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**ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE (ESG)
PRACTICES IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR OF SAUDI
ARABIA: LITERATURE REVIEW**

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<p>Article Info:</p> <p>Article history: Received date: 29.12.2024 Revised date: 14.01.2025 Accepted date: 05.02.2025 Published date: 10.03.2025</p> <p>To cite this document: Alhejaili, M. H. M., & Ahmas, M. (2025). Environmental, Social, And Governance (ESG) Practices In The Hospitality Sector Of Saudi Arabia: Literature Review. <i>Journal of Tourism Hospitality and Environment Management</i>, 10 (39), 39-52.</p> <p>DOI: 10.35631/JTHEM.1039004.</p> <p>This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0</p> 	<p>Abstract:</p> <p>The Saudi government's Vision 2030 has identified tourism as a crucial factor in the nation's economic and cultural advancement, recognizing its role as a primary catalyst for change. Although numerous studies have assessed ESG practices by examining various practices identified in the literature, a notable gap exists in the evaluation of ESG practices within hotels in Saudi Arabia. This oversight underscores the necessity for more comprehensive and detailed ESG practices that can effectively measure and enhance the influence of the hotel sector. This research aims to identify the most relevant strategies for measuring Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors in Saudi hotels, to ascertain the context of the studies, and to highlight opportunities and future trends within the hotel sector. The articles included in this review study were published between 2020 and 2024. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the present state of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) evaluation in Saudi Arabia's hotel sector. The discussion was focused on the current issues faced in the discipline and the available research prospects within the topic.</p> <p>Keywords: ESG, Practices, Sustainability, Saudi Arabia Hotels</p>
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Introduction

The management of environmental, social, and governance issues has become a serious social concern on a national and international scale. While regulators in a number of nations are working on drafting new laws and legislation, a large number of investors are actively looking for businesses that meet their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria. Consultancy businesses and private groups are widely disseminating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) models that are able to capture distinctive characteristics of many countries (Yeoh, 2022). ESG is increasingly becoming an essential objective for achieving sustainability. European sovereign wealth funds and pension funds in nations including the UK, Sweden, and France are mandating corporations to publish information linked to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors (Sládková et al., 2022). Furthermore, there has been a significant influx of investment into the ESG sector in recent years. According to the UN PRI, the amount of money being managed in the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) sector grew from \$6 trillion in 2006 to \$104 trillion in 2020 (UNPRI, 2021). The scholarly literature has examined different aspects of sustainability in the hospitality sector, including the establishment of a clear concept of ESG within the industry explored various dimensions of ESG in the hospitality context (Bae, 2022).

The adoption of corporate ESG practices is influenced by several factors and is expected to provide specific results. Initially, management should contemplate embracing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors as a deliberate and intended choice. An organization's commitment to sustainability can enhance its overall value and support sustainable practices. It can also lead to differentiation and cost reductions (Porter et al., 2019), positively impact employee work engagement, and foster productive behavior among employees as well as customer loyalty (Park & Kwong., 2020)

Furthermore, the implementation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices can effectively contribute to the management of both risks and opportunities. This, in turn, can provide advantages for management, employees, players in the supply chain, and customers. Corruption poses a risk to the existence of recently formed companies (Nam et al., 2020). Additionally, companies are faced with the responsibility of making profits while also ensuring that their operations and products do not cause any harm to the environment and that equity and justice are maintained among their workforce. Especially when there is a high degree of compatibility between the company and the ESG business model, consumers are more inclined to make purchases from companies that engage in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) as a business model (Lee et al., 2022). Landrum (2017) indicates that 66% of consumers are prepared to pay a premium for businesses that prioritize ESG investments, while 81% of millennials anticipate that their preferred companies will publicly affirm their commitment to sustainable and ethical business practices. Companies that carefully highlight their environmental efforts while hiding problems with social justice and ethical leadership run the risk of losing the trust of customers, drawing attention from regulators, and keeping up a superficial and incomplete sustainability agenda (Routray, 2024).

Various studies were conducted in the context of Saudi Arabia to examine the ESG strategies. For example, Hussain et al. (2024) focused more on the governance aspect, such as disclosure in Saudi Arabia companies. Li et al. (2024) scrutinized the intricate relationships that exist between emissions of carbon and key factors related to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 aims for a

low-carbon, sustainable future. Vinodkumar et al. (2022) investigated the impact of ESG performance on the ownership of international firms in Saudi Arabia.

On the other hand, hotels in Saudi Arabia that are interested in achieving sustainable growth and profitability should concentrate on crucial ESG strategies that are in accordance with environmental, social, and governance standards. As Figure 1 shows the profitability of Saudi Arabia hotels:



Figure 1: Hotel Market in Saudi Arabia

Source: <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/content-images/1987/1987809/2/saudi-arabian-hotel-market>.

In 2023, the valuation of the hotel market in Saudi Arabia reached US\$ 27.90 billion. The projection indicates an increase to US\$ 62.27 billion by 2030. The Saudi hotel industry is currently witnessing substantial growth due to significant investments in infrastructure, the development of strategic locations, and an increase in both domestic and international tourism (Balroo, 2023).

When it comes to evaluating ESG strategies into Saudi Arabia hotels, there is a substantial gap in the research that examine the ESG practices and despite the fact that a number of studies have reviewed ESG practices by discussing a variety of methods that have been identified in the literature (Arici et al., 2024). Because of this omission, there is a pressing need for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies that are more thorough and precise, and that are able to properly measure and improve the impact of the hotel sector.

This study aims to review the related literature of (Environmental, Social, and Governance) practices in Saudi Arabia hotels context.

Method

This investigation employs narrative analysis of relevant literature. In many instances, the author's profound affection for a certain literary work and the author's deficiency in reading resources are the primary catalysts for narrative analysis (Bae, 2014). The fundamental objective of a narrative review is to engage in the ongoing discourse on a subject while also providing a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature.

Terms of Search

A multitude of steps were conducted to finalize the review process for the current study. Essential keywords must be defined first. These may encompass terms such as "ESG Practices OR Strategies OR Criteria OR Score," "Tourism Hospitality OR," "AND," "Saudi Arabia," and "Hotels." Boolean operators, including "OR" and "AND," were employed during the search process.

Source of Data

This literature research, we utilized Google Scholar as our database. During the initial part of our investigation, 85 records were successfully acquired.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The next stage involves eliminating any content that is extraneous to the study. Consequently, we exclusively examined peer-reviewed scholarly publications in English from 2020 to 2024. Prior to examining the full texts of the publications, we reviewed their titles and abstracts. The absence of connection to environmental, social, and governance issues in tourist contexts resulted in the disqualification of some studies. Only publications directly related to ESG were considered suitable. Following a comprehensive screening process that assessed critical inclusion and exclusion criteria, we identified several publications relevant to ESG in Saudi Arabia companies.

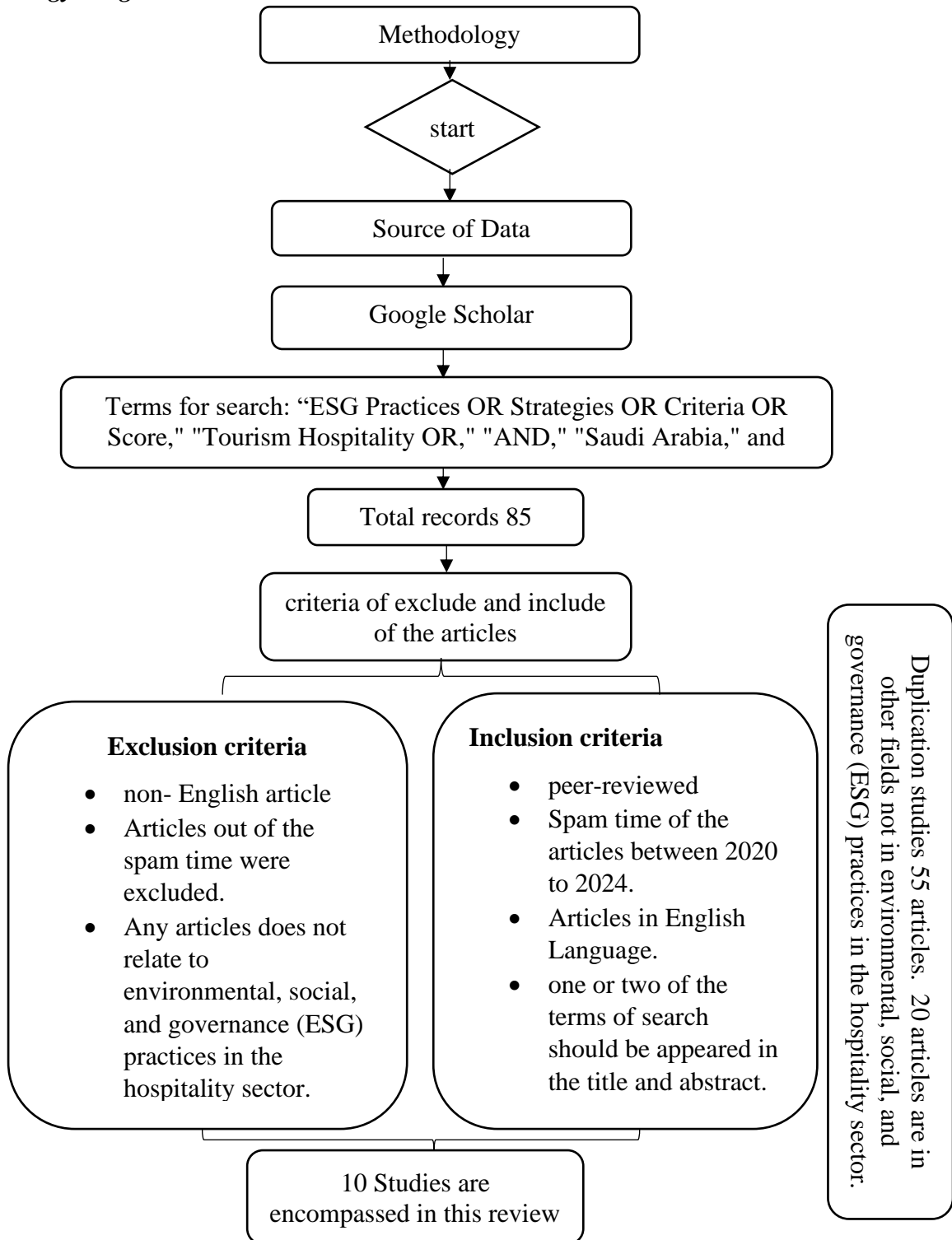
Methodology Diagram**Figure 2: Steps of Review Process**

Table 1: Related Studies to ESG Practices

NO.	Authors& years	Objectives	Methods	Results	Future research
1	(Atshan et al., 2024)	To investigated environmental, social, and governance in relation to green hotels.	questionnaire	The findings, demonstrated that the intention to make a purchase had a positive influence on the decision to stay in an environmentally sensitive hotel.	In order for hotels to develop green programs that are more successful and efficient, it is vital to have a greater understanding of the desire of customers to participate in green activities and the level of this desire.
2	(Li et al., 2024)	To examine the intricate relationships that exist between emissions of carbon and key factors related to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 aims for a low-carbon, sustainable future.	Markov switching regime regression	The findings illustrate a U-shaped relationship, integrating the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC).	providing specific suggestions to legislators in order to steer Saudi Arabia toward a low-carbon, sustainable future.
3	(Elhassan, 2023)	To examine the effect of trade liberalization and energy production on the growth of the Saudi Arabian economy and environmental damage.	employing annual data spanning from 1970 to 2020	According to the results of the two experiments, increasing energy output and expanded trade openness are both factors that contribute to the acceleration of economic expansion.	It is possible to investigate the strategies that in accordance with the Saudi Arabia sustainable goals.

4	(Alshammry et al., 2023)	This study seeks to empirically examine emissions of carbon, economic growth, energy consumption, and internet usage as variables.	Decoupling index and vector error correction model technique	The increasing emissions of greenhouse gases are substantially attributable to internet use.	It is beneficial to conduct study that enhance proposing strategies that reduce the CO2 emission.
5	(Waheed, 2022)	By utilizing energy, green, and blue measures, we can assess Saudi Arabia's sustainability goals.	nonlinear ARDL	The findings indicate that blue economic activities are not expanding sufficiently to achieve the sustainable objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.	It is better to conduct studies that compatible with Saudi Arabia's sustainable goals
6	(Alregab, 2022).	This study intends to assess the extent to which foreign investors perceive corporate governance (CG) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) as critical determinants of a company's sustainability.	Ordinary least squares OLS and System-GMM estimates	The results demonstrate that ESG performance has a favorable impact on foreign investment.	It is beneficial to examine the environment and social elements which were insignificant in the context of this study.
7	(Sharma et al., 2022)	To understand the influence of ESG reports on business outcomes.	A triple-bottom-line framework	The research indicated that ESG scores and governance pillar scores positively influence a firm's market value	There is a need to investigate the environment and social elements and their impact on the companies.

8	(Al Amosh, H., & Khatib, S. F. 2022).	Examining the effect of website traffic on the financial performance of banks inside the GCC.	content analysis methodology for data 64 GCC banks from 2014 to 2020	The results demonstrate that banking websites serve as an effective public relations tool, drawing in visitors and transforming them into customers by influencing individual behavioral intentions	There is a need to conduct more studies in different contexts.
9	(Vinodkumar et al., 2022)	This research aims to investigate the impact of ESG performance on the ownership of international firms in Saudi Arabia.	Analyze data from stocks registered in the Tadawul.	The results indicate that enhancing ESG performance is essential for enterprises aiming to attract foreign investment, therefore fostering the economic development and sustainability of the Kingdom	There is a necessity of incorporating ESG factors into corporate plans to attract conscientious stakeholders.
10	(Ammer et al., 2020)	to examine the disclosures about environmental sustainability and their impact on the company's valuation.	Accounting-Based Metrics	independent directors on corporate boards greatly improves the effect of stated environment	Future works could explore diverse approaches to clarify the link between business value and environmental

				al sustainabilit y initiatives on company value.	sustainability disclosure.
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Table 1 presents a chronological overview of ESG-related studies, illustrating the progression and focus of research over the years. The table highlights the publication trends and gaps in the existing literature on ESG strategies, particularly within the Saudi Arabian context. Only one article was published in 2020, followed by a decline in 2021, and a resurgence with five articles in 2022 and two articles each in 2023 and 2024. This pattern underscores a growing interest in ESG strategies, reflecting evolving priorities and research trends.

Notably, Saudi scholars have extensively explored methodologies for assessing ESG strategies in the hotel industry, focusing on sustainable practices and governance standards. For instance, A study by Atshan et al., (2024) investigated environmental, social, and governance in relation to green hotels. Moreover, the connection between the moderating influence of buying intention and the relationship between the two. The utilization of the Theory of Planning Behavior (TPB) as a theoretical framework. The questionnaire was used to collect information on 720 individuals who are employed in the hospitality business. The structural equation model (SEM) was utilized in order to do the analysis on the data. According to the findings, environmental (E) and social (S) aspects have a substantial impact on the degree to which hotels become environmentally friendly and sustainable. Governance (G) also has an effect on green hotels. Taking into consideration the theoretical justification and modification indications, it has been determined that these criteria are appropriate for application in the hotel industry. A further validation of the TPB hypothesis was provided by the findings of the analysis, which demonstrated that the intention to make a purchase had a positive influence on the decision to stay in an environmentally sensitive hotel. The use of green hotels that take into consideration the environment and whose upgrades include key answers to big problems was significantly impacted as a result of this. In terms of customer buy intent for green hotels, it showed a considerable influence. As a result, the research investigated the role of consumer purchasing intent as a moderator variable in the connection between environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and green hotels. Waheed (2022) examined the role of blue economic activities in Saudi Arabia's sustainable development program, particularly in the hotel sector. Their findings reveal that maritime tourism could promote economic sustainability and environmental conservation. However, the analysis highlighted a shortfall in meeting the sustainability criteria outlined in Saudi Vision 2030, emphasizing the need to advance maritime commerce and tourism to achieve these goals.

Elhassan (2023) analyzed the impact of energy production and trade liberalization on economic growth and environmental degradation from 1970 to 2020. Using FMOLS and DOMS methodologies, their findings show that economic growth driven by increased energy production has led to environmental degradation. This suggests that current energy policies may lack sustainability, necessitating reforms to balance economic expansion with environmental protection. Li et al. (2024) investigated the link between carbon emissions and Saudi Vision 2030 goals using the Triple Bottom Line framework and Markov switching regression. Their findings support a U-shaped relationship between economic growth and carbon emissions, aligning with the Environmental Kuznets Curve. The study advocates for

renewable energy adoption and community-based tourism to mitigate environmental impacts, emphasizing the role of stakeholder theory in achieving sustainable outcomes.

Alshammry (2023) examined carbon monoxide emissions from 1995 onward, using the decoupling index and vector error correction model. The study highlighted a direct relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and internet usage, indicating that digitalization could exacerbate environmental challenges. Johansen's cointegration analysis further revealed interdependencies between macroeconomic indicators and emissions, emphasizing the need for integrated policy frameworks. Alregab (2022) focused on ESG disclosure and financial performance in 100 non-financial Saudi companies from 2017 to 2022. Using Generalized Method of Moments (GMM), the study found that robust ESG disclosure positively impacts key financial metrics such as ROE, ROA, and Tobin's Q. The findings underscore the importance of governance and social responsibility in driving financial performance and stakeholder trust. Al Amosh (2022) analyzed the relationship between internet traffic and financial performance in GCC banks from 2014 to 2020. The study revealed that ESG compliance improves website traffic, customer satisfaction, and profitability. Banks leveraging ESG disclosures as public relations tools experienced higher customer engagement and conversion rates, demonstrating the strategic value of digital platforms.

Sharma et al. (2022) evaluated the impact of ESG reporting on corporate performance across six GCC regions between 2019 and 2021. While ESG scores positively correlated with market value, the social and environmental components lacked statistically significant associations. This highlights gaps in ESG integration and the need for targeted improvements. Ammer et al. (2020) investigated publicly traded Saudi corporations, showing that sustainability efforts significantly enhance corporate valuations. Their findings emphasize the role of ESG practices in shaping investor confidence and corporate growth strategies.

Vinodkumar et al. (2022) explored the influence of ESG performance on foreign ownership in Saudi Arabia. The study suggests that stringent ESG standards can attract foreign investors by aligning with global sustainability trends and risk management practices. ESG strategies also contribute to market resilience and long-term investment performance.

These studies collectively highlight the increasing relevance of ESG practices in Saudi Arabia, particularly within the context of Vision 2030. The research underscores the importance of sustainability, governance, and social responsibility in achieving economic growth, environmental protection, and long-term resilience.

Discussion And Future directions

The research revealed that numerous submitted publications concentrated on assessing the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) dimensions of hotels in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, determining the strategies of ESG in the context of Saudi Arabian hotels, identifying the context of the studies, and determining the gaps and future trends in the hotel sector are the primary objectives of this particular study. The literature indicated that most of the studies in this paper focus on environmental practices, specifically reducing CO₂ emissions (Mohammed et al., 2024; Hussain et al., 2024; Alshammry et al., 2023). These studies emphasize reducing carbon footprints in Saudi Arabian companies and adopting green economy strategies (Elhassan, 2023; Aziz et al., 2023). However, ESG issues pertaining specifically to hotels appear to have been overlooked.

Significant research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been conducted within the context of Saudi Arabian corporations (Alregab, 2022). Alregab's study analyzed 110 Saudi stock market companies across several industries using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and System-GMM estimate methods. The study examines foreign investments in Saudi Arabia to elucidate the correlation between environmental, social, and corporate governance performance and its influence on attracting these investments. The study seeks to elucidate how the adherence of Saudi enterprises, particularly those operating within Saudi Arabia, to environmental and social governance norms influences the decisions of foreign investors.

Companies can distinguish themselves from competitors by demonstrating transparency in corporate social responsibility disclosures, which signify their dedication to sound governance and adherence to social responsibility norms. The company's display of environmental and social responsibility bolsters investor confidence and signifies its commitment to obligations beyond mere financial gain, potentially enhancing its reputation and positioning it as a favored destination for foreign investments. Conversely, hotels may improve their efficiency and effectiveness—and consequently the quality of customer experiences—by evaluating their environmental, social, and governance criteria.

The secondary objective of this review is to delineate the context of the studies considered. For example, studies by Alregab (2022) and Vinodkumar et al. (2022) were carried out in Saudi Arabian stock market companies. A study by Al Amosh et al. (2022) was conducted in GCC banks. Other studies by Ammer et al. (2020) and Hussain et al. (2022) were carried out in financial companies. Waheed (2022) conducted their study in ocean tourism. The particular ESG elements influencing performance disparities among industries warrant investigation. Future researchers could concentrate on non-financial studies and give more attention to ESG strategies and models by adding more elements, such as brand representation and brand identification, in the context of Saudi Arabian hotels. In the future, academics in Saudi Arabia may investigate the impact of ESG disclosure practices on the nation's social and environmental contexts. Understanding customer perceptions in terms of ESG practices in Saudi Arabian hotels might be a promising avenue for future studies.

Conclusion

This research aims to identify the most relevant strategies for measuring Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors in Saudi hotels, to ascertain the context of the studies, and to highlight opportunities and future trends within the hotel sector. This research was conducted with the primary purpose of determining the most efficient methods for evaluating ESG (environmental, social, and governance) elements in hotels located in Saudi Arabia. Outlining the context in which the research was conducted was one of the goals of the study, which aimed to address the shortcomings and implement improvements in the hotel industry. The hotel and tourism sector mostly relies on natural resources and human capital, so it is essential to apply ESG principles to guide efficient food waste management systems, improve community involvement, and guarantee fair treatment of workers. The results indicate that ESG scores have a positive impact on corporate value. Moreover, numerous studies were performed across diverse contexts. The governance disclosure had a significant impact on firm value, whereas the social disclosure exhibited a positive but statistically insignificant correlation with business value. The findings of this inquiry provide new evidence from Saudi Arabia indicating a scarcity of studies addressing ESG practices in the context of hotels. Given the inconsistent results in the existing literature, it is advisable to conduct further research on Saudi Arabian

hotels, focusing on additional trends such as brand trust and customer experience. This research examines the implications for the hotel sector in Saudi Arabia, particularly regarding brand and reputation, through the implementation of ESG practices compared to hotels that do not prioritize ESG considerations. Additionally, the adaptation of ESG strategies could create a competitive advantage in the field of hospitality. This review provides valuable insights into the ESG literature; however, it has certain limitations. The data was obtained solely from the Google Scholar database, while other databases, such as Web of Science and Scopus, which contain additional reliable resources related to the studies, were not considered. The study concentrated solely on journals, excluding reports and book reviews that could contribute valuable data for future literature review studies. Future studies can focus on other database such as Web of Science and Scopus to conduct future review studies. Additionally, customer satisfaction, company brand are suitable avenues for future studies.

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