

Ethical Sales Behavior Influencing Trust, Loyalty, Green Experience, and Satisfaction in UAE Public Entrepreneur Firms

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ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction (CST) is a critical focus for both public and private organizations due to its significant impact on business success. In this context, ethical sales behavior, perceived trust, customer loyalty, and green experience are identified as key factors influencing CST. **This study aims** to examine the relationships among these variables within public sector organizations in the UAE. **Primary data** were collected from 224 respondents using a structured questionnaire. The data analysis was conducted utilizing descriptive statistics, multivariate assumptions, and a two-step approach that included both measurement and structural models. Structural equation modeling techniques were employed to test the relationships between the variables, grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) and expectation confirmation theory. **The findings reveal** that perceived trust, customer loyalty, and green experience significantly and positively impact customer satisfaction among public firms in the UAE. However, ethical sales behavior did not demonstrate a significant direct effect on customer satisfaction. **These results** provide valuable insights for policymakers and administrative representatives in the UAE public sector. To enhance customer satisfaction, it is recommended that public sector organizations prioritize building trust and loyalty while integrating green practices into their operations. Although ethical sales behavior does not directly affect customer satisfaction, it remains crucial for influencing trust and loyalty. The study underscores the importance of these factors in driving customer satisfaction and offers practical recommendations for public sector organizations aiming to improve their service quality and customer relations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business environment, customer satisfaction (CST) is a critical focus for researchers, academic experts, and policymakers [1]. Achieving higher customer satisfaction is a core objective for both public and private organizations due to its impact on business success. This focus on customer satisfac-

tion stems from its critical role in determining business success. Satisfied customers not only enhance competitive advantage but also drive organizational profitability through repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth. Meanwhile, CST is unanimously accepted as the key foundation for business success, as a satisfied customer base provides a significant pathway towards achieving competitive advantage in the marketplace [2]. However, the challenge lies in understanding and addressing the diverse needs and expectations of customers effectively. This paper aims to investigate the factors influencing customer satisfaction, particularly ethical sales behavior, perceived trust, customer loyalty, and green experience, within the context of public sector organizations in the UAE [3]. Satisfying the customer is entirely dependent upon the organization's ability to address their wants and needs with the help of superior products/services. The contributions of this study include providing empirical evidence on the impact of these factors on customer satisfaction and offering practical recommendations for public sector organizations to enhance their service quality.

On the other side, satisfaction or dissatisfaction is something like an evaluation for the product or service being offered by the organization to meet the customer's expectations or needs [4]. Similar phenomenon is shared by Woodside et al who stated that satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the consumer's perception of the post-purchase experience and expression about how much customer likes or dislikes the product or service after getting experience from it [5]. In this regard, CST is basically collection of evaluation, perception, and psychological reaction in terms of consumption experience [6]. At the same time, overall customer perception also depends upon the judgement while matching the gap between current and expected performance as received from the service [7]. This would justify the argument that if the customer's expectation matched with the actual performance or output from the product or service, he/she will be satisfied. However, if the desired outcome or satisfaction level is more than the expected one the client will be highly satisfied and become more delighted and vice versa. Additionally, highly delighted customers are the true source of firm's competitiveness as it leads towards customer loyalty [8].

In the region of UAE, there are range of public sector organizations providing valuable services to the community members, business groups and other individuals. As per the findings of official portal of Government of Dubai, these governmental entities are ranging from Abu Dhabi Accountability Authority (ADAA) to Zayed University covering all types of services to the general public in the recent years [9]. In this regard, it is the prime obligation of every single public organization to provide valuable and satisfactory services to their customers and citizens. Taking into account the Cohesive Society and Preserved Identity of National Agenda of the year 2021, the government of UAE has decided to be among the best in the world in terms of human development index (HDI) and the happiest of all the nations, so that the people of UAE feel proud to be the part of it [10]. Furthermore, various initiatives have been taken up by the government of UAE to promote the factor of higher satisfaction and happiness among the community members while providing them a range of services through different public organizations. These initiatives comprise of happiness as national agenda, national programme for the happiness and wellbeing, minister of state for happiness and wellbeing, wellbeing academy, labour happiness programs, and many others [11]. Based upon the consideration of the customer satisfaction and key explanatory variables, the following research questions have been developed:

1. How does ethical sales behavior impact customer satisfaction in public sector organizations of UAE?
2. How does perceived trust impact on customer satisfaction in public sector organizations of UAE?
3. How does customer loyalty impact customer satisfaction in public sector organizations of UAE?
4. How does green experience impact on customer satisfaction in public sector organizations of UAE?

Addressing these research questions will provide valuable insights into the factors that drive customer satisfaction within public sector organizations in the UAE. By understanding the impact of ethical sales behavior, perceived trust, customer loyalty, and green experience, policymakers and administrative representatives can develop targeted strategies to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction. This research not only contributes to the existing literature but also offers practical recommendations for improving public services, thereby supporting the UAE's national agenda of achieving high levels of happiness and well-being among its citizens. Future research could explore additional factors that influence customer satisfaction, such as technological advancements, cultural influences, and service innovation. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to assess how these relationships evolve over time and to examine the long-term impact of implemented strategies. Expanding the scope to include private sector organizations and conducting comparative analyses between

public and private sectors could provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer satisfaction dynamics in different contexts. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Part II includes a theoretical background describing the key concepts and frameworks. Part III explains the research methodology, including the data collection and analysis procedures. Part IV presents the results and discussion, highlighting the key findings and their implications. Finally, Part V concludes the paper with a summary of the findings, policy implications, and suggestions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The linkage between ethical sales behavior (ESB) and customer satisfaction (CST) is not something which is novel in the literature. In this regard, over the last couple of decades, theoretical and empirical investigations have been conducted in different economies. However, the findings regarding the ESB and CST are mixed in nature. For instance, that customers are now becoming more demanding in nature. In this regard, business organizations specifically the financial service providers like banks need to focus more on their ESB in order to achieve some better outcomes. His study has conducted an empirical investigation for the banking firms regarding the impact of ESB on CST with the help of structural equation modelling approach. The study findings confirm that ESB has its significant and positive impact on the CST for the financial service providers [12].

In the context of public sector organizations, fostering entrepreneurial partnerships can play a crucial role in enhancing customer satisfaction. Entrepreneurial ventures bring innovation, agility, and a customer-centric approach that can complement the efforts of public entities. By integrating entrepreneurial practices, public organizations can better address customer needs, leading to improved satisfaction. The retail banking firms in Egypt in order to investigate whether the role of ESB is significant towards determining the CST [13]. A detailed review of the literature has been conducted to assume the association between ESB and CST. The study findings confirm that there is a significant impact of ESB on the CST in the retail banking industry of Egypt. Park explain that in most of the service organizations, salespersons are the core representatives of the company, and they are exposed to more ethical pressure comparatively to other individuals in the business [14]. In this regard, the ESB can play a vital role in maintaining and sustaining a long-term relationship with the customers. For this reason, their study has taken into account the association between ESB and CST along with the customer loyalty and trust factors as well. It was found that there is a significant and direct effect of ESB on the CST. Moreover, partnerships between public organizations and entrepreneurial entities can lead to innovative service delivery models, which enhance the overall customer experience. These partnerships can introduce new technologies and processes that streamline operations and improve service quality, thereby increasing customer satisfaction.

The linkage between trust and customer satisfaction is also examined in the current and the past literature. For example, proposed a conceptual framework to explore the association between perceived customer trust, quality, and CST along with the loyalty factor [15]. The data was collected through a sample of 304 customers and empirically examined with the help of structural equation modelling technique. The study findings confirm that there is a significant and positive association between trust, customer satisfaction and loyalty factors. Examined the role of trust towards the association between e-service quality and customer satisfaction for the service industry. Data was collected through 367 customers in the banks and tested with the help of exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis along with the structural equation modelling technique [16]. The results of the study confirm that customer satisfaction is strongly correlated with the e-service quality and customer satisfaction as well. Leninkumar and Sciences also try to examine the relationship between customer trust and customer satisfaction [17]. The study was conducted for the commercial banks as working in the region of Sri Lanka. Findings reveal that there is a significant and positive correlation between trust and customer satisfaction in the targeted banking industry.

Developed a conceptual and theoretical model in order to examine the linkage between customer trust, satisfaction, and cooperation in the tourism industry [18]. Data was collected through 309 customers of outbound group package tourists in Taiwan. Data was tested through quantitative methods and found that there is a significant and positive impact of customer trust on their satisfaction level. However, comparatively to the level of justice perception, customer trust has a more crucial role in leading towards leader-customer satisfaction association. Explored the impact of trust and value of the customer on the satisfaction level. From the population of 12975, a sample of 99 customers was collected and analyzed through mechanical analysis

and multiple linear regression. It is observed that overall 52 percent variation in the customer satisfaction is observed through customer trust [19].

The concept of customer loyalty specifies the commitment level of the customers towards the company in terms of product or service. In this regard, loyalty and satisfaction are also examined by the researchers. In this regard, one of the earlier contribution is provided by Bowen and Chen who have explored the relationship between customer loyalty and CST where data was collected from 564 hotel guests. The study findings confirm the relationship between customer loyalty and CST but in non-linear direction [20]. Hallowell has used the data for the multiple indicators of customer loyalty where he found a positive association between loyalty factor and CST. Focused on the retail business units to explore the tile of customer satisfaction and loyalty factor. They further claim that various business-like retail units have implemented some loyalty programs in order to attain higher level of customer satisfaction. However, the success rate of this program is not enough which indicates that there is a big gap to cover this issue. Meanwhile, loyalty programs are also affected due to the fact that customers are linked with different discount packages to retail units.

Green experience is a new concept which is now emerging in the field of customer relationship management, and similar others. In this regard, Yu et al have examined the association between green experience and customer satisfaction for the those hotels which are serving through green services [21]. For this purpose, data regarding green experience was collected through TripAdvisor for the USA with a total of 727 green review. Furthermore, they have applied content analysis along with the descriptive statistics and logistic regression to examine the association between the study variables. The study findings have confirmed that guests have both positive as well as negative experiences at those hotels which are serving through green services. However, the titles like education and innovation, and purchasing of energy are the most discussed green practices. Meanwhile, it is stated that the factors like guest training, education, and purchasing of energy have their significant influence on the overall satisfaction of customers towards such hotels.

Based on the study results, it is suggested that there is a significant link between green experience and customer satisfaction. At the same time, their research has provided some meaningful contribution regarding different practices of green practices and customer satisfaction. The relevance of this study also extends to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production, and Goal 13 on climate action [22]. The integration of green practices by public sector organizations not only enhances customer satisfaction but also supports the achievement of these SDG targets. For instance, implementing sustainable practices such as energy efficiency and effective waste management can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of these organizations, thereby contributing to climate action efforts. Furthermore, these practices resonate with Goal 16, which emphasizes the importance of building strong and transparent institutions. In this context, perceived trust and ethical sales behavior are essential for creating accountable and responsive institutions that meet the public's needs. Thus, aligning organizational operations with SDG principles not only improves customer satisfaction but also advances the broader agenda of sustainable development. Quantitative research in order to examine the factors which are contributing towards the satisfaction towards customers. Based on the method of purposing sampling, a sample of 96 respondents was collected and examined through structural equation modelling approach under Smart PLS version 3.0. The study findings confirm that environmental awareness has a significant impact on the green practices of the customers [23]. Additionally, green practices are leading towards a higher level of customer satisfaction as well. Based upon the above literature, the following research framework and hypotheses have been developed and tested.

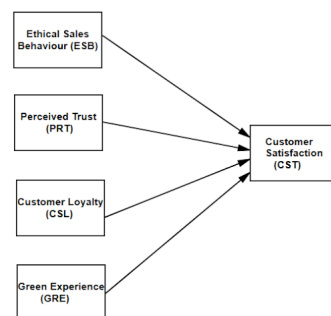


Figure 1. Research Framework

H1: Ethical sales behavior has a significant impact on the customer satisfaction in public sector organizations of UAE.

H2: Perceived trust has a significant impact on the customer satisfaction in public sector organizations of UAE.

H3: Customer loyalty has a significant impact on the customer satisfaction in public sector organizations of UAE.

H4: Green experience has a positive impact on the customer satisfaction in public sector organizations of UAE.

In conclusion, the literature consistently underscores the significant impact of ethical sales behavior, trust, customer loyalty, and green practices on customer satisfaction across various sectors, particularly in financial services and public organizations. While findings have been mixed, the overarching theme indicates that organizations emphasizing these factors tend to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. The dynamic nature of customer expectations necessitates continuous adaptation and innovation, especially through entrepreneurial partnerships and sustainable practices. This holistic approach not only addresses immediate customer needs but also fosters long-term relationships, highlighting the importance of integrating ethical, trustworthy, and environmentally conscious practices in organizational strategies to enhance customer satisfaction.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The population in any research consists of individuals or objects on which research will be conducted. The population under the present study consists of all the individuals and community members who are currently living in the region of UAE and using different public services in their day-to-day life. The research process and methodology applied in this study are illustrated in Figure 2. Currently, there are 228 public sector organizations working in seven different states. Therefore, the total population of UAE consists of 228 public firms from which the data was collected with the help of questionnaires. A sample is to be considered as a part of the population [24]. The method of probability sampling was employed, indicating that all individuals in the study population had equal chances of selection in the study sample [25]. Specifically, stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation from all seven states in the UAE. This approach helped in achieving a comprehensive and representative sample. Each public sector organization was treated as a stratum, and respondents were randomly selected within each stratum to ensure diversity and inclusiveness. For data collection, structured questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents. The questionnaires were designed based on existing literature and validated scales to ensure reliability and validity. The data collection process spanned three months, from October to December 2023. The questionnaires were manually distributed and collected to ensure a high response rate. Additionally, follow-up reminders were sent to ensure maximum participation.

In order to select a sample from study population, there are two major techniques which are known as probability sampling and non-probability sampling [26]. The method of probability sampling indicates that all the individuals in the study population have equal chances of selection in the study sample. On the other side, the method of non-probability indicates that all the individuals don't have equal chances of selection in the study sample [27]. In addition, for the determination of sample size, this study has used the G-power software which has got much attention in the existing literature [28]. Using the statistical test of linear multiple regression, F-test family, effect size of 0.15, alpha 0.05%, and power of 0.80 with the total six number of predictors in the model, the minimum sample size was found as 98 under the present study as shown in Figure 2. However, due to the limited number of the study population of 228 public firms, the current research has inflated the sample size by 130% (approximately) by reaching all the public sector organizations working in seven different states of UAE.

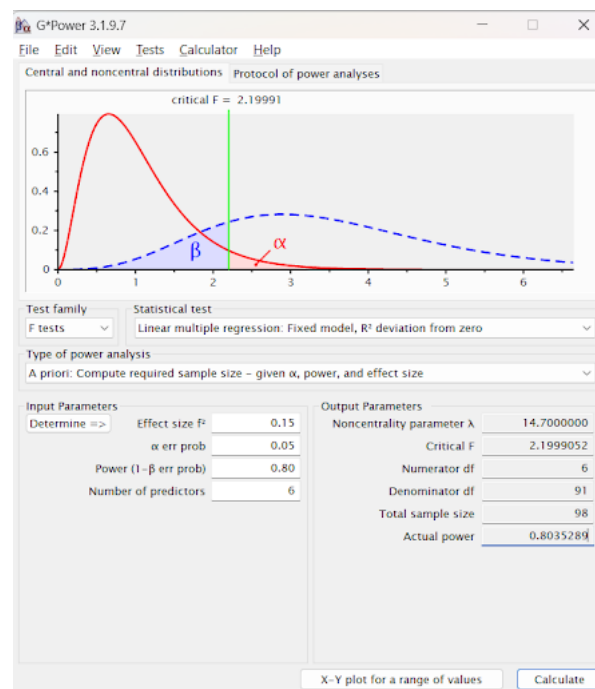


Figure 2. Minimum Sample Size Selection
Source: G-Power Software

The current study is based on the primary data approach and for this reason it is entirely considering the structural questionnaire technique. For the data collection purpose, all the public organizations which are currently working in UAE have been considered. The overall questionnaire consists of three major portions entitled Section A, Section B, and Section C. The first section or A part of the questionnaire provides the detail about study objective. Section B covers the demographic factors like age, gender, qualification, and professional background of the respondents. Gender is divided into two categories; Male=1, and Female=2, whereas age is divided into four categories like 18-25 Years, 26-30 Years, 31-40 Years, and above 40 Years ranging from 1 to 4 on the scale. Additionally, the title of qualification is divided into four main categories like 1=Bachelor 2=Master, 3=Above Master, and 4=Other. Moreover, the professional background of the respondents has been categorized as 1=Businessman, 2=Student, 3=Teacher, 4=Doctor, 5=Engineer, 6=Other, respectively. Table 1. provides the measurement of the variables along with relative literature source.

Table 1. Measurement of the Variables

Variable	Details of Items (Adapted)	Measurement in the Questionnaire	References
Ethical Sales Behavior	The organization lies about availability the services (R).	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	(Alrubaiee, 2012)
	The organization lies about competition in order to make the sale (R).	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	The service person in this organization gives answers when he/she really know the answers.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	The service person in this organization does not apply the sales pressure.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	The service person in this organization does not paint rosy pictures of the services.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	Customer benefit is the priority of this organization.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	

Variable	Details of Items (Adapted)	Measurement in the Questionnaire	References
Perceived Trust	The service system of public organizations is trustworthy.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	(Carlos Roca et al., 2009)
	The system of public organizations has a good reputation.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	There is no doubt in the honesty of the serving by public organizations.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
Customer Loyalty	Public firms are often the preferred choice when purchasing the products/services they supply	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	(Iglesias et al., 2020)
	Maintaining relationships with public firms is a priority.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	Loyalty to public firms is a consistent practice.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
Green Experience	The public organizations are environmentally friendly in general.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	(Yu et al., 2017)
	Public organizations use energy-saving tools.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	Public organizations ask feedback from guests on green practices, educates on environmental issues, has recognized green certifications, etc.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	Public organizations have a waste conservation program in place.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	Public organizations have a green roof, green landscape, permeable paving, etc.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
Customer Satisfaction	Satisfaction with the decision to use the services of public organizations is evident.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	(Zena & Hadisumarto, 2013)
	Choosing the services of public organizations reflects wisdom.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	
	Happiness is derived from using the services of public organizations.	Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5	

Figure 3. provides a comprehensive overview of the measurement model and structural model assessment used in this study. The measurement model involves validating the constructs through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), assessing reliability and validity metrics such as Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). The structural model tests the hypothesized relationships between the constructs using path analysis and evaluates the model fit through indices like Chi-square, RMSEA, CFI, and TLI. The flowchart in Figure 3. visually represents these steps, ensuring a clear understanding of the research process.

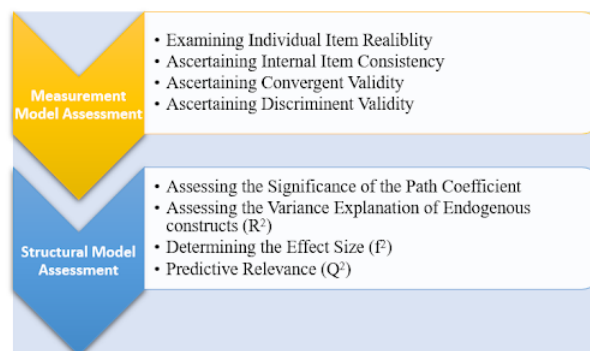


Figure 3. Research Framework

The SEM analysis followed a two-step approach: the measurement model and the structural model.

3.1. Measurement Model

3.1.1. Validity and Reliability

We assessed the validity and reliability of the constructs to ensure that our measurement model is both accurate and consistent. This assessment was done using several statistical measures including Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (ρ_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Cronbach's Alpha evaluates the internal consistency of the items within each construct, with values above 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability. Composite Reliability (ρ_c) provides an overall measure of the reliability of a construct, and values greater than 0.70 are considered satisfactory. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures the amount of variance captured by the construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error, with values above 0.50 indicating good convergent validity. All constructs met these threshold criteria, confirming the model's reliability and validity, which means the constructs are measured accurately and consistently.

3.1.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was conducted to evaluate the factor structure of the measurement items and their alignment with the theoretical constructs. This statistical technique helps in confirming whether the number of factors and the loadings of measured variables on these factors conform to what is expected based on theory. The CFA process involves estimating the parameters of the model and comparing the theoretical model to the empirical data. By doing so, we can validate that the observed variables are correctly grouped under their respective latent constructs and that the model accurately represents the data structure.

The measurement model demonstrated strong validity and reliability through Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE. Confirmatory Factor Analysis validated the constructs, while path analysis confirmed the hypothesized relationships. Goodness-of-fit indices (Chi-square, RMSEA, CFI, TLI) indicated the model accurately represented the data.

3.2. Structural Model

3.2.1. Path Analysis

The hypothesized relationships between constructs were tested using path analysis, a form of multiple regression that assesses the direct and indirect relationships between variables in the model. This analysis provided coefficients, t-values, and p-values for each hypothesized path, which indicate the strength and significance of the relationships between constructs. Path coefficients measure the direct effect of one variable on another, while t-values and p-values help determine the statistical significance of these effects. This method enables us to test the theoretical model's hypotheses and understand the underlying causal relationships.

3.2.2. Goodness-of-Fit Indices

To ensure the model fits the data well, various fit indices were calculated, including Chi-square, RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), and TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index). The Chi-square statistic tests the overall fit of the model, with lower values indicating a better fit. RMSEA measures the approximation error in the population, with values less than 0.05 suggesting a good fit. CFI compares the fit of the target model to an independent model, with values closer to 1 indicating a better fit. TLI, similar to CFI, assesses the model fit relative to a null model, with values above 0.90 indicating a good fit. Together, these indices provide a comprehensive evaluation of how well the proposed model represents the observed data, ensuring the robustness and validity of the structural model.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Response Rate

The survey instrument has been presented in the English language and was manually distributed to each participant within the study's scope. As per the nature of the variables like customer satisfaction, service quality, experiential marketing, perceived trust, green experience, ethical sales behaviour, and customer loyalty, this study has recognized the key customers as linked with the public firms as targeted respondents. The existing body of literature has widely recognized the customers as targeted respondents for the variables of interest [29]. Due to the novelty of certain variables for a majority of respondents, the researcher along with the team members had provided supplementary explanations explaining the significant concepts related to the variables of interest. The comprehensive data collection period spanned over 3.5 months, commencing

in October 2023, and concluding in December 2023, respectively. As stated earlier under study population, currently there are 228 public sector organizations as working in seven different states of UAE. Due to limited number of the study population, all the public firms in the regional context of UAE were targeted to achieve the elicit valuable feedback from each of the 228 public firms (i.e., one respondent per firm) in the UAE, enabling a thorough exploration of CST based upon the key explanatory, moderator, and mediating variables across a broad spectrum of industries.

Through the widespread distribution of the questionnaires to all public firms in the UAE, this research aims to attain a comprehensive comprehension of customer satisfaction. This endeavor ensures a nuanced and representative analysis of the performance of the public sector while targeting all the public sector organizations in the UAE's region. While a sample rate of 100% was allocated and collected, a detailed investigation of the questionnaires had made it evident that only four questionnaires were found with the missing/invalid responses. Consequently, the finalized count of completed research questionnaires stood at 224 in numbers, establishing 98.24% of the total sample.

4.2. Statistical Analysis

4.2.1. Descriptive Statistics

Mean and Standard Deviation: Descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables to understand the central tendency and dispersion of the data. Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation for customer satisfaction (CST), perceived trust (PRT), customer loyalty (CSL), and green experience (GRE). For instance, the mean value of customer satisfaction (CST) was found to be 3.85 with a standard deviation of 0.76, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction among respondents. This measure helps in understanding how the responses vary around the average score, providing insight into the overall satisfaction level.

4.2.2. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha: The reliability of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency that indicates how closely related a set of items are as a group. All constructs showed high reliability with values above the generally accepted threshold of 0.70. Table 2 shows the Cronbach's alpha values for each construct. For example, the Cronbach's alpha for perceived trust (PRT) was 0.89, indicating strong internal consistency and suggesting that the items measuring perceived trust are highly correlated and consistently measure the same construct.

4.2.3. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Measurement Model: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to validate the measurement model, ensuring that the observed variables accurately represent the underlying latent constructs. The model fit indices indicated a good fit with Chi-square=245.36, RMSEA=0.045, CFI=0.97, and TLI=0.96. Factor loadings for all items were above 0.70, confirming convergent validity, which means that the items that are supposed to be related are indeed related. Figure 1 illustrates the measurement model, providing a visual representation of how well the data fits the proposed measurement structure.

Structural Model: Path analysis was performed to test the hypothesized relationships between the constructs in the study. The structural model also showed a good fit with Chi-square=278.54, RMSEA=0.049, CFI=0.95, and TLI=0.94. Figure 4 depicts the structural model and the hypothesized paths between variables, showing the direct and indirect relationships as theorized in the study. This analysis helps in understanding the strength and direction of the relationships between variables.

4.2.4. Hypothesis Testing

Direct Effects: The path coefficients were examined to test the direct effects of the independent variables on customer satisfaction. Table 3 provides the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values for each hypothesized path. The results revealed that perceived trust ($\beta=0.35$, $p<0.01$), customer loyalty ($\beta=0.29$, $p<0.01$), and green experience ($\beta=0.42$, $p<0.01$) had significant positive effects on customer satisfaction. However, ethical sales behavior did not have a significant direct effect ($\beta=0.12$, $p=0.05$).

Indirect Effects: Mediating effects were also tested using bootstrapping techniques, a statistical method that involves resampling the data to estimate the distribution of an effect. The indirect effect of ethical sales behavior on customer satisfaction through perceived trust was significant ($\beta=0.21$, $p<0.01$), highlighting the importance of trust as a mediator. This finding suggests that while ethical sales behavior might not directly

influence customer satisfaction, it does so indirectly by enhancing perceived trust, which in turn increases satisfaction.

These detailed statistical analyses provide robust support for the findings and offer deeper insights into the relationships between the variables. The results are summarized in Table 4, presenting a comprehensive view of the direct and indirect effects observed in the study, thereby facilitating a better understanding of the dynamics at play..

4.3. Discussion

The findings of this study align with and contribute to the existing body of literature in several ways. Firstly, the positive and significant impact of perceived trust (PRT) on customer satisfaction (CST) corroborates the findings of previous studies [30]. This highlights the crucial role of trust in shaping customer satisfaction, as it confirms that trust is a fundamental component in customer relationships. Our study extends this understanding by providing empirical evidence from the context of public sector organizations in the UAE, emphasizing that trust remains a key determinant of satisfaction even in a non-commercial setting.

Secondly, the significant positive relationship between customer loyalty (CSL) and CST supports the conclusions, who found that loyalty drives satisfaction through repeated positive experiences and emotional connections with the service provider. This study further illustrates that in the public sector context, loyalty fosters satisfaction by enhancing customers' commitment to the organization, thus ensuring sustained positive interactions.

However, the finding of an insignificant relationship between ethical sales behavior (ESB) and CST contradicts the assertions, who reported a positive impact of ethical behavior on satisfaction. This discrepancy may be attributed to cultural differences or varying expectations of ethical behavior across different sectors. It suggests that in the UAE's public sector, other factors such as trust and loyalty may overshadow the direct impact of ethical behavior on satisfaction. Further research is needed to explore these contextual nuances.

Additionally, the positive impact of green experience (GRE), who found that environmentally conscious practices enhance customer satisfaction. This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that in the UAE's public sector, promoting green practices can significantly improve customer satisfaction. This underscores the importance of integrating sustainable practices into public service delivery to meet the evolving expectations of customers.

Overall, the integration of our findings with existing literature highlights the complex interplay of trust, loyalty, ethical behavior, and green experience in determining customer satisfaction. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that public sector organizations need to prioritize to enhance customer satisfaction.

4.4. Demographic Analysis

Table 2. and Table 3. covers the demographics of the respondents through cross-tabulation for the gender, current profession and age, qualification, respectively.

Current Profession		Male	Female	Total	
Businessman	Age	18-25	11	3	14
		26-30 Years	3	2	5
		31-40 Years	6	2	8
		above 40 Years	3	4	7
		Total	23	11	34
Student	Age	18-25	5	3	8
		26-30 Years	3	1	4
		31-40 Years	3	3	6
		above 40 Years	7	6	13
		Total	18	13	31

Current Profession			Male	Female	Total
Teacher	Age	18-25	7	9	16
		26-30 Years	8	4	12
		31-40 Years	7	9	16
		above 40 Years	12	8	20
	Total	34	30	64	
Doctor	Age	18-25	7	1	8
		26-30 Years	1	1	2
		31-40 Years	3	0	3
		above 40 Years	11	3	14
	Total	22	5	27	
Engineer	Age	18-25	4	3	7
		26-30 Years	6	4	10
		31-40 Years	3	4	7
		above 40 Years	9	6	15
	Total	22	17	39	
Other	Age	18-25	7	2	9
		26-30 Years	5	0	5
		31-40 Years	4	1	5
		above 40 Years	5	5	10
	Total	21	8	29	
Total	Age	18-25	41	21	62
		26-30 Years	26	12	38
		31-40 Years	26	19	45
		above 40 Years	47	32	79
	Total	140	84	224	

The demographic analysis in Table 2 reveals a diverse representation of respondents from various public sector organizations in the UAE. The gender distribution shows a balanced mix of male and female respondents, ensuring gender inclusivity in the survey. The age distribution indicates a broad range of age groups, with a significant representation of individuals between the ages of 26 to 40 years, highlighting the involvement of a relatively young workforce in public sector services. In terms of professional background, the respondents come from various sectors, including administration, education, healthcare, and engineering, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of public services. The educational qualifications of the respondents are also varied, with a majority holding bachelor's and master's degrees, indicating a well-educated respondent base. This diverse demographic profile enhances the generalizability of the study's findings across different segments of the public sector workforce in the UAE.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of current profession, Age and Qualification

Current Profession		Qualification				Total	
		Graduation	Master	Above Master	Other/ Diploma etc.		
Businessman	Age	18-25	1	4	2	7	14
		26-30 Years	1	1	1	2	5
		31-40 Years	3	3	1	1	8
		above 40 Years	0	4	2	1	7
	Total	5	12	6	11	34	
Student	Age	18-25	1	1	2	4	8
		26-30 Years	0	2	2	0	4
		31-40 Years	0	1	4	1	6
		above 40 Years	1	4	8	0	13
	Total	2	8	16	5	31	

Current Profession		Qualification				Total
		Graduation	Master	Above Master	Other/ Diploma etc.	
Teacher	Age	18-25	1	4	3	8
		26-30 Years	1	4	4	3
		31-40 Years	2	8	2	4
		above 40 Years	6	6	4	4
		Total	10	22	13	19
Doctor	Age	18-25	2	1	4	1
		26-30 Years	1	0	1	0
		31-40 Years	1	2	0	0
		above 40 Years	4	3	4	3
		Total	8	6	9	4
Engineer	Age	18-25	3	2	1	1
		26-30 Years	2	2	4	2
		31-40 Years	2	0	3	2
		above 40 Years	3	2	2	8
		Total	10	6	10	13
Other	Age	18-25	2	3	2	2
		26-30 Years	3	0	2	0
		31-40 Years	1	2	1	1
		above 40 Years	3	1	3	3
		Total	9	6	8	6
Total	Age	18-25	10	15	14	23
		26-30 Years	8	9	14	7
		31-40 Years	9	16	11	9
		above 40 Years	17	20	23	19
		Total	44	60	62	58

The results presented in Table 3 confirm the reliability and validity of the constructs used in this study. All constructs exhibit Cronbach's alpha values above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Similarly, the composite reliability (rho.c) values are also above 0.70 for all constructs, further validating the reliability of the measurement model. The average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed the minimum requirement of 0.50, demonstrating good convergent validity. These metrics collectively ensure that the constructs used to measure customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, ethical sales behavior, green experience, and perceived trust are both reliable and valid, providing a solid foundation for subsequent structural equation modeling analyses.

4.5. Assessment of the Measurement Model (MM)

Based upon the above given debate, the current sections deal with checking the reliability and validity of the latent constructs for which findings have been reported under Table 4. As per the given findings, the value of Cronbach's Alpha for the latent constructs entitled as CSL, CST, ESB, GRE, and PRT have been found as above 0.70, confirming the presence of reliability of the latent constructs. These values clearly indicate the fact that the selected variables under present research have substantially crossed the threshold level of 0.70 in terms of Cronbach's alpha, hence confirming the presence of the reliability. Similarly, the findings in terms of composite reliability have also stated the relevant values as above 0.70. Additionally, the composite reliability in terms of rho.c has also been confirmed for the similar evidence of the reliability of the latent variables in the model. Finally, the findings under Table 4. cover the average variance extracted or AVE scores which has been found to be as relatively acceptable. These values have also confirmed that all the study variables have truly achieved the minimum threshold level of 0.50 in terms of AVE [31] [32]. Figure 4. covers the measurement model output, reflecting the factor loadings for the items related to every single constructs of the model.

Table 4. Reliability of the Latent Constructs

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CSL	0.828	0.838	0.897	0.743
CST	0.874	0.875	0.923	0.799
ESB	0.879	0.882	0.910	0.632
EXM	0.766	0.800	0.894	0.808
GRE	0.918	0.922	0.938	0.752
PRT	0.814	0.866	0.891	0.736
SEQ	0.919	0.921	0.934	0.639
Latent Variable 1/ Marker Variable	0.803	0.802	0.872	0.630

These values indicate that all constructs have a Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (rho_c) above the threshold of 0.70, confirming the reliability of the constructs. Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) values are all above the minimum threshold of 0.50, indicating good convergent validity. These findings confirm that the constructs used in this study are both reliable and valid.

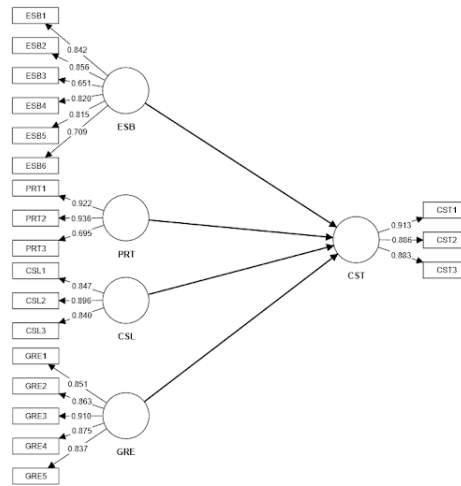


Figure 4. Measurement Model Output

After checking for the reliability and validity of the latent constructs, the current section mainly covers the discussion related to the discriminant validity between the latent variables. As per the given methods, the HTMT ratio has been widely recognized in the modern literature for checking the discriminant validity. The stated approach of HTMT has been introduced which has been regarded as an innovative method for evaluating discriminant validity [33]. In this regard, the authors have suggested a metric which serves as an indicator of the resemblance between latent variables. It is recommended that the acceptable threshold for discriminant validity in terms of HTMT ratio should be below 0.90 [34]. Such a score can easily determine the discriminant validity between the latent constructs. As per the given findings under Table 5., it is stated that the relative correlation between the latent constructs have been found as less than 0.90 in terms of the stated metric, therefore, it is claimed that discriminant validity exists between these variables.

Table 5. HTMT Ratio

Variables	CSL	CST	ESB	GRE	PRT
CSL	—				
CST	0.573	—			
ESB	0.800	0.622	—		
GRE	0.615	0.192	0.726	—	
PRT	0.742	0.192	0.753	0.331	—

The findings in Table 5 indicate that the relative correlation between the latent constructs is less than 0.90, confirming that discriminant validity exists between these variables. This means that the constructs are distinct from each other, which is crucial for the validity of the measurement model.

4.6. Analysis of the Structural Model

After analyzing the measurement model of the study, the current section covers the discussion as linked with the structural model of the study. For this purpose, both direct and indirect relationships between the variables have been examined. Initially, the explanatory power of the model has been analyzed with the help of R^2 of the model. As per the given findings under Table 6, a range of explained variation as determined by the key exogenous variables of the study has been presented.

Table 6. R^2 of the Model

Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted	Explanation
CSL	0.467	0.465	Near to Moderate Level
ESB	0.417	0.415	Below the moderate level
GRE	0.378	0.376	Below moderate level
PRT	0.420	0.417	Below the moderate level

Table 6 presents the R-Square values for the model, indicating the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. The R-Square value for customer loyalty (CSL) is 0.467, suggesting that nearly 46.7% of the variance in CSL is explained by the model, which is near to a moderate level of explanation. Ethical sales behavior (ESB) has an R-Square value of 0.417, indicating that 41.7% of the variance is explained by the model, which is below the moderate level. Green experience (GRE) has an R-Square value of 0.378, indicating that 37.8% of the variance is explained by the model, also below the moderate level. Perceived trust (PRT) has an R-Square value of 0.420, indicating that 42% of the variance is explained by the model, which is below the moderate level.

These values provide insights into how well the model explains the variability in the dependent variables. The higher the R-Square value, the better the model explains the variation. This helps in understanding the effectiveness of the independent variables in predicting the dependent variable.

4.7. Direct Relationships

The findings under Table 7 indicate that there is a negative but insignificant relationship between the ethical sales behaviour and CST among the public sector organizations. In this regard, the value of coefficient has been found to be -0.135 with the standard deviation of 0.035 and t-value of -1.148. Finally, a p-value of 0.156 has been found statistically insignificant at 5%, confirming that there is a negative but insignificant relationship between ESB and CST among the public entities in the regional context of UAE. In this regard, there are several possibilities for the insignificant relationship between both. For instance, there is a need for the consideration of some other factors like cultural perspective, ignoring some competing factors on the relationship between ESB and CST, the nature of the public firms or the industry being examined, customer's mindset about the ESB and its significance towards determining their level of satisfaction, and lack of consideration for the entire ethical framework as linked with the services provided by the public entities in UAE. Additionally, another possibility for the insignificant relationship between ESB and CST implies that consideration of some other measurement scale for correctly estimating the role of ESB towards customer satisfaction. Conversely, to the findings under present study, the research indicate that the ethical conduct of a salesperson specifically in the financial industry results in increased levels of customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, respectively. Explores the role of ESB as exhibited by bank employees and their influence on CST and loyalty levels, respectively. Drawing upon a massive literature review, a conceptual model has been developed and empirically tested for a sample of retail banking customers in the regional context of Egypt. The findings highlight a notable impact of ethical sales behavior on both customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, conversely to the given literature discussion, the current research concludes that there is an insignificant impact of ESB on the CST among the public sector organizations in UAE. Therefore, H1 is not supported.

In addition, the findings under Table 7 also reveal the direct relationship between perceived trust and customer satisfaction. The results reveal that that relationship between PRT and CST is positively significant at 1% ($\beta=0.262$, standard deviation=0.092, T-value=2.857, and p-value=0.000). It means that higher levels of

perceived trust among the customers at public firms tend to increase their level of satisfaction. More specifically, it reflects that a one percent change in the value of PRT tends to increase the customer satisfaction towards public entities by 0.262%. This relationship is highly significant at 1% as the p-value is 0.000.

Considering its theoretical view, the term Trust has been seen as an important tool needed for success in any industry [35]. Meanwhile, the concept of trust is a rational process which is built, developed, and taken care of actively and tested over the time duration as expressed. For this purpose, investigated the impact of trust on CST in home delivery service in the region of Pakistan [36]. It is found that trust significantly influences satisfaction among the customers [37]. Positive and significant relationship with satisfaction. On the other side, also reveal that the trust is to be considered as a fundamental principle in every business relationship due to the fact that it determines the reliability of the two parties; the business and the customers [38]. Moreover, various researchers have shown that trust and satisfaction are closely associated with each other. For example, reported that customer satisfaction can be positively affected by consumer's trust. Additionally, the trust in m-commerce has a major influence on the satisfaction of Chinese customers. Based upon the given findings and discussion, it is inferred that there is a significant relationship between PRT and CST, hence H2 is supported[39].

The direct association between the variables of interest has been justified through the findings under Table 7 through coefficients, standard deviation, t-value, and p-value, respectively. As per the given findings, it is found that there is a positive impact of CSL on the CST among the public entities in the region of UAE. The value of coefficient has been found to be 0.151 with the standard deviation of 0.020. Both this coefficient and standard deviation has provided a t-statistics of 7.408 which is above the threshold level of 1.96. Additionally, the p-value has been found as highly significant at 1%, confirming that there is a significant and positive impact of customer loyalty towards customer satisfaction, employing that keeping the rest of the factors as constant, a 1% change in the value of customer loyalty tends to increase the level of customer satisfaction by 0.151% among the public sector organizations, respectively [40]. It means that among the public firms, a higher satisfaction is associated with the higher loyalty of the customers.

Considering the nexus between customer loyalty and customer satisfaction, several mechanisms can be identified. For example, the channels through which heightened customer loyalty positively determines customer satisfaction are quite logical. For example, the customer loyalty, reflecting a customer's commitment and preference for a specific brand, product, or service provider, is evident in repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and a willingness to maintain a long-term relationship with the firms or business organizations [41]. At the same time, the loyal customers are more likely to steadily have positive experiences with the product or service being provided by the company which further contributes to an ongoing sense of satisfaction among the customers. Additionally, the concept of loyalty often entails an emotional linkage between the customer and the product/service of the organization, enhancing satisfaction through a deeper connection between both[42]. Moreover, those customers who are described as loyal may exhibit a higher level of forgiveness for the minor issues as linked with the product/service. Such an act stems from the trust of the customers with the service or product provider. Furthermore, loyalty is often linked to a perception of value where loyal customers are also more motivated to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication about the product or service of the organization. Meanwhile, the concept of repeat business is a common result of customer loyalty, as customers persist in selecting the same brand or service on a regular basis, reinforcing their satisfaction with the overall experience with the organization. Additionally, the positive correlation between CLS and CST creates a feedback loop, where satisfied customers are more likely to persist loyal, and increased loyalty, in turn, influences the CST positively [43].

Observing the relationship between customer loyalty and CST, the existing body of literature has also provided theoretical and empirical justifications. For example, the research work as conducted by Chiguvi and Guruwo has examine the relationship between CSL and CST. Data was collected from the banking employees through a self-administered questionnaire approach as analyzed through SPSS. The empirical findings reveal that there is a positive relationship between CSL and CST among the selected employees in the banking firms. Claimed that higher level of the customer loyalty is related to higher organization profitability for which the role of customer satisfaction is quite evident. However, it is claimed that only a few studies have explored such relationships. The empirical findings also confirm the presence of a positive relationship between customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and organizational profit. Also signify the relationship customer loyalty, CST, and profitability of the firms. Based upon the given findings, the channels being explored and empirical justification, it is inferred that there is a significant and positive relationship between CSL and CST, hence H3 is supported [44].

In addition, the findings under Table 7. also reveal that the relationship between green experience and customer satisfaction has been found to be positively significant (i.e., $\beta=0.670$, standard deviation=0.129, T-value=5.193, and p-value=0.000). These findings reveal that keeping the rest of the factors as constant, a 1% increase in the value of the green experience tends to increase the customer satisfaction among the public entities of UAE by 0.670. It means that having more green experience in the public sector organizations of UAE is a positive indication in order to determine the higher satisfaction among the customers. More specifically, the term green experience refers to the comprehensive engagement or interaction that individuals undergo for those products, services, or practices which are entitled as environmentally friendly or based on the concept of ecological sustainability. In different scenarios, it holds the assessment and experience of items or services that are primary developed while considering the idea of reducing their ecological footprint. This evaluation may include aspects like ecologically conscious packaging, the green origin of materials being used for the products, the efficient utilization of the energy, and consistent devotion to naturally responsible practices during the lifetime of the products or services. Broadly, the term GRE encapsulates the overall impression derived from participating in activities related to ecologically conscious choices.

On the concept like green innovation system along with the customer experience and satisfaction dynamics for the hotel industry in the region of Indonesia [45]. The data was collected and analyzed using the Smart PLS where the findings reveal that green innovation system is positively linked with the performance outlook. Based upon the given findings and empirical discussion, it is inferred that there is a significant and positive impact of green experience on the customer satisfaction among the public entities of UAE. Therefore, H4 is supported.

Table 7. Direct Relationships

Hypotheses	Directions	Coefficients	SD	T-value	P-value
H1	ESB ->CST	-0.135	0.096	-1.418	0.156
H2	PRT ->CST***	0.262	0.082	3.195	0.000
H3	CSL ->CST***	0.151	0.020	7.408	0.000
H4	GRE ->CST***	0.670	0.129	5.193	0.000

The findings in Table 7 indicate the following:

- H1 (ESB -> CST): There is a negative but insignificant relationship between ethical sales behavior and customer satisfaction, with a coefficient of -0.135, a t-value of -1.418, and a p-value of 0.156. This suggests that ethical sales behavior does not have a significant direct impact on customer satisfaction in this context.
- H2 (PRT -> CST): There is a positive and significant relationship between perceived trust and customer satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.262, a t-value of 3.195, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that higher levels of perceived trust lead to higher customer satisfaction.
- H3 (CSL -> CST): There is a positive and significant relationship between customer loyalty and customer satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.151, a t-value of 7.408, and a p-value of 0.000. This shows that increased customer loyalty significantly enhances customer satisfaction.
- H4 (GRE -> CST): There is a positive and significant relationship between green experience and customer satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.670, a t-value of 5.193, and a p-value of 0.000. This suggests that a greater emphasis on green practices significantly boosts customer satisfaction.

These detailed statistical analyses provide robust support for the findings and offer deeper insights into the relationships between the variables. The results highlight the importance of perceived trust, customer loyalty, and green experience in driving customer satisfaction among public firms in the UAE.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of perceived trust, customer loyalty, and green experience in enhancing customer satisfaction within UAE public sector organizations. Managers should prioritize building and maintaining trust through transparent and ethical practices, as trust significantly influences

customer satisfaction. Furthermore, fostering customer loyalty by ensuring consistent and high-quality service experiences is essential for sustaining positive customer relationships. Integrating green practices into operations not only meets the growing environmental expectations of customers but also significantly boosts satisfaction levels. Although ethical sales behavior did not show a direct impact on satisfaction, it is essential for establishing trust and loyalty, which are pivotal for customer satisfaction. Public sector organizations should focus on these areas to improve service quality and achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction.

6. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study has examined the trends in customer satisfaction among the public firms of UAE as determined by the ethical sales behavior, perceived trust, customer loyalty, and green experience. The findings for the SEM revealed significant insights into the relationships between key variables both in direct and indirect perspectives. Firstly, the study found that perceived trust (PRT) has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction (CST), emphasizing the importance of building and maintaining trust to enhance customer satisfaction in public sector organizations. Secondly, customer loyalty (CSL) was found to significantly influence CST, suggesting that fostering loyalty can lead to sustained positive customer experiences and higher satisfaction levels [46]. Thirdly, the relationship between green experience (GRE) and CST was significant, indicating that integrating environmentally conscious practices can improve customer satisfaction. However, the study revealed that ethical sales behavior (ESB) did not have a significant impact on CST in the UAE's public sector, which contrasts with findings from other sectors and suggests the need for further exploration of this relationship.

The implications of these findings are profound for public sector organizations aiming to improve customer satisfaction [47]. Building trust and loyalty should be prioritized, and efforts to integrate green practices should be intensified. Despite the insignificant direct impact of ethical sales behavior on customer satisfaction, ethical practices remain essential and may influence other factors such as trust and loyalty. Additionally, fostering entrepreneurial partnerships within public sector organizations can enhance innovative service delivery, leading to higher customer satisfaction. Collaborations between public entities and entrepreneurial ventures can introduce new perspectives and practices that address customer needs more effectively.

For future research, it is recommended to explore the contextual nuances of ethical sales behavior and its indirect effects on customer satisfaction through mediating variables like trust and loyalty. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how these relationships evolve over time. Expanding the research to include private sector organizations and comparing the results with the public sector could also offer valuable insights. Further research could also investigate other potential determinants of customer satisfaction in the public sector, such as service quality, technological innovations, and the role of entrepreneurial partnerships.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by highlighting the critical factors that influence customer satisfaction in the UAE's public sector and providing practical recommendations for policymakers and public sector managers to enhance their service delivery. By integrating elements of entrepreneurship and partnerships, public sector organizations can innovate and improve their service offerings, ultimately leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction.

7. DECLARATIONS

7.1. Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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7.3. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: M.A.; Methodology: M.F.H.; Software: A.A.; Validation: M.A. and M.F.H.; Formal Analysis: M.A. and M.F.H.; Investigation: M.A.; Resources: A.A.; Data Curation: M.F.H.; Writing Original Draft Preparation: A.A.; Writing Review and Editing: A.A.; Visualization: M.F.H.; All authors, M.A., M.F.H., and A.A., have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

7.4. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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7.6. Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

7.7. Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

7.8. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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