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**The contribution of boutique hotels to enhanced guest experiences
and tourism sustainability**



UNIVERSIDADE DO ALGARVE

FACULDADE DE ECONOMIA

2025

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and tourism sustainability**

Master's Degree in Tourism Economics & Regional Development

Dissertation carried out under the supervision of:

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Work Authorship Declaration

I declare to be the author of this work, which is unique and unprecedented. Authors and works consulted are properly cited in the text and are included in the listing of references.

Md Shahadat Hossain

.....
(signature)

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This dissertation means more to me than a piece of academic paper; it is a truly chaotic ride, one that went in another direction. I was thinking of completing it in 2022, but life, as it has a habit of doing, threw a curve in my way. With family problems and an unexpected accident, everything was too much, and I had to take a step back for a bit. Honestly, there were moments I wasn't sure I'd ever get back to it.

Last but not least, there were Professor Dora Agapito and Professor Marisa Cesário. Genuinely, I don't know where I'd be today without them. They weren't just supervisors; they were my motivators, mentors, and just nice, humble human beings. They pushed me when I needed to give up, and their patience was commendable. Thanks to both from the bottom of my heart.

Being thousands of miles away from home as an international student raised the bar for "exciting." In my own country, my parents were my pillar of support. The texts, the calls, and the fact that they had faith in me were all that mattered. Without their constant faith in me, I could not have accomplished this.

This thesis is more than just a study. It bears witness to the hardships of falling and rising again, the love that kept me going, and the grace of those who supported me throughout my most difficult times. Even though it is just a portion of my narrative, I will always be grateful to everyone who helped make it possible.

ABSTRACT

The increasing significance of boutique hotels in the tourism industry is reviewed in this study, including their unique characteristics, contribution to the guest experience, and role in promoting sustainable tourism practices. Through a systematic literature review, the study analyses existing research to determine the key aspects that differentiate boutique hotels from traditional hotels and examines how these elements contribute to enhanced guest satisfaction and sustainable tourism. The research indicates that boutique hotels are defined by their unique design and atmosphere, personalized guest service, cultural authenticity, strategic location, limited capacity, commitment to sustainability, well-appointed room features, and a strong emphasis on quality and value. The reflection on published studies suggests that these distinctive features have a positive impact on the guest experience, promoting personalized and memorable stays, customized services and a stronger connection with the local culture and heritage. In addition, the research emphasizes the role of boutique hotels in promoting sustainable tourism by supporting the local economy, being environmentally responsible and conserving cultural heritage. The review concludes that boutique hotels can play a relevant role in the evolving tourism landscape by providing unique and personalized experiences while contributing to sustainable tourism.

Keywords: Boutique hotels, guest experience, sustainable tourism, personalized services, unique design, local experiences.

RESUMO

A indústria das viagens internacionais sofreu uma transformação significativa nos últimos anos, impulsionada principalmente pelas mudanças nas expectativas dos viajantes. Os viajantes de hoje estão insatisfeitos com as experiências comuns e os serviços hoteleiros padronizados. Em vez disso, esforçam-se por encontrar experiências de férias únicas, autênticas e personalizadas. Esta tendência levou ao estabelecimento de hotéis boutique, propriedades mais pequenas e independentes, que oferecem uma estadia mais personalizada e culturalmente envolvente. Os hotéis boutique não estão a tornar-se não só mais populares e forma única de alojamento, como também uma parte fundamental da entrega de experiências aos hóspedes, com ligações ao turismo sustentável.

Os primeiros boutiques hotéis começaram a surgir em centros urbanos como Londres e Nova Iorque durante a década de 1980. A partir daí, transformaram-se num fenómeno global. Os boutiques hotéis são caracterizados por terem um tamanho compacto, um design único e uma hospitalidade personalizada. Embora a demografia dos seus clientes possa variar, os próprios hotéis boutique atraem viajantes sofisticados e focados na experiência que desejam, em torno da autenticidade, imersão local e conexão emocional. Em vez da uniformidade de marca característica de grupos de hotéis maiores, os hotéis boutique procuram expressar a individualidade, muitas vezes através da arquitetura, do design de interiores e dos serviços incorporados na personalidade local. Este aspeto produz ambientes distintos que os separam da norma dos alojamentos convencionais.

O aumento da procura de boutique hotéis reflete uma tendência social mais ampla no sentido de viagens mais ecológicas. Os consumidores estão hoje mais propensos a procurar alojamentos que se enquadrem na cultura local, beneficiem a economia local e sejam amigos do ambiente. Os hotéis boutique, como o próprio nome indica, estão em melhor posição para capitalizar estas exigências. Têm uma dimensão limitada, o que significa que é possível uma maior flexibilidade operacional, permitindo uma incorporação mais fácil de estratégias verdes, relações com fornecedores locais e estratégias de participação dos hóspedes numa base individualizada.

O principal objetivo da dissertação é examinar como as características definidoras dos boutique hotéis afetam não só a satisfação dos hóspedes, mas também as iniciativas de turismo sustentável. O objetivo é examinado no âmbito de uma revisão sistemática da literatura em

torno de três questões-chave de investigação: quais as características essenciais dos hotéis boutique; como é que estas características afetam a experiência do hóspede; e como afetam a sustentabilidade no turismo? Através destas questões de investigação, o trabalho mapeia a investigação sobre as implicações na experiência dos hóspedes e a sustentabilidade no setor dos hotéis boutique.

A metodologia utiliza a abordagem de revisão sistemática seguindo as diretrizes PRISMA. A literatura utilizada para revisão é derivada de literatura com revisão por pares (artigos científicos), acessada através das bases de dados Web of Science e Scopus, com um foco específico em artigos que analisam hotéis boutique em comparação com a experiência dos hóspedes e as implicações ao nível da sustentabilidade. Dezoito artigos científicos foram selecionados para análise. O autor está consciente de uma limitação importante: a exclusão de fontes em língua não inglesa e documentos que não são artigos, que poderiam ter representado melhor a diversidade das práticas dos hotéis boutique.

O estudo identifica uma série de atributos únicos que marcam consistentemente os hotéis boutique em todos os contextos. Destes, o design e a atmosfera únicos são particularmente críticos. Os hotéis boutique têm detalhes arquitetónicos e interiores visualmente distintos, muitas vezes de origem local, que proporcionam um encontro sensorial instantâneo e duradouro aos hóspedes. Ao contrário das cadeias de hotéis que priorizam a consistência, os hotéis boutique utilizam o design como veículo de narrativa, permitindo aos hóspedes conectarem-se com a história ou o carácter do destino.

O atendimento personalizado também se tornou um fator importante. Devido ao seu tamanho mais reduzido e à baixa proporção de funcionários por hóspede, os hotéis boutique podem oferecer um serviço extremamente personalizado, antecipando as necessidades dos hóspedes e criando um nível de ligação emocional. Este tipo de hospitalidade aumenta o sentimento de valorização e apreço, o que tem um impacto significativo na satisfação e lealdade geral dos hóspedes. Paralelamente, muitos hotéis boutique integram experiências locais nas suas ofertas, seja comida local, passeios culturais e workshops, para enriquecer ainda mais a sua experiência e aumentar a conexão com a comunidade local.

Para além de proporcionarem uma satisfação dos hóspedes aumentada, os hotéis boutique apresentam também um elevado potencial para promover o turismo sustentável. Na maioria dos casos, os hotéis boutique empregam métodos ecológicos, como infraestruturas de conservação de energia, estratégias de minimização de resíduos e utilização de materiais

verdes. A sua prática de sustentabilidade é motivada não só pelo cumprimento da lei ou pelos apelos na comunicação social, mas também pela preocupação genuína em manter intactos o ecossistema local e a sociedade.

Os boutique hotéis também desempenham um papel vital no apoio à economia local. Ao adquirir produtos e serviços a negócios locais, empregar habitantes locais e encorajar experiências culturais locais, retêm as receitas turísticas dentro da comunidade anfitriã. Este modelo de criação de valor à escala local ressoa fortemente com os princípios do turismo sustentável e distancia-se das práticas tipicamente economicistas das cadeias hoteleiras internacionais.

A outra área em que os hotéis boutique podem ter valor prático é na preservação das culturas. Ao se integrarem no tecido social e cultural da comunidade de acolhimento, oferecem aos visitantes uma forma mais rica e sensível de interagir com um destino. Quer estejam ocupados em edifícios icónicos ou adornados com obras de arte do país anfitrião, os hotéis boutique são guardiões do património, incentivando os visitantes a compreender e abraçar os destinos.

O trabalho observa ainda que a satisfação dos hóspedes e a sustentabilidade não são objetivos mutuamente exclusivos no contexto dos boutique hotéis. Na verdade, são os mesmos elementos que contribuem para a experiência do hóspede. A localidade, a autenticidade e a personalização são, muitas vezes, os mesmos elementos que levam a resultados sustentáveis. Esta sinergia torna o argumento a favor da expansão do modelo de boutique hotel para um nível mais amplo, especialmente convincente em destinos turísticos onde o turismo está em ascensão e a sustentabilidade é uma prioridade.

O estudo conclui afirmando o papel significativo e crescente dos hotéis boutique no setor hoteleiro. Realça que estes hotéis não só podem proporcionar excelentes experiências aos hóspedes, como também estão preparados para impulsionar políticas de turismo sustentável. Destaca-se ainda a necessidade de mais investigação para compreender melhor como os hotéis boutique operam em diferentes contextos culturais e socioeconómicos.

Palavras-chave: boutique hotéis, experiência do hóspede, turismo sustentável, serviço personalizado, design único, experiências locais.

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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

Travelers are increasingly looking for individualized experiences, and tourism has grown to be a crucial part of many economies throughout the world. In recent years, the number of boutique hotels has increased in response to the demand for unique and individualized lodging (Lwin et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2013). Smaller in size, with individualized service and distinctive design elements, boutique hotels provide their visitors with a genuine and unique travel experience. Boutique hotels are becoming more and more popular because of their distinctive and inventive characteristics, whereas traditional hotels have traditionally dominated the hospitality business (Aggett, 2007).

Boutique hotels have become an important part of enhancing visitor experience and advancing environmentally friendly tourism strategies (Kleinrichert et al., 2012). In addition to supporting sustainable methods that lessen the harmful effects of tourism on the environment and local communities, these hotels put a strong emphasis on creating a distinctive atmosphere, reflecting the local culture and heritage (Rahman, 2018). Boutique hotels are emerging as significant proponents of environmentally and socially responsible tourism. They often promote activities that benefit the local community and help protect the natural environment and cultural heritage of the area (Kleinrichert et al., 2012).

Numerous studies have investigated how boutique hotels can improve visitor experiences and support eco-friendly travel strategies. For instance, a study by McIntosh and Siggs (2005) examined how guests felt while staying in boutique hotels. According to the report, boutique hotels stand out from traditional hotels because they provide a distinctive, genuine and customized experience. Additionally, Wang et al. (2019) investigated the effect of boutique hotels on customer experience and word-of-mouth marketing and discovered that boutique hotels significantly improve customer experience, resulting in favorable word-of-mouth marketing. In a similar vein, Hussein et al. (2018) examined how boutique hotel characteristics affected client happiness, loyalty, and intention to recommend. Research revealed that the distinctive design, individualized service, and emotional experience of boutique hotels had a beneficial impact on patron satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth intentions (Parolin and Boeing, 2019).

Hussein et al. (2018) and Wang et al. (2019) also found out authentic experiences influenced customer happiness, loyalty, and intentions to recommend boutique hotels to others. Boutique

hotels offer tourists a unique and distinct experience, which can enhance the overall tourism experience.

Fuentes-Moraleda et al. (2019) indicate that guests staying at small hotels exhibited higher levels of environmentally responsible behaviour compared to those staying at traditional hotels. In addition, Kasimu et al. (2012) evaluated the impact of hotels in promoting sustainable tourism practices and fostering the social and economic advancement of local communities in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

This paper aims to contribute to the existing literature on the contribution of boutique hotels to enhancing guest experiences and promoting sustainable tourism practices by mapping previous studies on this topic and reflecting on their findings. In so doing, through a review of existing literature, this dissertation will explore the key features that distinguish boutique hotels from conventional hotels and how they contribute to enhancing guest experiences and promoting sustainable tourism practices. The manuscript will also highlight the potential of boutique hotels as a model for sustainable tourism and the need for future research in this area.

1.1 Background and Context of Boutique Hotels

Boutique hotels are a distinctive subsection of the hospitality sector that provides guests with personalized and fashionable accommodations. The idea of boutique hotels first surfaced in the 1980s in well-known places like London and New York, and it has since spread throughout the world (Chang & Teo, 2009; Lim & Endean, 2009). The distinctiveness and aesthetics of each boutique hotel make it challenging to identify the sector's ideal clientele. However, Boutique hotels typically focus on specific niche customer groups with particular interests and attract university-educated individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 (Buhagiar et al., 2024; Chang & Teo, 2009).

The distinctive design and style of boutique hotels, where each component of the hotel's appearance is carefully selected to create a unique experience, is one of their defining characteristics. Boutique hotels generally have their own front desk, lobby, and appearance, giving them a distinct identity even though they may be a part of a larger hotel chain or brand.

According to research, travelers looking for a more distinctive and customized vacation experience are increasingly choosing boutique hotels. The boutique hotel industry has

expanded over the past few decades with an increase in the development of boutique hotels all over the globe (Buhagiar et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2015).

1.2 Significant and purpose of the study

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how distinctive characteristics of boutique hotels impact guest experience and elements related to tourism sustainability. Customers' overall happiness and loyalty have been found to increase when boutique hotels provide them with distinctive and personalized experiences (Buhagiar et al., 2024). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that boutique hotels use sustainable practices to advance conservation and aid local populations (Kleinrichert et al., 2012).

1.3 Objectives & Research questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how distinctive characteristics of boutique hotels impact guest experiences and elements related to tourism sustainability.

Following the main research objective, this research aims to answer three research questions:

R1. What are the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels?

R2. How do the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels impact the guest experience?

R3. How do the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels impact aspects related to tourism sustainability?

1.4 Scope and limitations of the study

The primary focus of this research is to conduct a systematic evaluation of the literature on the effects of boutique hotels on guests' experiences and the sustainability of the tourism industry. Due to the exclusion of publications in languages other than English and other publications that are not journal articles, this study is limited to findings published in English-based journal articles.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The manuscript has the following structure:

Chapter 1- Introduction: Discuss the research background, the importance of boutique hotels, and the objective of the study.

Chapter 2- Literature Review: Details available literature on the aspects of boutique hotels, the impact of guest experience, and the contribution of sustainability.

Chapter 3- Methodology: This section explains the systematic review methods, including the search strategy and data selection criteria.

Chapter 4- Results and Discussion: Represent the results and findings of the systematic review, considering their significance related to the research objective.

Chapter 5- Conclusion: Present the summary of the overall thesis, the key finding and their relevance to the research questions, and limitations, together with future research suggestions.

CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to review the literature on boutique hotels' guest experience and sustainability practices that support the dissertation theory, evaluating its relevance to the current research.

2.1 Distinctive elements of boutique hotels

Tourists are attracted to boutique hotels because of their special appeal and attentive care, which has made them a distinctive section of the hospitality business. These hotels, which are distinguished from conventional hotels by their unique design and small scale (Jones et al., 2013), provide a carefully crafted experience. Emphasizing exclusivity and attention to detail, those hotels tend to attract affluent customers (Tavares & Fraiz Brea, 2018; Khosravi et al., 2014). They frequently have novel room features, themed decoration, and a strong emphasis on creating a unique ambience (Buhagiar et al., 2024). Travelers looking for alternatives to standardized accommodations (Aggett, 2007) are drawn to this individualized approach, as well as the convenient locations and excellent services. Boutique hotels are typically understood to be small, fashionable places that prioritize personalized services and creating an intimate ambience. However, a comprehensive definition is still problematic (Jones et al., 2013). By addressing modern travelers' changing needs for distinctive and customized experiences, this sector has shown resiliency and development potential.

Several studies have identified the key aspects of boutique hotels. These include:

- Unique design and ambience
- Personalized service
- Small scale and intimacy
- Focus on guests' memorable experiences
- Impact on satisfaction and comfort
- Authentic local experiences

2.1.1 Unique Design and Ambiance

Boutique hotels are recognized for their unique ambience, unusual design, and excellent services (Tavares & Fraiz Brea, 2018). In order to give visitors unforgettable experiences, these hotels often incorporate historical architectural aspects and local cultural components. Interior design plays an essential role in shaping the unique identity of boutique hotels, some establishments take cues from the surrounding environment (servicescape) and regional traditions (Buhagiar et al., 2024). The idea of boutique hotels was born out of the influence of famous designers and reflects 20th century trends in fine art, architecture, and design (Aggett, 2007). Since they emphasize emotional and intellectual elements in their design to enhance the hotel offering, these properties are sometimes seen as conceptual pieces of art. Exclusiveness, distinctive property features, a specific atmosphere, high standards, employee culture, and a unique location and architecture are some of the key criteria that distinguish boutique hotels (Tavares & Fraiz Brea, 2018).

2.1.2 Personalized Service

Boutique hotels are characterized by the delivery of distinctive experiences and individualized service, both of which greatly enhance visitor satisfaction (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). Their relatively small scale and low staff-to-guest ratio allow for greater individualized attention (Lim & Endean, 2009). Loureiro et al. (2020) found out that the personalized hospitality provided by boutique hotels in Lisbon positively influences guests emotional arousal and contributes to a more pleasurable experience. Important aspects of service quality, such as responsiveness, dependability, and empathy, are vital in influencing visitors' perception and raising levels of satisfaction (Crossman, 2024). Recent analyses of guest reviews using natural language processing techniques further highlight the importance of amenities, service quality, and overall stay experience are important determinants of satisfaction (Xiang et al., 2022). Boutique hotel's cozy settings foster personalized interactions and build deep emotional bonds with visitors. Personalized service has been identified as an important feature by McIntosh and Siggs, (2005) among the five experiential dimensions that are central to the success of boutique accommodations.

2.1.3 Smaller Scale and Intimacy

The relatively small size of boutique hotels allows for a more intimate and customized experience for visitors (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). These establishments usually provide excellent customer service, with important components including certainty, responsiveness, dependability, empathy, and tangibles that greatly increase client happiness. The relatively small size of boutique hotels affords the optimum conditions in which personalized service may be provided, and it is therefore advised that the number of rooms in each of these hotels be kept to a minimum (Aggett, 2007). Visitors looking for extraordinary experiences place a high value on boutique hotels' distinguishing qualities, which include upscale settings, individualized service, and unique design (Tavares & Fraiz Brea, 2018). Five essential experience factors were recognized by McIntosh and Siggs (2005) as being crucial to the success of boutique lodging: distinctive character, individualized service, cozy and ambience quality. Boutique hotels' small spaces enable customized encounters that build deep emotional bonds with visitors and frequently go above and beyond their expectations (Jones et al., 2013). This distinctive strategy differentiates boutique hotels from more conventional accommodation choices due to their popularity in the hospitality sector.

2.1.4 Focus on guests memorable experiences

Boutique hotels provide unique experiences that have a big influence on how satisfied guests are. Personalized services, distinctive design, and cozy settings are important components. (Hussein et al., 2018; Khosravi et al., 2014). Positive guest views are influenced by aspects such as responsiveness, dependability, and empathy, which are crucial components of service quality (Aggett, 2007). According to research, physical attributes that have the most influence on consumer satisfaction include indistinctive architectural features and indistinctive décor (Wang et al., 2019). Other significant elements that draw visitors to boutique hotels include location, cost, and amenities (Khosravi et al., 2014). As per Hussein et al. (2018), boutique hotels' unique features and excellent service not only satisfy but frequently surpass guests' expectations, resulting in greater loyalty and favorable word-of-mouth referrals.

The distinctive elements of boutique hotels have a significant impact on the guest experience. Studies have shown that guests of boutique hotels tend to have a higher level of satisfaction

and loyalty due to the personalized service, distinctive ambiance, and the creation of memorable experiences that promote emotional connections with the property (Tavares & Fraiz Brea, 2018; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005).

According to Kokkhangplu and Auemsuvarn (2024), boutique hotels have become popular in the hospitality sector because they appeal to affluent tourists looking for exceptional experiences. These hotels prioritize giving guests outstanding experiences through comfortable accommodations, unique interior design, and superior merchandise. Positive, memorable encounters are influenced mainly by the travel experience, hotel space management, and the perceived friendliness and professionalism of the staff (Loureiro et al., 2020).

2.1.5 Impact on satisfaction and comfort

Personalized service increases visitor pleasure and fosters a feeling of worth. Boutique hotels embrace co-creation and provide distinctive, customized experiences that significantly influence patron happiness. High-quality service, individualized attention and unique surroundings are crucial elements affecting guest satisfaction (Yu et al., 2024). Unique character, personalization, homeliness, quality, and value-added amenities are characteristic of boutique lodging's experiential nature (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). To influence guest assessments and promote loyalty, service quality attributes such as responsiveness, dependability, and empathy are essential (Hussein et al., 2018). The simplicity of the booking service and facilities are stay experiences that determine consumer satisfaction and comfort, according to natural language analysis of customer evaluations. Hospitality, perceived value, and pleasure all affect value co-creation behaviors, such as advocacy, feedback, assistance, and tolerance (Yu et al., 2024)

2.1.6 Authentic local experiences

Boutique hotels are increasingly prioritizing authentic local experiences to meet travelers' demand for meaningful interactions with hosts and engagement with local culture. Research highlights that tourists seek unique accommodations, interactions with hosts, and engagement with local culture as key elements of a fulfilling travel experience (Kokkhangplu &

Auemsuvarn, 2024). To deliver on this expectation, many boutique hotels integrate local art, design, and cultural events into their offerings, allowing guests to connect deeply with the destination. Local food plays a significant role in sustainable tourism by appealing to visitor's desire for authenticity, symbolizing the place and culture of the destination (Wang et al., 2019).

Boutique heritage hotels, in particular, differentiate themselves through escapism, perceived quality, and authenticity (Kabra & Singh, 2023). Research has indicated that perceived quality, authenticity, and escapism are important criteria that distinguish boutique historic hotels from historic non-boutique ones (Sánchez-Aguirre & Martínez 2024). These original experiences, such as collaborations with regional craftspeople, cultural gatherings, and culinary specialties, help hotels stand out from the competition and offer exceptional, unforgettable stays that immerse visitors in the local way of life.

2.2 Boutique Hotels and Tourism Sustainability

The concept of sustainable tourism has evolved over time and has varying meanings. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines it as “Sustainable tourism development, full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, taking into account visitors’ needs, the industry, the environment, and the host communities” on their website (www.unwto.org). This means sustainable tourism considers the bigger picture, for example, the economy, society, and environment now and in the years to come.

Butler (1999) suggests that sustainable tourism must satisfy tourists and destinations today and maintain and improve things for the future. One of the main goals of sustainable tourism proposed by Butler (1999) is to reduce negative impacts on the natural environment and minimize natural resource consumption.

Essentially, sustainable tourism is about making sure that tourism activities are sustainable in the long run. This approach aims for tourism development to bring positive experiences to residents, tourism establishments, and tourists. This involves taking three related aspects into account: the environment, society & culture, and the economy (Creaco & Querini, 2003).

Sustainability and customer preferences in the hospitality sector have been the subject of recent research, with special emphasis on boutique hotels. Hotel and business models are progressively integrating sustainable practices, according to research, with environmental regulations and training having a favorable effect on financial performance and resource conservation (Sakshi et al., 2020). According to Fuentes-Moraleda et al. (2019), consumers are prepared to pay extra for boutique hotels that have environmental management systems, depending on their age, income, and level of environmental commitment. Customers' perceptions of the company and their intent to promote it to others are positively impacted by the sustainable servicescape, which consists of both substantive and communicative components (Khalil-ur-Rehman et al., 2021). Special services, room amenities, convenience, and hotel architecture are some of the factors that draw tourists to boutique hotels (Khosravi et al., 2014). In order to fulfil changing customer tastes and sustainability expectations in the boutique hotel industry, hotel owners and marketers may benefit greatly from these findings.

In terms of cultural preservation, boutique hotels are important. To preserve cultural heritage, these hotels might include local and traditional architectural features (Xiang et al., 2022). Good marketing techniques, such as codesign and storytelling, may increase consumer value and support the expansion of cultural heritage tourism (Khalil-ur-Rehman et al., 2021). Boutique hotels must integrate local cultural features to attract visitors. The Treehouse Suites in Pati, for example, use traditional Pati decor and coastline design to create a distinctive back-to-nature idea (Adyssa & Atridia, 2022). These strategies support the hotel industry's economic expansion by providing guests with individualized experiences in addition to protecting cultural heritage (Ng et al., 2021).

In order to draw eco-aware guests and reap financial rewards, boutique hotels are progressively implementing equipment procedures. These methods include trash reduction, water conservation, and the use of energy-efficient devices (Kleinrichert et al., 2012). To lessen their influence on the environment, many hotels employ renewable energy sources, establish specialized green teams, and implement green certification programs.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

This study employs a systematic literature review. Systematic literature reviews are rigorous, transparent approaches to synthesizing the current body of evidence on a subject with minimal bias and increased reliability (García-Peñalvo, 2022; Riesenber & Justice, 2014). A systematic literature review includes clear steps: defining research questions and eligibility criteria, systematic searching of literature, data extraction, as well as evidence synthesis (Brignardello-Petersen et al., 2024; Crowther & Lim, 2010).

PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) is a set of evidence-based guidelines designed to assist scientific researchers in reporting meta-analyses and systematic reviews. The PRISMA statement, initially developed in 2009 for systematic reviews and meta-analysis, was significantly revised in 2020 to reflect advancements in review practice and terminology (Page et al., 2021; Page et al., 2020). This updated PRISMA 2020 guideline aims to improve reporting transparency and enhance decision-making (Tetzlaff et al., 2021). It emphasizes three key stages: identification, screening and inclusion (Page et al., 2021).

The study aims to understand how distinctive characteristics of boutique hotels impact guest experiences and elements related to tourism sustainability using this methodology.

Following the main research objective, this research goals to answer three research questions:

R1. What are the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels?

R2. How do the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels impact the guest experience?

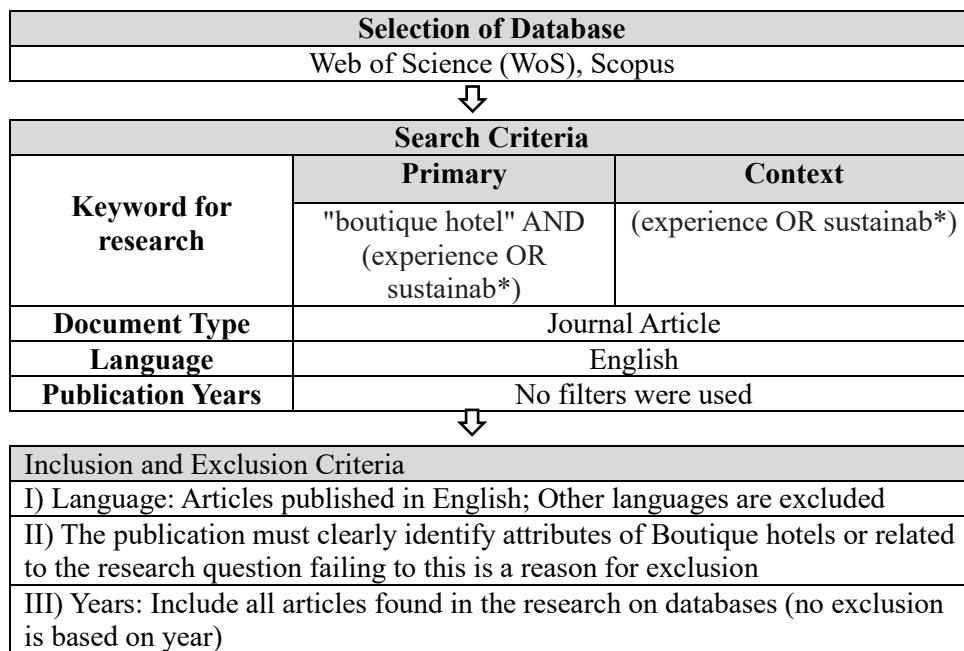
R3. How do the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels impact aspects related to tourism sustainability?

3.1 Selection of database, inclusion and exclusion criteria

The first phase of the PRISMA approach is identification: what, how and where to locate are the three primary components of the identification stage. Most of the researchers prefer using Web of Science and Scopus databases due to the broad coverage provided by these databases

across scientific disciplines (Abas et al., 2023). In the identification process of PRISMA, establishing search queries, finding related studies and extraction of data occurs. As shown in Figure 3.1, this search protocol was arranged with the research objective and questions in mind; the latter served as the foundation for the identification (Rehman et al., 2020) . The Scopus and Web of Science databases were searched in February 2025.

Figure 3.1- Procedures used to carry out the SLR



Source: Own elaboration

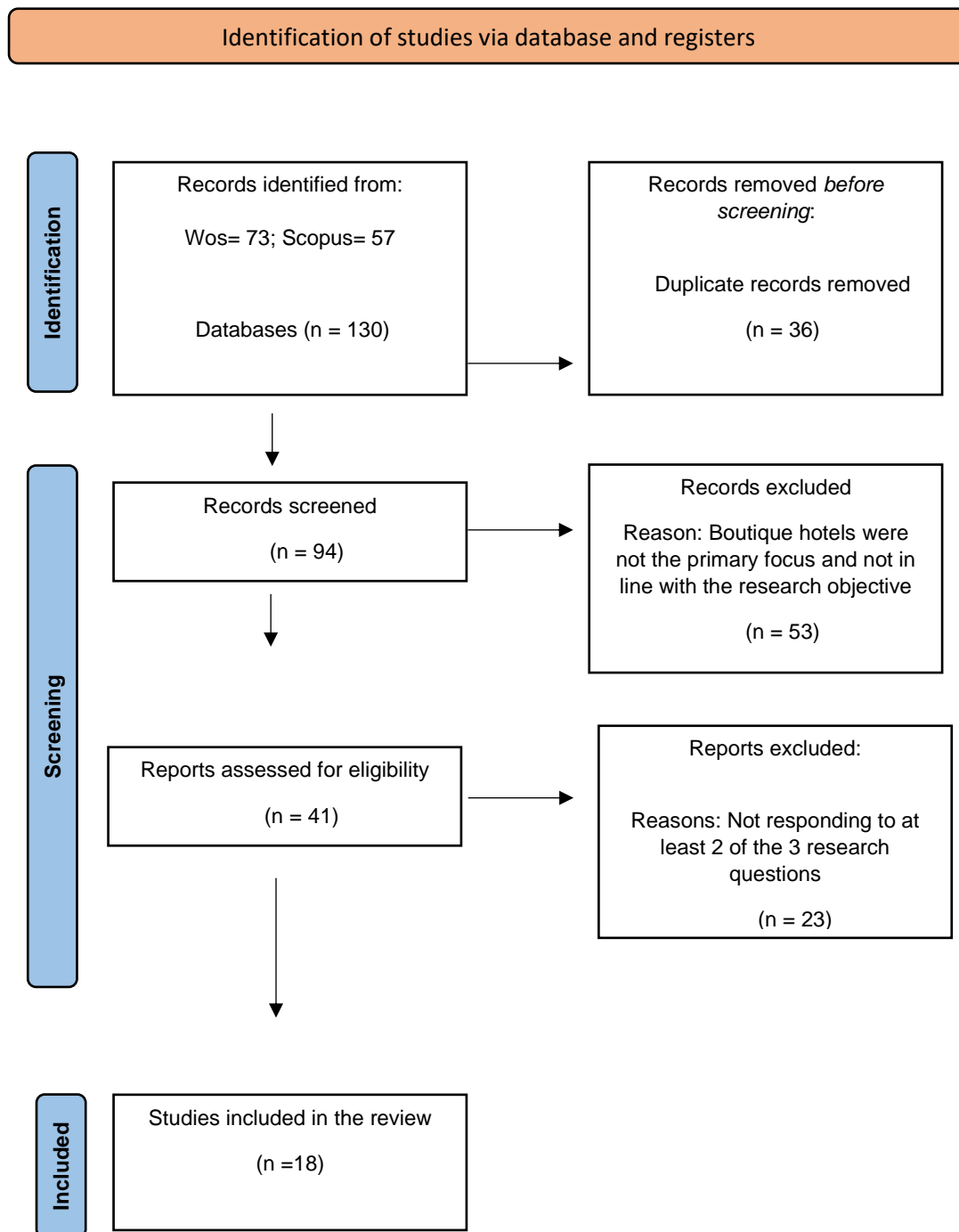
This review was narrowed down to journal articles as the document type to ensure the quality of the selected documents. The use of peer-reviewed journal articles is an approach that helps to guarantee the quality of results (Scott et al., 2019). All published articles were considered at the first stages as there was no year of publication criteria used. A total of 130 articles (WOS=73; Scopus=57) were found in the databases. A total of 36 items that were duplicated, were eliminated before the screening phase. After restricting the duplicate numbers of paper was 94.

At the second step of the screening procedure, articles were exported to an Excel file, creating a single database. Several procedures were used to clean the data to guarantee that every manuscript that was part of this evaluation addressed the research questions under analysis. It

started by reading each article's abstract. This made it easier to assess if boutique hotels were the paper's primary emphasis. To ascertain relevance, the screening began with a preliminary examination of abstracts and titles. In so doing, 41 of the 94 papers were left for full text and retrieval. Therefore, after a thorough abstract evaluation, 53 articles were eliminated for not being in line with the study objective and related to the research. A full-text analysis was performed on articles that were judged possibly eligible based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

In order to further restrict the search results, only papers that address two or more study questions were kept for additional analysis in the 3rd and final step, known as the inclusion stage. The literature review analysis concluded with a thematic analysis of the selected 18 journal articles, by identifying the main themes that helped to answer the three research questions (Buhagiar et al., 2024). The final dataset can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 3.2 PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews, which included searches of databases and registers only



Source: Own Elaboration.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a descriptive analysis based on data extracted from the Web of Science and Scopus websites as detailed in the Methodology chapter. In this section, we will take a closer look at the 18 studies included in the systematic literature review. Additionally, the attributes of the included studies are examined, and a thematic analysis is provided. Essentially, the main aim is to provide a clear picture of the findings related to the research objective, considering the three research questions indicated in the Introduction.

Table 4.1 presents the 18 articles contained in the results section.

Table 4.1 – Selection of articles for database

Journal article	Authors	Year
An exploration of the experiential nature of Boutique accommodation	Mcintosh and Siggs	2005
What has influenced growth in the UK's boutique hotel sector	Aggett	2007
Elucidating the aesthetic and operational characteristics of UK boutique hotels	Lim and Endean	2009
Emerging Definitions of Boutique and Lifestyle Hotels: A Delphi Study	Jones, Day and Quadri-Felitti, D.	2013
The investigation of consumer motivations to patronize boutique hotels using push-pull theory: a case study in Xiamen, China	Wang, Luo and Tang	2015
Experience quality and hotel boutique customer loyalty: Mediating role of hotel image and perceived value	Hussein, Hapsari and Yulianti	2018
Confirmatory analysis of the preference in Boutique Hotels in the city of Oporto, Portugal	Tavares and Brea	2018
Willingness to Pay More to Stay at a Boutique Hotel with an Environmental Management System. A Preliminary Study in Spain	Fuentes-Moraleda, Lafuente-Ibáñez, Muñoz-Mazón and Villacé-Molinero	2019
Perceived image study with online data from social media: the case of boutique hotels in China	Wang Ying Lyu and Qi	2019

What is the core essence of small city boutique hotels?	Loureiro Rita and Sarmento	2020
Impact of substantive staging and communicative staging of sustainable servicecape on behavioural intentions of hotel customers through overall perceived image: A case of boutique hotels	Khalil-ur-Rehman, Adnan, Ahmad, Scholz, Khaliq, Naveed and Han	2021
How to create interactive rituals: Key factors and strategic configurations for host-guest interaction in boutique hotels	Xiang, Zhang and Qiao	2022
Competitive advantage in boutique hotels. The case of Queretaro, Mexico	Aguirre	2023
Envisaging creative tourism through boutique hotels: an integrated framework of transformative experience	Kabra and Singh	2023
Examining customer value co-creation behavior in boutique hotels: hospitableness, perceived value, satisfaction, and citizenship behavior	Yu Liang and Choi	2024
Defining attributes of boutique hotels: a systematic literature review	Buhagiar Pace and Dingli	2024
Understanding customer experiences insights in boutique hotels: a case study from Thailand	Kokkhangplu and Auemsuvarn	2024
Tourists Perceptions of Cultural Experiences in Heritage Hotels in Queretaro City	Sanchez-Aguirre and Martínez	2024

Source: Own elaboration

According to the database that was created through the selected criteria indicated in the Methodology section, the literature on boutique hotels began to take shape in 2005 after the publication of McIntosh and Siggs’s article titled “An exploration of the experimental nature of Boutique accommodation”. It can be observed that there were one to three articles published annually about boutique hotels between 2005 and 2024, considering the specific keyword string that was considered relevant and related to guest experiences and sustainability. According to Table 4.1, no scientific articles that specially addressed our research objective/questions were published in 2006, 2008, 2010-2012, 2014, 2016, and 2017.

When looking at how these studies were designed, we found a mix of approaches. Nine studies used numbers and statistics (quantitative methods), four explored experiences and perspectives through interviews and descriptions (qualitative methods) and four combined both, the remaining is a systematic literature review.

Research has spanned across the globe: eight studies in Asia, five in Europe, one in Oceania, and two in North America. The other two studies did not specify a country as a focus.

Table 4.2 shows that each study had a particular focus on boutique hotels. Various facets of boutique hotels were also examined, but most of the studies focused on characteristics of boutique hotels and provided a broad picture of the topic.

Table 4.2- Study design, geographic and research focus

Authors	Study Design	Geographic Focus	Primary Research Focus
Mcintosh and Siggs	Qualitative study (in-depth interviews)	New Zealand	Experiential dimensions
Aggett	Quantitative survey	United Kingdom (UK)	Factors influencing growth and consumer attraction
Lim and Endean	Qualitative study	United Kingdom (UK)	Aesthetic and operational characteristics of boutique hotels
Jones, Day and Quadri-Felitti	Mixed methods (qualitative inquiry and quantitative assessment)	N/A	Definitions of "boutique hotel" and "lifestyle hotel"
Wang, Luo and Tang	Quantitative survey	China	Motivations that drive consumers to patronize boutique
Hussein, Hapsari, and Yulianti	Quantitative survey	Indonesia	Examines the relationships between experience quality,

			hotel image, perceived value, and customer loyalty
Tavares and Brea	Mixed qualitative and quantitative research methods	Portugal	Factor of guest's preferences on boutique hotel
Fuentes-Moraleda, Lafuente-Ibáñez, Muñoz-Mazón and Villacé-Molinero	Quantitative study (Cross-sectional)	Spain	Willingness to pay for environmental management systems
Wang, Ying, and Qi	Quantitative study using web scraping and sentiment analysis	China	Perceived image dimensions (features)
Loureiro, Rita, and Sarmento	Mixed methods (qualitative inquiry and quantitative assessment)	Portugal	Core essence of small city boutique hotels
Khalil-ur-Rehman, Adnan, Ahmad, Scholz, Khaliq and Naveed and Han	Quantitative study (Cross-sectional)	Pakistan	Sustainable servicescape and behavioral intentions
Xiang, Zhang and Qiao	Qualitative	China	Key factors and strategic configurations for creating successful host-guest interactions
Aguirre	Qualitative study (in-depth interviews)	Mexico	Comparative advantages
Kabra and Singh	Quantitative study	India	Creative tourism and value co-creation
Yu, Liang and Choi	Quantitative study	China	perceived value and customer satisfaction
Buhagiar, Pace and Dingli	Systematic literature review	N/A	Core attributes of boutique hotels

Kokkhangplu and Auemsuvarn	Quantitative survey	Thailand	Memorable experiences and customer loyalty
Sánchez-Aguirre and Martínez	Mixed methods (content analysis and text mining)	Mexico	Cultural tourism experiences

Source: Own elaboration

4.1 Thematic analysis

According to the studies reviewed (Table 4.3), boutique hotels are often identified by unique and innovative design features that show reference to local history and culture. One of the eight essential components of boutique hotel appearance, according to Wang et al. (2019), is “uniqueness” as defined by Loureiro et al. (2020) “Style” is a fundamental component that includes distinctive interior architecture and non-standard furnishings. “Unique character” was emphasized by McIntosh and Siggs (2005) as a crucial experience component.

In multiple studies, personalized service was identified as a key factor. For example, one of the top five characteristics drawing guests to boutique hotels, according to Aggett (2007), is the personalized level of service. McIntosh and Siggs (2005) also recognized personalized service as a crucial experience feature. The importance of service was constantly emphasized. Wang et al. (2019) included “service” as one of the eight aspects of boutique hotel image.

Authenticity and cultural integration have been characteristics that make boutique hotels different. According to Sánchez-Aguirre and Martínez (2024), “authenticity” is a crucial quality that sets boutique heritage hotels apart. Interactive authenticity and “emotional authenticity” were significant indicators of value co-creation and creative experiences by Kabra and Singh (2023). Based on Loureiro et al. (2020), boutique hotels frequently use local customs and history to create an individual environment that attracts travellers. This demonstrates how cultural integration affects the whole guest experience.

Prime location has been found as a defining characteristics of boutique hotels, with a strong emphasis on accessibility and experiential value. Most boutique hotels are ideally situated in urban areas or city centre to offer easy access to shopping malls, public transportation, and cultural landmarks; some, on the other hand, are situated in suburban, rural or world heritage

sites and offer unique, immersive experience (Buhagiar et al., 2024; Xiang et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2019; Lim and Endean, 2009; Aggett, 2007).

Smaller size is another fundamental aspect of boutique hotels that significantly improves the guest experience (Lim and Endean, 2009). With a limited number of rooms, these hotels are able to provide a more personalized and intimate level of service, an impression of exclusivity, and careful attention to detail (Jones et al., 2013).

Additionally, sustainability has emerged as a key feature of boutique hotels, reflecting the increased awareness of environmental issues among hotel owners and guests. In order to meet global sustainability trends and customer demand, boutique hotels are becoming more environmentally friendly, as highlighted in the reviewed literature (Khalil-ur-Rehman et al., 2021; Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019). Tourists have admitted that they are willing to pay extra for accommodations that prioritize environmental responsibility (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019).

Quality and value have been described as essential factors that impact the image and appeal of boutique hotels. A high quality is closely tied to the physical environment, room features and meaningful communication between staff and guests, all of which contribute to the overall perception of value (Wang et al., 2019; Hussein et al., 2018; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005). Guests find well-designed rooms and accessible facilities synonymous with increased value of money, hence guaranteeing customer loyalty and further boosting the reputation of the boutique hotel (Yu et al., 2024; Tavares and Fraiz Brea, 2018).

Following analysis of the database (Table 4.3), the following key characteristics of boutique hotels stand out: their unique design and atmosphere, attentive service, cultural authenticity, prime location, smaller scale, commitment to sustainable practices, well-appointed room features and facilities, as well as a strong emphasis on quality and value.

Table 4.3- Guest Experience Impacts

Distinctive Element	Experience Impact	Supportive Evidence
Unique design and Novel atmosphere	Enhance emotional response, sense of escapism	Buhagiar et al., 2024; Kokkhangplu and Auemsuvarn 2024; Sanchez-Aguirre and Martinez, 2024; Loureiro et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2015; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005;
Smaller in Size	Fosters a cozy sense of belonging	Jones et al., 2013; Lim and Endean, 2009; Aggett, 2007
Personalized service	Increased satisfaction, feeling of being valued	Buhagiar et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2024; Aguirre, 2023; Wang et al., 2015; Lim and Endean, 2009; Aggett, 2007; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005
Prime location	Convenience and enhanced local experience	Buhagiar et al., 2024; Xiang et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2019; Lim and Endean, 2009; Aggett, 2007
Cultural authenticity	Acquire cultural insights and experience a sense of satisfaction	Sanchez-Aguirre and Martinez, 2024; Buhagiar et al., 2024; Kabra and Singh, 2023; Xiang et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2013
Sustainable practices	Positive perception, willingness to pay premium price	Khalil-ur-Rehman et al., 2021; Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019
Quality and Value	Enhance overall satisfaction	Yu et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2019; Hussein et al., 2018; Tavarise and Fraiz Brea, 2018; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005
Room features and Facilities	Physical comfort and satisfaction	Wang et al., 2019

Source: Own elaboration

The present review revealed that these distinctive aspects of boutique hotels have a major impact on the guest experience, and satisfaction was the most frequently cited outcome. More than just contentment, guests reported a range of deep experiences, from emotional reactions and escapism to feeling valued and even experiencing life-changing journeys. Visitors also remarked on the hotel's ability to establish a sense of belonging to the place, develop favourable attitudes and justify a premium willingness to pay more. Further, the features contributed to memorable and unique experiences, enhanced convenience, improved the local experience, provided physical comfort, influenced perceptions of quality, improved willingness to return, and finally made the experience overall better.

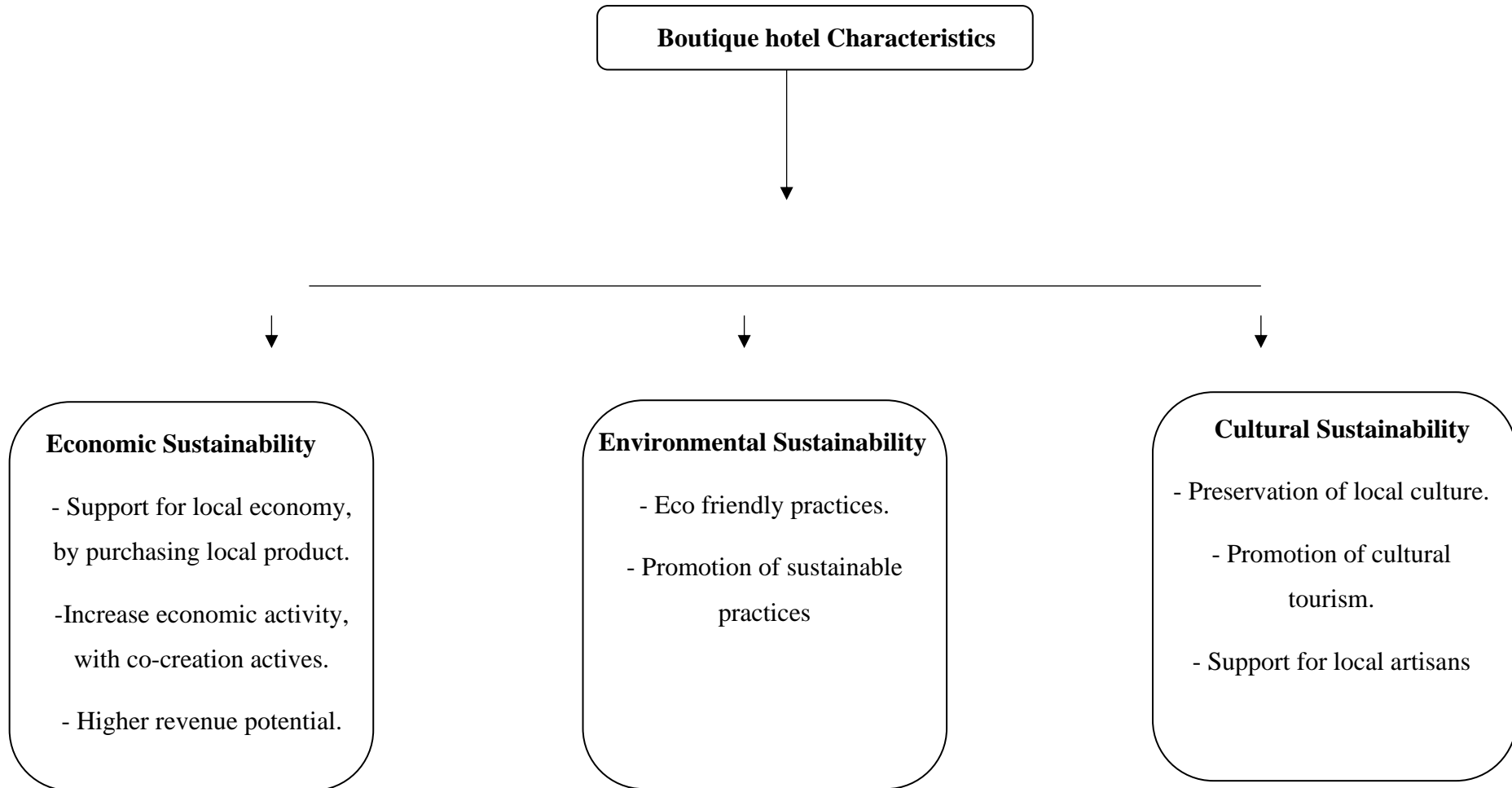
Regarding the sustainability implications of boutique hotels, culture preservation, economic sustainability, and environmental aspects are highlighted (Figure 4.1). Within the field of cultural heritage, Sánchez-Aguirre and Martínez (2024) stress the contribution of boutique heritage hotels to safeguarding and respecting local culture in terms of authenticity. Likewise, Kabra and Singh (2023) suggest that creative tourism experiences created by boutique hotels emotionally engage guests and empower local craftspeople. These practices not only contribute to the sustainability of cultural heritage but also enrich the guest experience.

Economic sustainability of boutique hotels is supported by activities that increase profitability, boost local economies, and enable long-term value development. Fuentes-Moraleda et al. (2019) reported that clients are willing to pay extra to assist sustainable practices, and green design has a positive influence on guest loyalty, Khalil-ur-Rehman et al. (2021), resulting in repeat visits, increased income and financial sustainability. Although Wang et al. (2019) don't specifically address economic sustainability, their study highlights how "uniqueness" and "value" influence guest perceptions- attributes that typically result from localized and co-created experience. Local products and cultural elements are frequently involved in unique offerings, which indirectly benefit local economies. Activities that engage guests with the local community can also improve value perception. Additionally, host-guest rituals increase engagement, offer value and encourage return visits (Xiang et al., 2022).

Sustainability in the environment is addressed through eco-friendly practices that influence guest behaviour and brand reputation. Fuentes-Moraleda et al. (2019) found that visitors showed remarkable commitment to the environment, especially in areas related to saving energy, water and waste management. Sustainable servicescapes, like nature-based design

components, promote behavioural intentions and satisfaction (Khalil-ur-Rehman et al., 2021).
Adoption of environment-friendly practices shows the shift towards greener hospitality.

Figure 4.1 Boutique Hotel Impact on Sustainability



Source: Own elaboration

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the conclusion of the main topics of this dissertation, together with the limitations and suggestions for future research. The purpose of this dissertation was to understand how distinctive characteristics of boutique hotels impact guest experiences and elements related to tourism sustainability. Following the main research objective, this research aimed to answer three research questions:

R1. What are the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels?

R2. How do the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels impact the guest experience?

R3. How do the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels impact aspects related to tourism sustainability?

5.1 Main findings of the study

This systematic review studied published journal articles to provide an overall understanding of boutique hotels' involvement in the tourism sector. The key attributes of boutique hotels, their impact on customer experiences, and their role in sustainable tourism are covered in this dissertation. To make the most adequate decisions and investments, hotel owners, managers, and decision-makers should be knowledgeable about these areas.

A systematic review of the literature was used to assess earlier studies. This made it easier to gather and examine journal articles using a search protocol in scientific databases such as Web of Science and Scopus. After compiling the retrieved data, articles were screened and organized according to defined inclusion criteria, which prioritized English-language journal articles. It was noticed that boutique hotels gained popularity in recent years, making the research topic more relevant.

The major findings were able to address the main objective of this research and respond to the initially defined research questions, which are presented below.

Considering “**R1. What are the main distinctive elements that characteristic of boutique hotels?**”, the review acknowledges that boutique hotels are characterized by a group of distinct features. These are their own unique design and character, usually involving local culture and history (Loureiro et al., 2020; Tavares & Fraiz Brea, 2018), smaller in size, personalized service, emphasizing customized attention and close guest-staff interaction (Aggett, 2007; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005) and care about providing local experiences, putting visitors at the center of the authenticity of the destination (Sánchez-Aguirre & Martínez, 2024; Kabra & Singh, 2023). Additionally, boutique hotels are often recognized for their commitment to sustainable practices, delivering high quality and value, and providing thoughtfully curated room features and facilities that enhance the overall guest experience (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019).

In response to “**R2. How the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels impact the guest experience?**”, this review illustrates how much these elements contribute to the guest experience. High-end design and atmosphere play their role in providing effective and memorable stays (Aguirre, 2023; Loureiro et al., 2020) and customize service increases guest satisfaction and makes guests feel cared (Aggett, 2007; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). The emphasis on local experiences provides the tourists with more exposure to the place, enhancing their overall experience while travelling (Kabra and Singh, 2023). Moreover, a prime location offers convenience and greater accessibility (Buhagiar et al., 2024; Lim and Endean, 2009), and a smaller size of property creates a cozy, intimate sense of home (Aggett, 2007; Jones et al., 2013). Sustainability commitment not just improves perception of the hotel among guest but also their willingness to pay a premium (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019). Further, delivering high quality and value increases guest satisfaction, whereas well-appointed room features and facilities contribute physical comfort and positive guest experiences (Wang et al., 2019; Tavares & Fraiz Brea, 2018).

Regarding “**R3. How the main distinctive elements that characterize boutique hotels impact aspects related to tourism sustainability?**”, the literature addresses the contribution of boutique hotels towards tourism sustainability. This is demonstrated by their support of the local economy, usually through the use of local products and co-creation. Their focus on sustainability increases guest loyalty and profitability as guests are prepared to spend more for eco-friendly operations (Khalil-ur-Rehman et al., 2021; Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019). They help preserve and promote local heritage through authentic design and experiences, engaging guests with local culture and empowering artisans (Sánchez-Aguirre & Martínez, 2024; Kabra

and Singh, 2023). Environmentally, green activities such as energy, water and waste management influence guest behaviour, promoting more sustainable travel (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019).

Finally, this research indicates that boutique hotels are an effective model in the tourism sector to that extent as they work to successfully pair the provision of enhanced guest satisfaction with an emphasis on sustainable tourism's values.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although this study offers valuable information regarding the contributions of boutique hotels, no research is ever ideal and has limitations. This research uses a systematic literature review approach, and the selected inclusion criteria resulted in a small number of articles to analysed. A large sample of articles, opening the criteria for selecting documents, could allow the use of network and cluster analysis, which was missing in this research. Nevertheless, we considered the selected articles were sufficient to offer a reflection on the research questions, based on previous systematic reviews with a small sample of articles (Scott et al., 2019).

The inclusion criteria of the review considered only English-language publications may have omitted other relevant research publications in other languages, and this may have limited the scope of the findings. The search for data was also limited to Web of Science and Scopus, but the PRISMA statement also suggests including data from other sources. Future research can address these limitations and further expand our understanding of boutique hotels through more advanced analyses, including network analysis.

Furthermore, future research can continue to investigate the long-term economic, social, and environmental impacts of boutique hotels on local communities, providing valuable insights into sustainable tourism development. The growing role of technology in gathering memorable experiences for guests calls for more research on the topic (Xie et al., 2016). Finally, an examination of the contribution of cultural context to the experience and perception of authenticity in boutique hotels would enlighten a more complex understanding of this developing industry (Kabra & Singh, 2023).

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APPENDIX 1 – Complete table of database

Publication Title	Author/s	Year of publication	Journal
An exploration of the experiential nature of Boutique accommodation	Mcintosh, A. J., and Siggs, A.	2005	<i>Journal of Travel Research</i>
What has influenced growth in the UK's boutique hotel sector	Aggett, M.	2007	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>
Elucidating the aesthetic and operational characteristics of UK boutique hotels	Lim, W. M., and Endean, M.	2009	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>
Emerging Definitions of Boutique and Lifestyle Hotels: A Delphi Study	Jones, D. L., Day, J., and Quadri-Felitti, D.	2013	<i>Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing</i>
The investigation of consumer motivations to patronize boutique hotels using push-pull theory: a case study in Xiamen, China	Wang, T., Luo, Y., and Tang, L. R.	2015	<i>International Journal of Tourism Cities</i>
Experience quality and hotel boutique customer loyalty: Mediating role of hotel image and perceived value	Hussein, A. S., Hapsari, R. D. V., and Yulianti, I.	2018	<i>Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism</i>
Confirmatory analysis of the preference in Boutique Hotels in the city of Oporto, Portugal	Tavares, F. O., and Brea, J. A. F.	2018	<i>African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure</i>
Willingness to Pay More to Stay at a Boutique Hotel with an Environmental Management System. A Preliminary Study in Spain	Fuentes-Moraleda, L., Lafuente-Ibáñez, C., Muñoz-Mazón, A., and Villacé-Molinero, T.	2019	<i>Sustainability (Switzerland)</i>
Perceived image study with online data from social media: the case of boutique hotels in China	Wang, W., Ying, S., Lyu, J., and Qi, X.	2019	<i>Industrial Management and Data Systems</i>

What is the core essence of small city boutique hotels?	Loureiro, S. M. C., Rita, P., and Sarmiento, E. M.	2020	<i>International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research</i>
Impact of substantive staging and communicative staging of sustainable servicecape on behavioural intentions of hotel customers through overall perceived image: A case of boutique hotels	Khalil-ur-Rehman, Adnan M., Ahmad N., Scholz M., Khalique M., Naveed R.T., Han H.	2021	<i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>
How to create interactive rituals: Key factors and strategic configurations for host-guest interaction in boutique hotels	Xiang, K., Zhang, H., and Qiao, G.	2022	<i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management</i>
Competitive advantage in boutique hotels. The case of Queretaro, Mexico	Aguirre, D. P. S.	2023	<i>PASOS Tourism and Cultural Heritage Magazine</i>
Envisaging creative tourism through boutique hotels: an integrated framework of transformative experience	Kabra, S., and Singh, P.	2023	<i>Tourism Recreation Research</i>
Examining customer value co-creation behavior in boutique hotels: hospitableness, perceived value, satisfaction, and citizenship behavior	Yu, C., Liang, L. J., and Choi, H. C.	2024	<i>Tourism Analysis</i>
Defining attributes of boutique hotels: a systematic literature review	Buhagiar, K., Pace, L. A., and Dingli, S. M.	2024	<i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights</i>
Understanding customer experiences insights in boutique hotels: a case study from Thailand	Kokkhangplu, A., and Auemsuvarn, P.	2024	<i>Cogent Business and Management</i>
Tourists Perceptions of Cultural Experiences in Heritage Hotels in Queretaro City	Sanchez-Aguirre, D.P. and Martínez, D.	2024	<i>PASOS Tourism and Cultural Heritage Magazine</i>