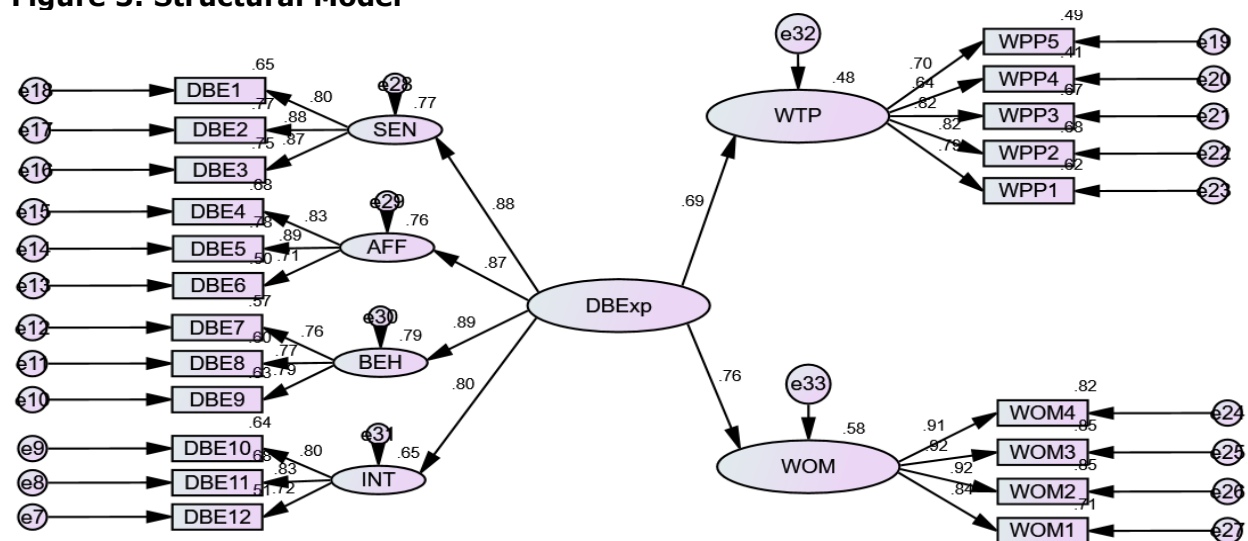
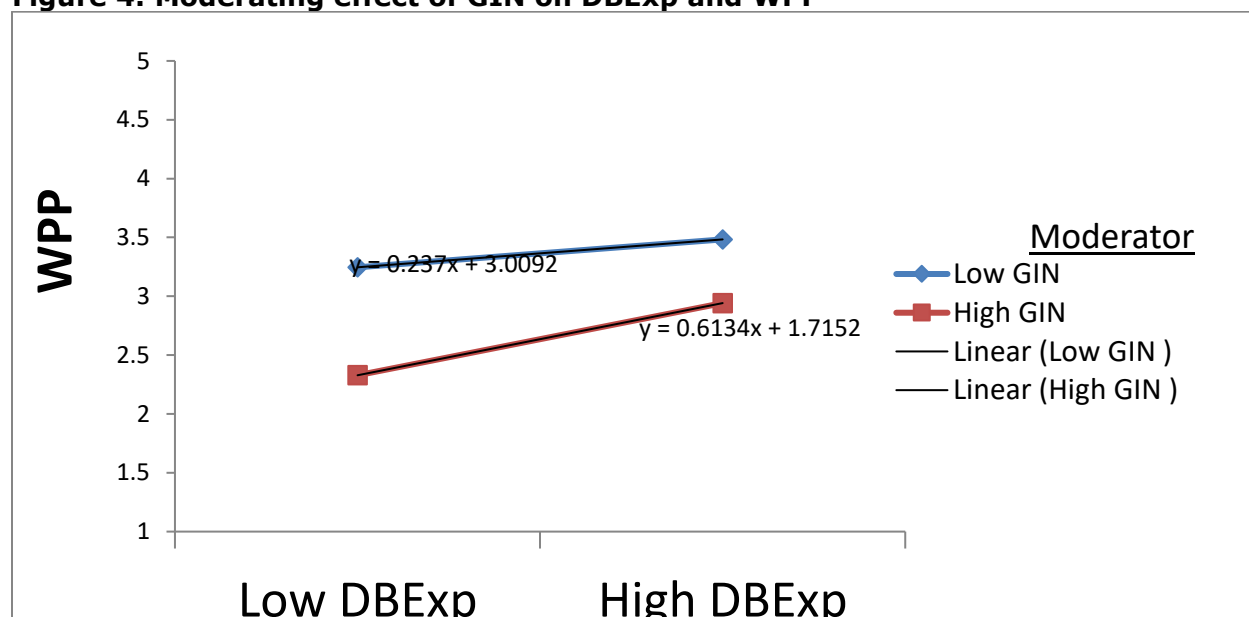
Figure 3: Structural Model

Table 6: Direct Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Structural Path	β	p	R ²	Results
H1	DBExp → WPP Premium	.69	< .001	.48	<i>Supported</i>
H2	DBExp → Green WOM	.76	< .001	.58	<i>Supported</i>

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

The moderating effect of the GIN was tested using the widely accepted Hayes PROCESS Macro Model 1. In Figure 4, the slope of the relationship is greater at higher levels of green innovation, which indicates that the value proposition of green innovation enhances the economic return on investment from a positive tourist experience. The effect of the interaction between DBExp and GIN on WPP appeared as positive and significant ($\beta = .094$, $p = .0088$), supporting H3 shown in Table 7. This suggests that green innovation enhances the positive effect of destination brand experience on tourists' willingness to pay a premium. However, the interaction effect on green word-of-mouth was not significant ($\beta = .031$, $p = .3993$); thus, H4 was rejected. It indicates that although DBExp directly encourages Green WOM, the strength of this relationship does not significantly vary across different levels of green innovation.

Figure 4: Moderating effect of GIN on DBExp and WPP**Table 7: Results of Moderation**

Hypothesis	(β)	p-value	Result
H3: DBExp × GIN → WPP	0.094	0.0088	<i>Supported</i>
H4: DBExp × GIN → WOM	0.031	0.3993	<i>Not Supported</i>

Note: standardized interaction coefficient, *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

In summary, the empirical results support the role of green destination brand experience as an important driver of tourists' economic and post-visit behaviors. Favorable destination experiences are found to result in an increase in tourists' willingness to pay a price premium and green WOM. Moreover, the moderating effect of perceived green innovation is more positive in the relationship between destination brand experience and willingness to pay, but is not significant in the relationship between green destination brand experience and green word-of-mouth. This suggests that green innovation may play a more important role in

increasing tourists' perceived economic value than in their post-visit communication intentions. Thus, destinations that aspire to achieve premium positioning may benefit from creating sustainable experiences while promoting green innovation initiatives.

5. Discussions

This study investigated the impact of green destination brand experience on tourist economic and behavioral responses in the context of urban tourism, incorporating the conditional role of green innovation. The study examined the impact of green destination brand experience on willingness to pay a price premium and green WOM among tourists who visit major cities in Pakistan. The study sought to bridge experiential branding and sustainable marketing responses to take destination research. The study viewed destinations as brands that are able to create business value and promote responsible green WOM. The study offers evidence that the experiential value is still an essential source of destination competitiveness, especially as tourist expectations extend to a quality, innovative and sustainable experience. The findings indicate that green destination brand experience substantially boosts consumers' willingness to get charged for premium services and to spread green WOM. This suggests that providing tourists with eco-friendly and meaningful experiences enhances the tourists' willingness to pay a premium price for the activities or programs a destination along with encourage them to share favorable sustainability related positive impressions. Moreover, perceived green innovation significantly enhanced the effect of destination brand experience on willingness to pay a price premium. But its moderating role on green WOM was not significant.

This implies that while innovation driven sustainability implies economic value to tourists, impact on advocacy may be more dependent on the actual experience. In summary, the results show that the value of green destination brand experience can simultaneously increase both financial and reputational returns, while green innovation selectively impacts on the financial success of positive experiences. The results of the tested hypotheses strongly support green destination brand experience as a strategic asset for shaping tourists' reactions. The positive effects (*H1*, *H2*) on willingness to pay a premium price and green WOM suggest that green destination experiences create greater perceived value and green promotion. This implies that engaged tourists compensate involved destinations both in their price expectancy and recommendations. Apart from the direct effects, the moderation analysis (*H3*) shows that green innovation was a positive moderator in the relationship between green destination brand experience and willingness to pay. That is to say, the impact of green destination experience on willingness to pay a premium price was stronger at higher levels of green innovation. However, green innovation (*H4*) had no significant moderating effect on green destination brand experience's effect on green WOM. This suggests that advocacy may be more directly driven by sensory experience whereas willingness to pay may be more likely to be influenced by contextual cues.

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

The current study extends the literature of destination branding by revealing that destination experience leads to favorable outcomes. It also highlighted that it can lead to economic and behavioral outcomes simultaneously. This study extends the literature of destination experience by adding an environmental dimension to an existing destination brand experience to conceptualize as a green destination brand experience perspective. These research results suggest that contemporary tourist experiences might be affected by visible sustainable measures and green innovations. This extends the scope of destination experience outcomes and its importance beyond attitudinal outcomes. This study highlighted the urban context. An emerging and under researched destination context where more attention could be beneficial. The analysis of the present study suggests that these relationships in urban tourism markets add to the geographical representation of destination branding and provide evidence from an emerging non-Western destination. The study extends to the literature of

experience economy by delineating how memorable and sustainable destination experiences of tourists/visitors be translated into market value. Specifically, tourists who feel that they have experienced greater sensory, emotional, intellectual, and behavioral experiences are more likely to economically reward destinations through premium price paying. This reinforces the position that experiences are value-creating market offerings in tourism. Further, this research has conceptualized green innovation as the conditional mechanism to test the effect of experience on tourists' economic and behavioral outcomes, which adds uniqueness to the present study. The findings demonstrate that green innovation leads to greater outcomes for certain experience based responses, and not all responses are equally influenced by green innovations. This provides a more precise picture of situations where a destination experience supports more economically beneficial outcomes and market-distinct qualities.

5.2. Managerial Contributions

Destinations need to focus on sustainable experience design by increasing the sensory appeal, emotional attachment, participative engagement, and intellectual stimulation of experiences. Better experiences can enhance tourists' willingness to pay and to recommend the destination that bring both traffic of money and brand image. In addition, visible and smooth efforts need to market without over claiming. Green transport, renewable energy sources, eco-efficient infrastructure, waste reduction programs and other green innovation in services can increase tourists' willingness to pay. For popular urban destinations, integrating sustainable innovation and experience quality may enhance differentiation and positioning. Managers ought to view destination brand experience less as a fluffy marketing notion and more as a means to enhance competitiveness. Designing for sensory appeal, culture immersion, other services interactions, entertainment and memorable trips for visitors can result in higher willingness to pay for a higher price and positive word-of-mouth. This suggests that design of experience should be part of competitiveness strategies.

5.3. Research Limitations & Recommendations

While the present research has yielded meaningful findings and contributions, it is important to acknowledge its limitations and proposed directions for further studies. Firstly, the cross-sectional nature of the study reflects perceptions at one moment and precludes causal claims. Longitudinal designs could be used to track changes in experiences and intentions across multiple visits. Also, the study was conducted in urban destinations in Pakistan. While this is significant for new urban destinations, it may not fully generalized rural, heritage, resort, or mature tourism destinations. Further studies can extend in different cultural and destination settings. In addition, the research was based on self-reported perceptions. Future studies may add non-verbal measures such as financial transactions, review text or return rate. Other moderators and/or mediators, such as trust, environmental responsibility, authenticity, or digital media, may also be considered to better understand destination brand experience on sustainable tourist outcomes.

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