

# TOURIST SATISFACTION: THE IMPACT OF MARKETING, ENVIRONMENT AND E-COMMERCE

ISMAIL, F.<sup>1\*</sup> – IMRAN, M.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Faculty of Technology Management & Business, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn, Johor,  
Malaysia.*

*\*Corresponding author  
e-mail: fadillah[at]uthm.edu.my*

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**Abstract.** This research investigates the impacts of marketing strategies (product, price, promotion, and physical evidence) and the environment on tourist satisfaction in Malaysia by focusing on the moderating influence that e-commerce has in the relationship between environment and tourist satisfaction. Following a quantitative research approach, a structural equation modeling technique called partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to evaluate the hypotheses. For data collection, a questionnaire was used, and a total of 330 completed questionnaires were included in the study. The findings revealed that the presence of physical evidence had no impact on the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists. However, a positive correlation was found between product, price, promotion, and environment. In addition, the findings also indicate that the association between the environment and tourist tourists is not affected by the presence of e-commerce. Through an investigation into the moderating effects of e-commerce on the relationship between environmental factors and tourist satisfaction, this research aims to significantly expand the academic understanding of the impact that marketing strategies and environmental factors have on tourist satisfaction. In conclusion, it is assumed that the outcomes of this study would give adequate insight to scholars and marketing managers in the tourism industry. The findings' implications and further study potential directions are also highlighted.

**Keywords:** *product, price, promotion, physical evidence, environment, e-commerce*

## Introduction

The Malaysian economy relies heavily on tourism as a significant source of revenue and job opportunities. It is essential to provide information regarding tourists' overall satisfaction through marketing to attract tourists (Azhar et al., 2018). Since the beginning of tourism research, one of the essential questions to consider is tourist satisfaction (Moore et al., 2015). The level of satisfaction experienced by tourists is an essential component of a location's ability to compete, and it has a considerable impact on both the tourism market and the country's economy (Goffi et al., 2019). Because of this, it has become an extremely important focal point for marketing efforts and success strategies. As a consequence of increased marketing methods, better satisfaction among tourists has been seen (Jeong and Kim, 2019). The most important implication is that it is essential to comprehend both the factors that contribute to the satisfaction of tourists and the results that come from that satisfaction (Agyeiwaah et al., 2016). Given the cutthroat nature of the tourism industry, it is essential to develop a method for measuring the level of satisfaction felt by tourists, which should also facilitate the efficient formulation of marketing strategies and environmental policies.

Previous research has shown that marketing has elements of art and science. At the same time, the strategy can be described as a set of action plans implemented to explicitly target the firm's goals to ultimately accomplish those objectives (Ferrell et al., 2021). Because of the increasingly competitive environment in the tourist industry,

countries have been compelled to use a wide range of marketing strategies to assist tourists in meeting their objectives of long-term profitability and sustainable business revenue. There is strong evidence that the amount of satisfaction experienced by tourists directly impacts the tourism sector's profitability (Pan, 2015). Because of this, tourists end up being satisfied with how they engage with the goods and services offered, which in turn helps them form deep relationships. In addition, marketing is not a static activity but rather a very dynamic process. Tourist satisfaction is always a significant challenge for the countries engaged since visitor movements are ever-shifting. Therefore, marketers need to devise innovative and alternative solutions (Killian and McManus, 2015). These solutions are founded on strategic strategies, so host countries can identify the most effective methods for marketing their tourist business. Countries' marketing strategies are designed, developed, and put into practice with primary consideration given to the satisfaction of the tourists that visit such countries (Stoddard and Clopton, 2015). Furthermore, However, all marketing strategies, including product, price, promotion, and physical evidence, come into tourist satisfaction (Hasan and Islam, 2020).

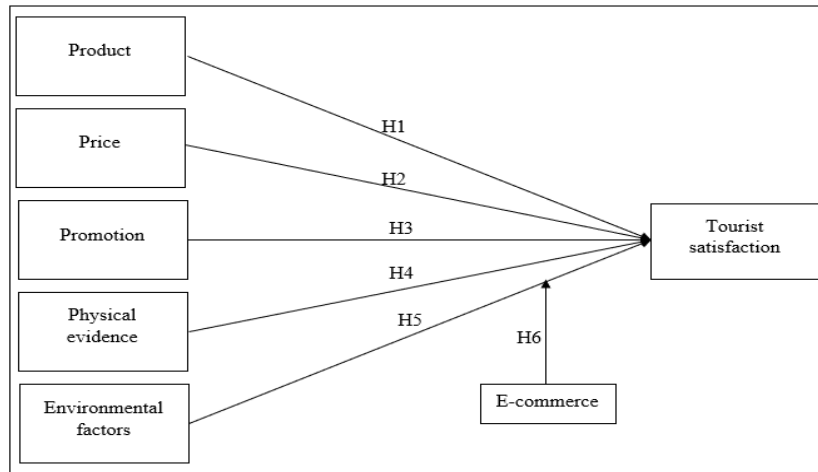
Maintaining the natural environment of destinations is crucial for a large portion of the tourist sector (He et al., 2018). Unfortunately, several tourist activities may occasionally be linked to the deterioration of destination environments. Tourism's negative effects can significantly impact a destination's environmental sustainability since tourism is strongly dependent on a destination's environmental, ecological, and cultural attractions (Su et al., 2020). Consciously and unconsciously, tourists may contribute to environmental deterioration. How to reduce tourism's negative environmental impacts is a major problem for academics and industry professionals working in the field of tourism. Understanding the primary elements that contribute to the development of environmentally conscious behavior is thus crucial. Therefore, mitigating or eliminating environmentally hazardous tourist activities is a crucial topic for academics and marketing (Su and Swanson, 2017). The improvement of information technology is accelerating at a fast rate. As a result, the rising prevalence of e-commerce in the Malaysian tourism industry is recognized as a significant driving force in this sector. E-commerce websites provide advantages to a bigger user base of tourists traveling globally, particularly regarding accessibility. Additionally, it enables a wider selection of goods and services to be purchased from a wider range of sellers. In addition, the use of e-commerce can boost the degree of satisfaction perceived by tourists (Tang and Zeng, 2021). The research also shows that the tourism industry is the most active in online purchases in Malaysia, with a total cost of RM435 million, which is an increase of 24 percent compared to other industries (Sobihah et al., 2015). This study examines the direct effect between marketing strategies and environmental factors on tourist satisfaction. Additionally, this study also seeks to find a moderating effect of e-commerce on the relationship between environment and tourist satisfaction.

### ***Literature review and hypothesis development***

Marketing is a social and management process that enables people and firms to acquire what they want and desire through manufacturing, presenting, and exchanging valuable items with one another (Rowley, 2016). According to the previous concept, the primary factor in a firm's success is its ability to fulfill the requirements of its customers. Any firm will always be up against a significant obstacle in the quest to achieve the greatest possible level of customer satisfaction. When tourists have a greater

degree of satisfaction when purchasing a product, it indicates that they will purchase the same item again in the future (Murray and Kline, 2018) and promote it to their friends and family. There is a strong consensus among researchers on the association between marketing and tourist satisfaction (Castro et al., 2017; Al Muala, 2012). Simultaneously, some evidence supports that tourist satisfaction translates into a higher-than-normal market share increase. This data comes in the form of surveys and interviews with tourists. The researchers Sarker et al. (2012) found a positive correlation between marketing and the satisfaction of tourists. In addition, similar research conducted by Magatef (2015) revealed that the essential components of the services marketing mix had a positive impact on the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists. Marketing strategies play a significant role in attracting new tourists and keeping the visitors that already have. Motivating marketing firms in the tourism industry to pay greater attention to their employees and tourists will result in increased satisfaction among employees and tourists. Consequently, our research findings supported the hypothesis that there is a positive association between marketing strategies and tourists.

The marketing strategies considered in this research are: (i.e. product, price, promotion, and physical evidence). Regarding tourism and services marketing, this combination of variables creates the optimal situation. These strategies are used in the service industry, which supplies substantial proof for study. Previous research, such as that conducted by Hole et al. (2018), who investigated the marketing strategies used in the service industry, also lends credence to this study. Hanaysha (2021) investigates marketing strategies that positively affect customer satisfaction and loyalty and spread good word-of-mouth. According to the findings of another research carried out by Takata (2016), marketing strategies have a significant and positive effect on the success of businesses. Işoraitè (2016) believes a direct correlation exists between increasing consumers and the efficient service offered using marketing strategy components strategies. In addition, the significant majority of studies have used marketing strategies within the framework of customer satisfaction; however, there is a shortage of research that examines the link between marketing strategies and tourist satisfaction within the context of the Malaysian tourism industry. In addition, the literature study indicates a shortage of research on marketing strategies with the environment, e-commerce, and tourist satisfaction in Malaysian tourism, all of which play an essential part in the overall success of the tourism industry. Because of this, it is evident that there is a significant gap in the research, which the researcher has attempted to address in the present study. As a result, they have contributed to the body of knowledge by determining the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists who visit Malaysia. In addition, the relationships between the hypotheses proposed for this research are shown in *Figure 1*.



**Figure 1.** Research framework.

### ***Product and tourist satisfaction***

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), a product can be presented to a market for attention, purchase, usage, or consumption in the expectation that it would fulfill a desire or a need. According to Khan (2014), the product offered regarding services can be described in two parts. These parts include the core service, which signifies the core benefit, and the secondary services, which depict both the tangible and increment levels. The latter may be comprehended most easily regarding the approach used to provide the specific service. According to Afuah (2020), the product is the central focus of the marketing strategy since here is where stores can provide distinctive characteristics that set their product apart from their counterparts. In addition, regarding services, Cusumano et al. (2015) defined a product as a tangible product or service to the customer for which the customer is prepared to pay. This definition applies to both products and services. In addition, Stanković and Đukić (2009) investigated the management of tourist destinations. They concluded that providing innovative and well-coordinated tourism products is of the utmost significance for the success of tourism areas and tourist satisfaction. This study suggested the following hypothesis after reviewing the relevant previous studies:

H1: Product is positively and significantly related to tourist satisfaction.

### ***Price and tourist satisfaction***

Regarding pricing in the services sector, issues are not quite as clear and plain as they are with products. A firm's pricing policy is the plan of action or guiding concept that it follows to arrive at price choices in an orderly and effective manner. According to Othman et al. (2020), the price of creating, distributing, and advertising a product is included in the price of the tourist service. The world travel and tourism council passes this price to the consumer. Consumers often make purchasing decisions in the tourist industry based on the product's brand image, pricing, and physical aspects (Park et al., 2017). The satisfaction a tourist derives from their overall trip is directly influenced by the price of the visit. The amount of satisfaction influences the intentions for future conduct. Numerous studies have investigated pricing and tourist price awareness's influence. Lu and Gursoy (2015) researched to investigate the interaction between price-

conscious tourists. Moreover, Šapić et al. (2019) revealed the extent to which a product's price influences customers' willingness to remain loyal to a certain over-the-counter brand. Based on our investigation of the relevant literature, we came up with the following hypotheses:

H2: Price is positively and significantly related to tourist satisfaction.

### ***Promotion and tourist satisfaction***

Promotion is a customer-facing endeavor that brings attention to a firm's products or services (Schwartz and Woloshin, 2019). Moreover, promotion as a crucial instrument of communication allows for the underlines of the tourist possibilities of a territory (Castro et al., 2017). This is carried out through different initiatives in both conventional and unconventional media, disclosing the tourism destination that, in the perspective of tourists, incorporates guarantees of quality and image of the brand (Kerdpitak and Heuer, 2016), which are then transformed into advantages and directly contributed to the satisfaction of the tourist under consideration (Lin et al., 2017). Consequently, enhancing the tourism destination and tourism initiatives of the destination based on the types of tourists continues to generate competitive and comparative economic benefits that seek to promote potential markets and compel the tourist to start generating one-of-a-kind experiences that are comprised; of encased needs evaluating different preferences and tastes or practices that can establish such as: adventure, cultural, gastronomic, and health tourism (Ayazlar, 2015; Sirigunna, 2015; Araslı and Baradarani, 2014). The third hypothesis is derived from these arguments, and it is as follows:

H3: Promotion is positively and significantly related to tourist satisfaction.

### ***Physical evidence and tourist satisfaction***

The term "physical evidence" refers to something a consumer can readily link with the advertised product (Wilson et al., 2016). Due to the extremely intangible nature of tourist products, the location, the furnishings, the employees, and everything else in the tourism office may all be connected to the experience to be presented. For instance, when tourists go to a historically significant location for the first time, they don't just take away memories of the location's stunning architecture; they also remember all of the other aspects of their tour, such as the transportation options, the surrounding markets, the manners of the locals, and so on, as a cohesive and unified whole. According to Kwok et al. (2020), the physical evidence in tourism mostly relies on the travel experience, the quality of the stay comfortable, and the accommodations' quality. The provision of simplicity for tourists and employees and the guarantee of effective service delivery and receipt is essential. In other words, it is considered an environment in which the customer and the firms engage to ensure service delivery (Rahman et al., 2019). In addition, Sharmin et al. (2020) asserted that sustainable development is an essential part of a destination's portrait, and a noticeable development in tourism contexts traffic is toward more ecologically responsible regions. As a result, the study could provide a hypothesis suggestion.

H4: Physical evidence is positively and significantly related to tourist satisfaction.

### ***Environmental factors and tourist satisfaction***

The marketing literature supports that the physical environment affects customer satisfaction in service settings. In addition, the environment impacts pricing, promotion, attitudes, and the product itself (Ali et al., 2016). Tourists' avoidance or approach to certain areas, the frequency with which they visit, and the amount of money they spend may all be influenced by their immediate surroundings (Bazneshin et al., 2015). The aesthetic design of a physical setting may often attract tourists and directly impact the degree to which they are satisfied with their experience. Similarly, the environment in which a service is provided is an important factor in overall tourist satisfaction (Holden, 2016). The hospitality sector has conducted a large number of studies that have investigated the impact of a wide range of factors, including air atmosphere, spatial layout, and advertising, on the levels of customer satisfaction and behavior (Moon et al., 2016; Omar et al., 2015). Similarly, Cristo et al. (2017) and Çetinsöz (2019) also argued that there is a relationship between the customer's physical surroundings and their level of satisfaction with the service they received. Tourists who have a positive experience during their visit will also have a positive impression of the destination's perceived worth to the environment, which will, in turn, motivate environmentally responsible conduct (Schofield et al., 2020). As a result of the fact that the research presented earlier found an association between environmental elements and customer satisfaction, it is clear that there is a significant gap in the level of satisfaction that tourists have concerning the tourism industry in Malaysia. As a result, the following hypothesis we hypothesized in the Malaysian tourism sector:

H5: Environmental factor is positively and significantly related to tourist satisfaction.

### ***The moderating role of e-commerce***

The term "e-commerce" refers to businesses and people who conduct transactions involving purchasing and selling products and services over the internet (Gupta, 2014). Furthermore, e-commerce, or electronic commerce, refers to purchasing and selling physical goods and services through the internet (Jusoh and Ling, 2012). A transaction requires participation from more than one party and data exchange. It is a subset of the larger tourism sector, which encompasses the operations necessary to manage a business online successfully. According to Daries et al. (2020), the role of e-commerce is of significant relevance in the tourism sector, characterized by rapid and turbulent changes, firms' strategies aimed at improving customer satisfaction and long-term survival and creating an effective business environment to ensure. E-commerce is regarded as a central enabler in the tourism sector business, which plays an important role in improving market mechanisms and facilitates firms' market transactions (Orji et al., 2022; Cristobal-Fransi et al., 2017). In this regard, e-commerce is seen as a primary enabler in the tourism sector. Because tourism industries are often influenced by environmental elements, providing a pleasant atmosphere, increasing levels of transparency, and using online shopping as a method of product acquisition are all ways to keep tourist satisfaction (Baralla et al., 2021). Consequently, in the context of the tourism industry, countries that offer a good environment can enhance tourist satisfaction by adopting e-commerce as a means to buy products and choose distinctions (Cao and Yang, 2016). As a result, the extent of e-commerce can influence the degree of

satisfaction experienced by tourists by mitigating the impacts of the surrounding environment. As a result, we propose the following hypothesis.

H6: E-commerce moderates the relationship between environment and tourist satisfaction.

## Materials and Methods

### Research instrument

All the measuring items were derived from previous research to ensure validity. Nevertheless, the items were modified slightly to make them appropriate to the current investigation. The variables of management strategies, product, price, promotion, and physical evidence were assessed using twenty items, with five individually allocated to each variable. These questions were adapted from Akroush (2011). At the same time, the environment was assessed using five items from Ali et al. (2016). E-commerce was also measured using five items adapted from Lin (2007). In addition, tourist satisfaction was measured with five items adapted from the previous study of Suki (2014). The items of each of these measurements can be seen in *Table 1*. All of the items were rated on a scale based on the Likert scale, and it included seven points, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 7 representing strongly agree. After sending the questionnaire for evaluation to the tourist and hospitality departments of Malaysia, various grammatical and structural adjustments were made to the statements to make them easier to grasp and increase their credibility.

**Table 1.** Description of the items.

Constructs	No. of items	Authors
Product	5	Akroush (2011)
Price	5	
Promotion	5	
Physical evidence	5	Ali, Amin, Ryu (2016)
Environment	5	
E-commerce	5	
Tourist satisfaction	5	Lin (2007)
		Suki (2014)

### Sample and data collection

Face-to-face discussions with tourists in several Malaysian tourist attractions, including Kuala Lumpur, Langkawi, Malacca, and the Cameron Highlands, performed the survey. All of the country destinations with quality ratings of five stars were considered for selecting tourist attractions. The data were collected via a survey that the respondents completed independently. For the survey, a sample based on convenience was selected. Throughout two months, questionnaires were given to guests several times throughout the day. This served as the sampling method. The objective of our study was described to the tourist, and questionnaires were only handed to those who desired to participate in the survey. This enabled us to achieve our goal of achieving a higher participation rate. A total of 480 questionnaires were given to the respondents. After removing any replies that were regarded insufficiently thorough, only 330 questionnaires were considered sufficiently comprehensive, resulting in a response rate of 68.75%. Three hundred thirty respondents filled out the survey; 44% were male, while 56% were female. 52% of respondents were younger than 35 years old, 10% were between 35 and 40 years old, and 38% were older than 41. 57% of the total respondents

had a bachelor's degree, 23% of the respondents held a master's degree, and 20% of the respondents held a high school diploma or equivalent. 74% of the respondents were from outside the country (foreigners), while 26% were tourists from the host country (Malaysians). It came as a surprise to learn that a large percentage of those who responded were younger than 35 years old. This distribution of age groups is corroborated by a prior study, which revealed that consumers in the age range of 35 years had a stronger interest in traveling for leisure than consumers in other age groups (Ayeh et al., 2013). According to the findings of this study, the percentage of tourists who come from other countries is much higher (74%) than the percentage of tourists who come from the country's population (26%).

### **Data analysis**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a multivariate analytic approach utilized in this research to characterize the simultaneous linear relationship between observable and latent variables. It was determined to employ a Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, component-based structural equation modeling. The purpose of this was to evaluate structural and measurement models. PLS is useful because it works with nominal, ordinal, and interval scale variables and has minimum restrictions on the data distribution. This is one of the reasons why it is helpful. In addition to this, it is the method of choice for distinguishing between groups even when the data do not follow the normal distribution, and it is well suited for making predictions about a subset of dependent variables based on a broad range of independent variables (Hair et al., 2019).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Measurement model**

The measurement model explains the link between the latent variable and its associated measurements. Unobserved variables are referred to as latent variables. Several measurement indicators may be employed to quantify a latent variable. In order to evaluate the measurement model according to the criteria presented, the reliability and validity of each variable are evaluated. It is suggested by Hair Jr et al. (2014) that the standardized loadings be at least 0.50 when calculating construct reliability to identify the factor loadings. The factor loading of the variables is shown to be significantly above the recommended value in *Table 2* and *Figure 2*. The measurement model determines the composite reliability (CR) of the variables, and the second requirement for this model is internal consistency reliability. According to Hair Jr et al. (2014), the standardized value of CR should be at least 0.60. The CR value demonstrates that the value is greater than the threshold value in *Table 2*. Researchers used average variance extract, or AVE, to assess the convergent validity. To establish convergent validity, a measuring indicator termed convergent validity must first be utilized to quantify a latent variable's relationship to another. Convergent validity has been shown because each construct has an AVE greater than 0.50 (*Table 2* and *Figure 2*).

**Table 2.** Reliability and convergent validity.

Constructs	Items code	F. Loadings	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
Product	PD1	0.829	0.868	0.904	0.653
	PD2	0.809			

		PD3	0.816			
		PD4	0.797			
		PD5	0.790			
Price		PC1	0.651	0.750	0.832	0.510
		PC2	0.671			
		PC3	0.617			
		PC4	0.800			
		PC5	0.778			
Promotion		PM1	0.788	0.820	0.874	0.582
		PM2	0.741			
		PM3	0.765			
		PM4	0.766			
		PM5	0.752			
Physical evidence		PE1	0.833	0.902	0.927	0.718
		PE2	0.814			
		PE3	0.856			
		PE4	0.862			
		PE5	0.871			
Environmentl factors		EF1	0.795	0.834	0.883	0.602
		EF2	0.822			
		EF3	0.654			
		EF4	0.802			
		EF5	0.795			
E-commerce		EC1	0.867	0.872	0.908	0.665
		EC2	0.835			
		EC3	0.860			
		EC4	0.842			
		EC5	0.656			
Tourism satisfaction		TS1	0.645	0.747	0.832	0.500
		TS2	0.695			
		TS3	0.720			
		TS4	0.651			
		TS5	0.807			

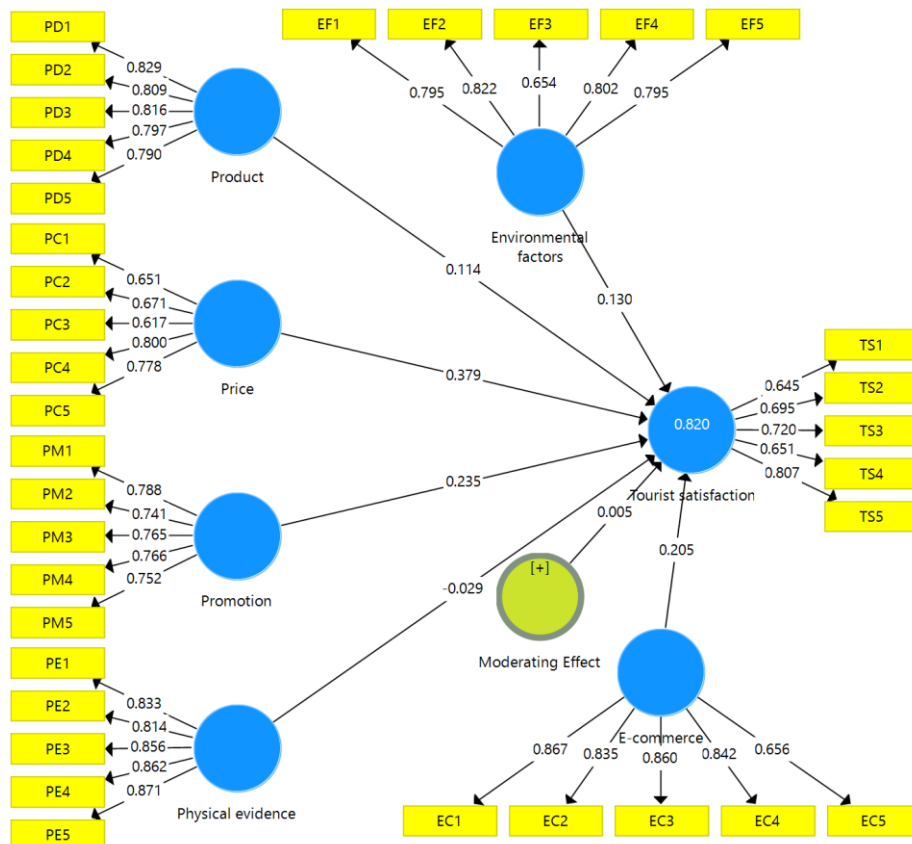


Figure 2. Measurement model.

According to Henseler et al. (2015), an additional criterion of the measurement model is discriminant validity, which is assessed to calculate the heterotrait–monotrait ratio. This criterion was developed to achieve discriminate validity (HTMT). The researcher demonstrated that HTMT is more trustworthy than the standard measure, especially in a scenario with little difference between the factor loadings. The HTMT in *Table 3* is often regarded as an important component in several aspects of model assessment, including individual item reliability, AVE, and CR. Without first establishing discriminant validity, researchers will be unable to determine whether or not the predicted structural paths are correct. According to Henseler et al. (2015), the standardized value of HTMT is 0.85 for those variables with a significant amount of conceptual distance between them, while the standardized value of HTMT is 0.90 for those variables have a significant amount of conceptual similarity between them. While *Table 3* shows that all the values are below the threshold of 0.85. The VIF was also computed to address the multicollinearity issues, and the threshold value was lower than five, as Hair Jr et al. (2014) recommended. The results of *Table 4* show that none of the VIF values is higher than five; hence, there is no multicollinearity issue.

**Table 3.** Discriminant validity HTMT criterion.

Variables	EC	EF	PE	PC	PD	PM	TS
EC							
EF	0.830						
PE	0.768	0.788					
PC	0.832	0.826	0.821				
PD	0.522	0.470	0.609	0.784			
PM	0.698	0.659	0.772	0.754	0.787		
TS	0.828	0.774	0.829	0.813	0.782	0.799	

*Notes: EC, EF, PE, PC, PD, PM, and TS represents; e-commerce, environmental factors, physical evidence, price, product, promotion, and tourist satisfaction.*

**Table 4.** Collinearity statistics (VIF).

Variables	Items	VIF
E-commerce	EC1	2.650
	EC2	2.153
	EC3	2.364
	EC4	2.399
	EC5	1.447
Environmental factors	EF1	1.857
	EF2	2.044
	EF3	1.400
	EF4	1.819
	EF5	1.746
Price	PC1	1.425
	PC2	1.476
	PC3	1.277
	PC4	2.186
	PC5	2.133
Product	PD1	2.010
	PD2	1.936
	PD3	2.041
	PD4	1.949
	PD5	1.788

Physical evidence	PE1	2.220
	PE2	2.126
	PE3	2.394
	PE4	2.475
	PE5	2.663
Promotion	PM1	1.712
	PM2	1.522
	PM3	1.627
	PM4	1.598
	PM5	1.582
Tourist satisfaction	TS1	1.379
	TS2	1.439
	TS3	1.465
	TS4	1.369
	TS5	1.731

### Structural model

This section discusses the structural model *Figure 3* that we use to examine the hypotheses that have been suggested. According to previous research findings, the next stage, after performing the measurement model, is to run the structural model to evaluate the path coefficient and the hypotheses that have been given (Henseler et al., 2016). The evidence of the relationships in the structural model and the relevance of those links can be found in *Table 5*. In this research, bootstrapping was performed using 5000 subsamples. According to the findings in *Table 5*, products directly impact the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists ( $\beta=0.114$ ,  $p=0.012$ ,  $t\text{-value}=2.519$ ), which supports H1. Despite this, price improved tourist satisfaction ( $\beta=0.379$ ,  $p=0.000$ ,  $t\text{-value}=5.895$ ), which supports H2. In addition, hypothesis H3 proposes a significant and positive relationship between promotion and tourist satisfaction ( $\beta=0.235$ ,  $p=0.000$ ,  $t\text{-value}=4.140$ ), which supports the H3. In addition, there is a negative relationship and insignificant effect between the physical evidence on tourist satisfaction ( $\beta=-0.029$ ,  $p=0.698$ ,  $t\text{-value}=0.389$ ), which does not support H4. Furthermore, the relationship between environmental factors and tourist satisfaction is positive and statistically significant ( $\beta=0.130$ ,  $p=0.046$ ,  $t\text{-value}=2.003$ ), thus supporting H5. Because this finding demonstrates that e-commerce does not moderate the relationship between environmental factors and tourist satisfaction in the Malaysian tourism industry ( $\beta=0.005$ ,  $p=0.798$ ,  $t\text{-value}=0.256$ ), hypothesis 6 (H6) is not supported.

**Table 5.** Path coefficients.

Hypotheses	Paths	$\beta$	M	SD	t-value	p-value
H1	PD $\rightarrow$ TS	0.114	0.113	0.045	2.519	0.012
H2	PC $\rightarrow$ TS	0.379	0.378	0.064	5.895	0.000
H3	PM $\rightarrow$ TS	0.235	0.236	0.057	4.140	0.000
H4	PE $\rightarrow$ TS	-0.029	-0.034	0.075	0.389	0.698
H5	EF $\rightarrow$ TS	0.130	0.131	0.065	2.003	0.046
H6	EC moderator EF $\rightarrow$ TS	0.005	0.003	0.018	0.256	0.798

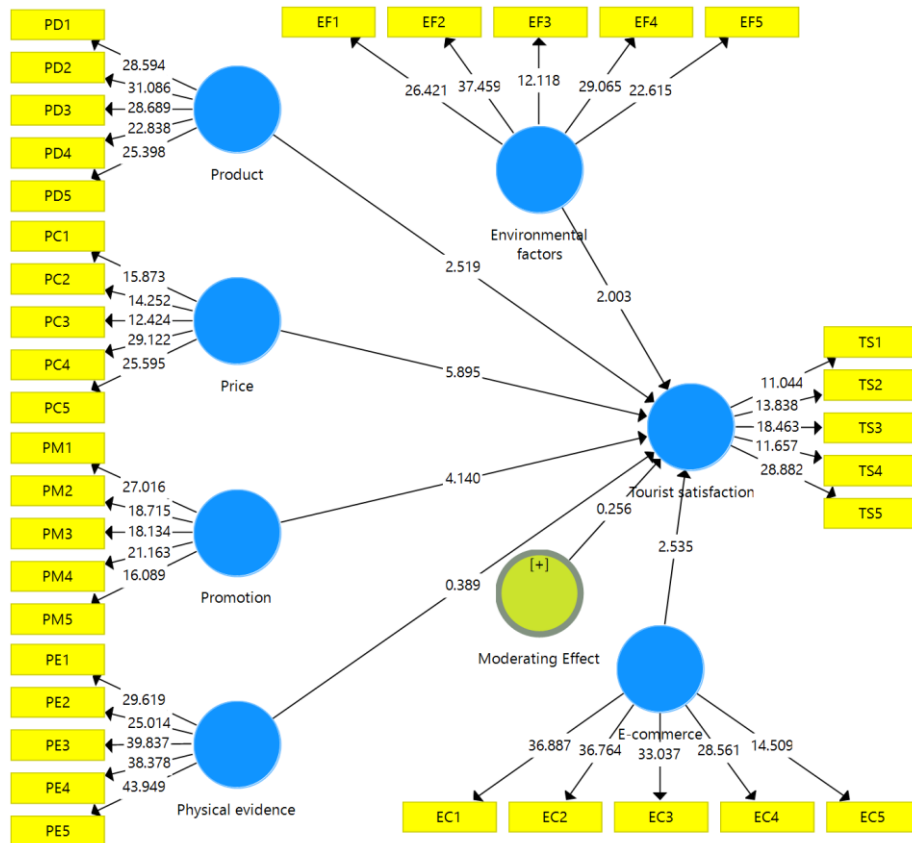


Figure 3. Structural model.

The value of the  $f^2$  indicates whether or not an exogenous construct in the research model substantially affects the endogenous variable. In descending order, the  $f^2$  values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are regarded to have smaller, medium, and high impacts (Cohen, 1988). According to Table 6, e-commerce, environmental factors, physical evidence, price, and product all have a smaller effect (0.043, 0.019, 0.001, 0.141, and 0.021), and promotion also has a smaller effect (0.103). These factors contribute less to the overall satisfaction experienced by tourists in the Malaysian tourist sector. In order to evaluate the research model's power for explanatory, the R2 statistic was computed (Consonni et al., 2010). In Smart PLS, the R2 was determined by using the algorithm approach. According to the findings of this research, the R2 value for tourist satisfaction was 0.820. Moreover, a different assessment approach was applied to determine the predictive significance of a research model developed specifically for PLS-SEM prediction. In addition, the researchers recommended starting with a computation of the Q2 value of the latent variables; if the value of Q2 is more than zero, then the items should be evaluated (Bonett and Wright, 2015). If some of the items have a lower score, this suggests poor predictive power; if all of the items have a higher score, this indicates that the model has no predictive power; and if all of the items have a lower score, this shows that the model has strong predictive power (Shmueli et al., 2019). According to Table 6, Q2-predict is higher than zero, indicating a stronger predictive relevance. According to the findings of this research, the value of Q2 is 0.391, which is significantly more than zero and indicates strong predictive importance at the construct level.

**Table 6.** Effect size  $f^2$ .

Constructs	$f^2$	$R^2$	$Q^2$
E-commerce	0.043	0.820	0.391
Environmental factors	0.019		
Physical evidence	0.001		
Price	0.141		
Product	0.021		
Promotion	0.103		

The environment and adoption of e-commerce are significant tourist attractions. Yet, a very small number of studies still demonstrate how essential it is to the tourism industry in Malaysia. As a result, this study was carried out to demonstrate the significance of environment and e-commerce as one factor that attracts tourists to Malaysia and gives them a satisfying experience while there. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors influencing the satisfaction level experienced by tourists in terms of marketing strategies, the environment, and e-commerce. In addition, the findings of this study demonstrate that marketing strategies and the environment can affect a tourist's satisfaction. Furthermore, the study revealed three underlying constructs of marketing strategies and environment experience (product, price, and promotion) that affect a tourist's satisfaction during their stay in Malaysia. Moreover, the results of this study indicate that the growth of e-commerce does not considerably impact the satisfaction of tourists. The environment in Malaysia presents a chance for environmental organizations, particularly those operating in regions with a significant volume of tourism activity, to provide a high-quality environment with appealing services. These organizations should seize this opportunity. According to the findings of the study, marketing strategies such as product, pricing, and promotion had a significant impact, both positively and significantly, on tourist satisfaction. This result is confirmed by the findings of prior studies, which found that product, price, and promotion were one of the strategies to satisfy tourist needs (Sudari et al., 2019; Magatef, 2015). This study also contradicts the findings of Surahman et al. (2020), who assert that physical evidence is positively and significantly related to tourist satisfaction. Whereas this research demonstrates that the fourth marketing strategy, such as physical evidence, is not positively and significantly related to tourist satisfaction. As a result, shopping centres, particularly those in areas densely populated by tourists, should emphasize products, prices, and promotions. Therefore, low pricing, sustainable products, constant promotion, and the environment of Malaysia can also boost the tourism industry by highlighting the satisfaction of tourists in various regions of the country. This can be achieved by promoting the satisfaction of tourists in Malaysia. It would be to the advantage of the Ministry of Tourism to highlight Malaysia's environment as one of the country's tourist attractions. However, rather than operating a specific campaign, it would be more effective to market this environment using an adaptable strategy to various situations. It is important that tourists have access to more advertising tools, such as brochures, catalogues, blogs, and websites, so that they can learn more about the products, prices, promotions, and environments available in Malaysia.

This research showed that the relationship between the environment and tourist satisfaction does not moderate the effects of e-commerce. Therefore, this result is also contrary to previous research that reported that e-commerce influences tourist satisfaction through the environment (Pan and Zhang, 2021; Aribawa, 2016). In addition, to improve the quality of service that internet shopping can provide to meet the

needs of tourists, online stores should work to increase the confidence and belief systems of tourists by emphasizing qualities such as intellectual ability, kindness, and honesty to combat the negative opinions pertaining the ambiguity of the transactions. This conclusion might be because tourists have come to anticipate a high level of response from the timely delivery of products. Yet, they are willing to tolerate slower online transactions if such activities have enhanced levels of protection (Lin, 2007). A large percentage of those surveyed came from other countries, which indicates that they belong to a subset of the population that is generally more exploratory and enthusiastic about going to new locations. When establishing a targeted marketing strategy to appeal to this demographic of tourists, tourism marketers can consider this finding an important component to consider. This study demonstrates that a tourist's experiences with the product, pricing, promotion, and environment affect tourist satisfaction and that this study can market the Malaysian tourism industry. If tourism marketers used the findings of this study, they would be in a better position to create product, price, and advertising-related tourism packages. Additionally, they would be better able to create environmentally relevant tourism packages.

The contribution of this study, seen from the perspective of managers, promotes and guides companies in the hospitality and tourist industries in developing an all-encompassing strategic marketing strategy centered on the tourist industry. In addition, this research offers useful knowledge that will help make it easier for managers to use the resources available to the tourist industry effectively. If tourism entrepreneurs, managers, and investors were to use the information provided in this research, they would be better able to build efficient tourism packages that would raise the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists. As a result, marketing activities directed at tourists should emphasize marketing strategies while simultaneously working to improve other areas of experiences, such as the environment and e-commerce. As a result, collaborative marketing firms with government officials and other stakeholders is crucial and has to be enhanced to raise tourists' satisfaction with traditional food. In addition, tour operators in Malaysia should each play the role appropriate for them in promoting different elements of Malaysia's tourism sites. Environment and e-commerce are important components of the tourism industry, but there hasn't been much research on how those components affect tourist satisfaction, particularly in Malaysia. To fill the gap in our understanding, researchers decided to conduct this research. The study contributed new theoretical propositions to the existing body of literature on international tourist marketing strategies, the environment, and e-commerce interaction, as well as the participant's satisfaction with their time spent in Malaysia. The research identified the aspects that contribute to the satisfaction experienced by foreign tourists. The results of this study demonstrate that factors such as product, pricing, promotion, and environment affect tourist satisfaction. Furthermore, the results of this study have the potential to serve as a basis for further investigations into this issue. As a result, the primary factors that contribute to and are measured might be applied to other tourism sectors to comprehend tourist satisfaction better.

## **Conclusion**

This study examines the role of marketing strategies and environmental factors in the Malaysian tourism sector, as well as the moderating role of e-commerce on the relationship between environmental factors and tourist satisfaction. The findings of this

research showed that three marketing strategies (product, price, and promotion) had a positive influence on tourist satisfaction. According to the findings of several researchers (Othman et al., 2020; Al Muala, 2012), the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists is an essential component in determining the level of success enjoyed by the products, prices, and promotions that use them as tourist destinations. As a result, it is essential to understand how the environment and the e-commerce experience satisfy tourists. Suppose marketing firms are aware of the products, promotions, prices, and environmental elements that affect the satisfaction level experienced by tourists. In that case, they will be able to establish appropriate marketing strategies that will raise the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists (Yeh et al., 2019).

In this study, surveys were sent to tourists to Kuala Lumpur, Langkawi, Malacca, and the Cameron Highlands, all of which are famous tourist sites in Malaysia. Studies in the future that broaden the scope of this study to include different tourist locations across Malaysia will be more comprehensive and extensive. It has also been proposed that future research should use questionnaires on the cultures and traditions of tourists. This kind of data will prove useful in evaluating whether there are relationships between the ethnic backgrounds of tourists and the level of satisfaction they report feeling during their visits. In order to obtain the necessary information for this study, a questionnaire was employed. For future research, it has been proposed that mixed or qualitative methods be used to have a deeper knowledge of the factors influencing tourists' satisfaction. The results of this study suggested that the environment, along with three of the four marketing strategies, impacts the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists. Furthermore, it is recommended that future studies investigate various marketing strategies and environmental factors to gain a deeper understanding of the significant role that other marketing strategies and environmental factors play in determining tourist satisfaction.

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### **Conflict of interest**

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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