

# **Customer Experience Satisfaction with Online Travel Agencies and Its Role in Promoting Sustainable Tourism Practices**

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## **Abstract**

The rapid expansion of online travel agencies (OTAs) has transformed tourism service delivery by positioning digital platforms as key intermediaries in travel planning and booking. The present study examines customer experience satisfaction with online travel agencies and analyzes its implications for sustainable tourism and sustainable management.

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design and collects primary data through a structured questionnaire administered to OTA users. Graphical method is employed for data analysis to interpret customer perceptions related to platform experience, sustainability-oriented management practices, trust, loyalty, and behavioral intention. The findings indicate that customers generally exhibit high levels of experience satisfaction and positive perceptions of ethical and sustainable practices adopted by online travel agencies. Furthermore, the study contributes to the sustainable tourism literature by highlighting the role of sustainability-driven digital platforms in fostering long-term customer relationships and supporting sustainable tourism development.

***Keywords: Customer Experience Satisfaction, Online Travel Agencies (otas), Sustainable Tourism Practices, Service Quality, Customer Loyalty.***

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital technologies has significantly transformed the tourism industry in India, particularly through the widespread adoption of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs). Platforms such as MakeMyTrip, Yatra, Cleartrip, EaseMyTrip, and Booking.com have become integral to the travel planning process, offering Indian consumers convenient access to transportation, accommodation, and tourism-related services. With increasing internet penetration, smartphone usage, and digital payment adoption, OTAs have reshaped customer expectations by emphasizing ease of use, price transparency, personalization, and service reliability. Consequently, customer experience satisfaction has emerged as a critical determinant of consumer loyalty and competitive advantage within India's highly dynamic online travel market.

At the same time, India faces growing challenges related to sustainable tourism, including environmental degradation, over-tourism at heritage and pilgrimage sites, pressure on local resources, and socio-cultural impacts on host communities. Popular destinations such as Goa, Shimla, Jaipur, Varanasi, and Kerala have experienced the adverse effects of unregulated tourism growth, highlighting the need for responsible and sustainable travel practices. In this context, sustainable tourism has become a key policy priority for the Indian government, as reflected in initiatives such as *Incredible India 2.0*, the *Swadesh Darshan Scheme*, and the promotion of eco-tourism and community-based tourism models.

Online Travel Agencies occupy a strategic position in influencing tourist behavior and decision-making in India. Through their digital interfaces, OTAs can shape customer perceptions, promote sustainable accommodation options, encourage off-season and off-beat destinations, and provide information on environmentally responsible travel choices. A positive customer experience with OTAs—characterized by trust, transparency, responsiveness, and ethical practices—can enhance travelers' willingness to adopt sustainable tourism behaviors. Conversely, poor service quality or misleading information may undermine both customer satisfaction and sustainability objectives.

Therefore, examining customer experience satisfaction with Online Travel Agencies in the Indian context is essential to understanding how digital tourism platforms can contribute to the promotion of sustainable tourism practices. By analyzing the relationship between customer satisfaction and sustainability-oriented features of OTAs, this study seeks to provide insights for policymakers, platform operators, and tourism stakeholders aiming to balance tourism growth with environmental conservation and socio-economic development in India.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

**Afraah, S. M., Aghniya, Z. P., & Artanto, B. (2026). Development of the E-SERVQUAL model for online travel agents. *Jurnal Sistem Teknik Industri*, 27(1), 45–57.** This research extends the E-SERVQUAL framework to the OTA context and demonstrates that reliability, system availability, and responsiveness are critical determinants of customer experience satisfaction. The study highlights that superior e-service quality creates a foundation for long-term customer relationships, which is essential

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for promoting sustainable tourism practices through repeat interactions and continuous exposure to responsible travel options(Afraah et al, 2026).

**Singh, R. P., Khan, M. S., & Alexandra, Y. ( 2026).** The mediating role of e-customer satisfaction in shaping e-customer loyalty. *Asian Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 8(1), 22–35. The authors find that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality attributes and loyalty in OTA usage. Trust emerges as a critical outcome of satisfaction, encouraging customers to rely on OTA recommendations. This trust can be strategically leveraged by OTAs to influence tourists toward environmentally responsible accommodations and travel choices(Singh et al., 2026).

**Su, W. (2024).** **Influence of service quality of online travel websites on customer satisfaction.** *Frontiers in Economics and Management*, 5(2), 88–101. This study emphasizes information quality as a dominant factor influencing customer satisfaction. Accurate, transparent, and comprehensive travel information enhances perceived value and reduces uncertainty. When sustainability-related information—such as carbon emissions or green certifications—is integrated effectively, satisfied customers are more inclined to consider sustainable tourism alternatives(Su,2024).

**Oktaviani, D., Sarwoko, S., & Sulistiyo, T. D. ( 2026).** **Value co-creation and loyalty in OTA ecosystems.** *Jurnal Pariwisata*, 12(1), 1–14. The study reveals that customer satisfaction strengthens engagement and value co-creation within OTA ecosystems. Engaged users actively participate in reviews, ratings, and feedback mechanisms. Such participatory behavior can amplify sustainable tourism practices by promoting responsible businesses and sharing eco-friendly travel experiences with other consumers(Oktaviani et al, 2026).

**Nurhadewa, K., Setiawan, A., & Djajadikerta, H. (2024).** **Customer satisfaction in online travel agencies: A literature review.** *Jurnal Ekonomika dan Bisnis*, 11(3), 233–245. This literature review synthesizes empirical findings showing that customer satisfaction consistently predicts revisit intention and word-of-mouth behavior in OTAs. The authors argue that repeat usage provides opportunities for OTAs to gradually introduce sustainability-oriented nudges, making responsible tourism a habitual choice rather than a one-time decision(Nurhadewa et al, 2026).

**García-Milon, A., Juaneda-Ayensa, E., & Olarte-Pascual, C. (2024).** **Digital intermediaries and sustainable tourism behavior.** *Tourism Management*, 96, 104695. This article conceptualizes OTAs as sustainability intermediaries. The findings suggest that customer experience satisfaction is a necessary antecedent for tourists to accept sustainability recommendations, reinforcing the strategic role of OTAs in aligning consumer satisfaction with sustainability goals(García-Milon et al, 2024).

**Bhatia, A., & Verma, R. (2024).** **Online travel agencies as enablers of responsible tourism behavior: Evidence from Indian millennials.** *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 50, 101123. This article finds that Indian millennial travelers' satisfaction with OTA platforms positively influences their responsiveness to responsible tourism cues, such as eco-labels and community-based tourism options.

The study emphasizes that experiential satisfaction enhances moral responsibility in travel decision-making(Bhatia,2024).

**Sharma, P., & Bansal, R. (2024). Entrepreneurial orientation, digital innovation, and sustainability performance of tourism startups in India. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 198, 122012.** This article demonstrates that Indian tourism startups with strong entrepreneurial orientation invest more in digital innovation, which enhances customer experience satisfaction. Improved satisfaction, in turn, strengthens customer acceptance of sustainable tourism initiatives, positioning startups as agile enablers of responsible tourism.

Extant literature has extensively examined customer experience satisfaction in online travel agencies (OTAs), primarily emphasizing its influence on trust, loyalty, revisit intention, and purchase behavior. Studies across global and Indian contexts consistently identify service quality, information transparency, usability, security, and personalization as key antecedents of customer satisfaction in OTA platforms. Parallel streams of tourism research have also explored sustainable tourism practices, focusing on tourists' environmental attitudes, ethical consumption, and destination sustainability outcomes. However, these two streams largely remain conceptually fragmented.

**Rani, M., Rather, R. A., & Hollebeek, L. D. (2024). Technology-enabled customer experience and sustainable tourism adoption in India. *Journal of Business Research*, 172, 114458.** This study integrates technology acceptance theory with customer experience research and shows that satisfaction with OTA technologies significantly influences Indian tourists' adoption of sustainable tourism practices. The findings highlight the importance of seamless digital experiences in overcoming resistance to sustainability initiatives in emerging economies(Rani et al,2024).

**Verma, S., Chandra, B., & Kumar, S. (2024). Millennial travelers' satisfaction with online travel platforms and sustainable travel intentions in India. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 15(1), 89–105.** This study focuses on Indian millennials and reveals that satisfaction with OTA platforms significantly predicts sustainable travel intentions. The study highlights that ease of use, personalization, and perceived transparency enhance satisfaction, which in turn increases openness to sustainable tourism options (Verma et al,2024).

**Su, X., & Zhang, G. (2023). Travel website quality, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention. *Sustainability*, 15(10), 8225.** This study establishes that service quality dimensions such as website usability, information accuracy, responsiveness, and security significantly influence customer satisfaction in online travel agencies (OTAs). The authors argue that positive digital experiences reduce perceived risk and enhance trust, which subsequently increases purchase intention. From a sustainability perspective, satisfied users are more likely to engage with additional informational cues, including eco-labels and sustainability indicators embedded within OTA platforms (Su & Zang,2023).

**Jacob, B. S., Rani, M. R., & T, K. T. (2023). Customer engagement of online travel agencies for sustainable tourism development. *Tourism Management Perspectives*.** This study explicitly connects

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customer engagement facilitated by OTAs with sustainable tourism development. It suggests that emotionally and cognitively engaged customers are more receptive to sustainability messages, especially when such messages align with their satisfaction-driven trust in the platform(Jacob,2023).

**OAG. (2022). Online travel agencies and sustainable travel. *Future of Travel Report*.** Industry evidence indicates that OTAs increasingly offer carbon calculators, eco-filters, and green accommodation labels. The report emphasizes that customer satisfaction with platform usability and trustworthiness significantly influences the acceptance and use of these sustainability tools, reinforcing the strategic importance of customer experience management(OAG,2022).

**Wang, L., Law, R., & Zhang, M. (2022). The impact of online trust and satisfaction on green hotel booking intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 102, 103167.** The study demonstrates that satisfaction with OTA interfaces strengthens trust, which subsequently influences green booking intentions. Trust derived from positive customer experience reduces skepticism toward sustainability claims, enabling OTAs to function as credible promoters of sustainable tourism practices (Wang et al,2022).

**Sweeney, J. C., Soutar, G. N., & Mazzarol, T. (2022). Customer value and ethical consumption in digital tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(8), 1793–1809.** This research finds that emotional and epistemic value significantly enhance customer satisfaction and ethical travel intentions. When sustainability is framed as value-enhancing rather than restrictive, satisfied OTA users are more inclined to adopt responsible tourism practices(Sweeney et al,2022).

**Paul, J., Modi, A., & Patel, J. (2022). Predicting green travel behavior: The role of attitude, satisfaction, and subjective norms in India. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(8), 1814–1833.** This study demonstrates that satisfaction strengthens the relationship between environmental attitudes and green travel behavior among Indian tourists. The authors emphasize that satisfaction derived from travel planning platforms plays a crucial role in converting pro-environmental attitudes into actual sustainable tourism practices(Paul et al,2022).

**Talwar, S., Dhir, A., Singh, D., Virk, G. S., & Salo, J. (2020). Why do people purchase from online travel agencies? *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 54, 102028.** Using consumption value theory, this research finds that functional and informational value significantly affect customer satisfaction and purchase behavior. Ethical and environmental values emerge as secondary but influential factors, indicating that satisfied customers may incorporate sustainability considerations when OTAs present them as part of the overall value proposition(Talwar,2020).

Although recent studies acknowledge the growing role of OTAs as digital intermediaries in tourism decision-making, empirical investigations directly linking customer experience satisfaction with sustainable tourism practices remain limited. Most sustainability-oriented studies treat digital platforms as neutral information channels rather than as experience-driven behavioral influencers. Consequently,

customer experience satisfaction is often positioned as an outcome variable (e.g., loyalty or trust) rather than as a strategic antecedent shaping sustainable tourism adoption.

### **3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

- To examine customer experience satisfaction with online travel agencies based on platform experience and service quality.
- To analyze the implications of customer experience satisfaction for sustainable tourism and sustainable management practices in online travel agencies

### **4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to investigate customer experience satisfaction with online travel agencies (OTAs) and to analyze the influence of sustainable tourism and sustainable management practices on user perceptions and behavioral intentions. A survey-based approach was adopted, as it is appropriate for examining attitudinal constructs and testing theoretical relationships in digital service and tourism research.

The target population consists of individuals who have previously used online travel agencies for travel-related bookings, including accommodation, transportation, or holiday packages. To ensure informed responses, only respondents with prior OTA usage experience were considered eligible. Data were collected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique, which is commonly applied in tourism and online consumer behavior studies due to accessibility and the dispersed nature of digital platform users.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire developed on the basis of an extensive review of existing literature related to service quality, customer experience satisfaction, sustainable tourism, and sustainable management practices. The questionnaire was administered through online platforms to reach a diverse group of OTA users. The questionnaire was forwarded to 80 users and 66 users filled the questionnaire.

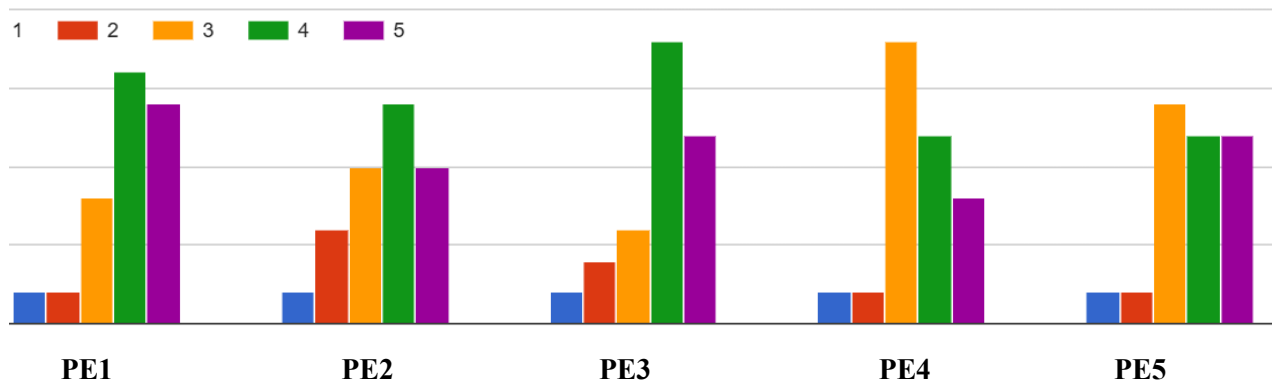
All study variables were operationalized using multi-item measurement scales adapted from prior validated studies and contextualized to the online travel agency environment. The constructs measured include platform experience, experience satisfaction, sustainable tourism practices, sustainable management practices, trust, and behavioral intention. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), which is widely accepted for measuring perceptions and attitudes in tourism and sustainability research.

The collected data were analyzed using graphical analysis to facilitate clear interpretation of respondents' perceptions and experiences with online travel agencies.

## 5 DATA ANALYSIS

### Interpretation Of Platform Experience & Service Quality

The graphical representation of responses related to platform experience and service quality indicates an overall positive perception of online travel agencies among respondents. Across all five statements, the majority of responses are concentrated in the “Agree (4)” and “Strongly Agree (5)” categories, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with OTA platforms.



*Figure 1- Bar graph of customer perception on platform experience & service quality*

- **PE1**-The online travel agency platform was easy to navigate and user-friendly.
- **PE2** -Information regarding prices, policies, and services was clear and transparent.
- **PE3**-The booking process was smooth and time-efficient.
- **PE4**-Customer support was responsive and helpful when required.
- **PE5**-The platform provided reliable and accurate travel information.

With respect to ease of navigation and usability, a substantial proportion of respondents selected ratings of 4 and 5, indicating that users generally perceive the online travel platforms as user-friendly and easy to navigate. This reflects the effectiveness of interface design and platform functionality in enhancing customer experience.

Regarding the clarity and transparency of information, responses are again skewed toward higher agreement levels, demonstrating that respondents largely believe that pricing, policies, and service-related information are clearly communicated. This transparency is a critical factor in building trust in digital travel platforms.

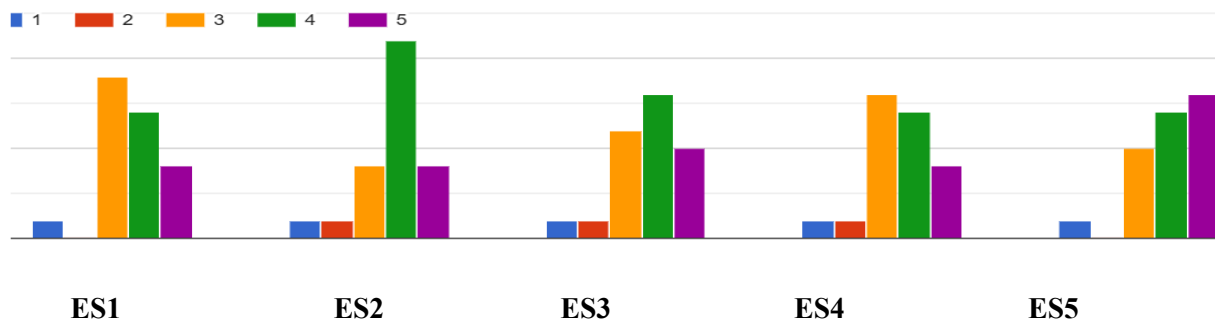
The results related to the booking process show the strongest concentration of high agreement scores, implying that respondents find the booking procedure smooth and efficient. This highlights the operational reliability of online travel agencies in facilitating hassle-free transactions.

In contrast, responses to customer support services show relatively higher neutral responses compared to other items, although agreement levels still dominate. This suggests that while customer support is generally perceived as satisfactory, there may be scope for improvement in responsiveness or service quality.

Finally, perceptions of the overall reliability of the platform are predominantly positive, with most respondents agreeing that the platform provides dependable and accurate services. This reinforces the role of service quality as a key contributor to customer experience satisfaction.

The graphical analysis demonstrates that platform experience and service quality are strong determinants of customer satisfaction with online travel agencies. The dominance of higher Likert-scale responses confirms that effective digital interfaces, transparent information, and efficient booking systems significantly enhance user experience, thereby supporting sustainable management practices in the online travel industry.

### Experience Satisfaction



*Figure 2 -Bar graph of customer perception on Experience Satisfaction*

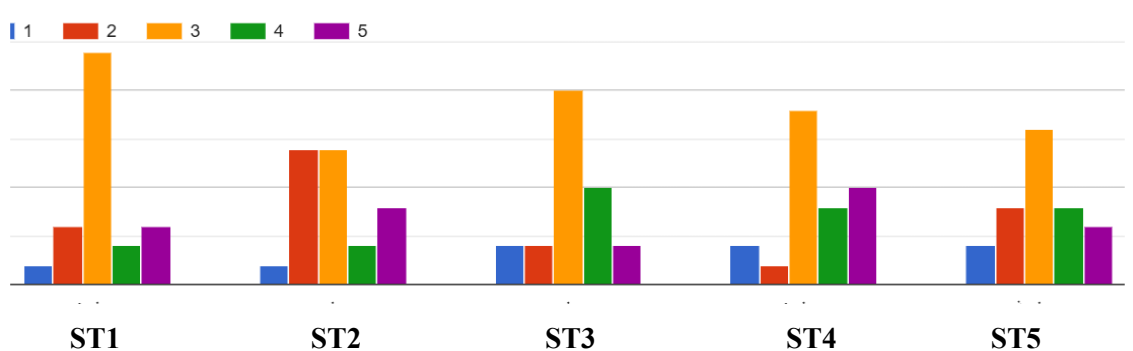
- **ES1**-Overall, I am satisfied with my experience using this online travel agency.
- **ES2**-The services met my expectations during the travel planning and booking process.
- **ES3**-I felt confident while making transactions through the platform.
- **ES4**-The online travel agency delivered value for money.
- **ES5**-My experience with this platform was better than traditional offline travel agents.

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The analysis of the experience satisfaction factors reveals an overall positive evaluation of the online travel agency among respondents. A majority of users agreed that they were satisfied with their overall experience, indicating that the platform is able to meet general customer needs and expectations effectively. The services offered during the travel planning and booking process were largely perceived as meeting expectations, as most responses clustered around the agreement level, suggesting that the platform provides adequate information, smooth booking procedures, and reliable service support, although a segment of respondents remained neutral, pointing to potential areas for service refinement.

Further, respondents reported a high level of confidence while making transactions through the platform, reflecting trust in payment security, data protection, and system reliability, which are critical determinants of customer satisfaction in online travel services. With respect to value for money, the findings indicate moderate to high satisfaction, as many respondents agreed that the platform delivers reasonable value, yet fewer respondents strongly agreed, implying that customers may expect more competitive pricing, better deals, or additional benefits. Lastly, when compared with traditional offline travel agents, most respondents perceived their experience with the online platform to be better, highlighting advantages such as convenience, time efficiency, and ease of comparison. Overall, the results confirm a favorable customer experience with the online travel agency, while also emphasizing opportunities to enhance perceived value and service excellence to further strengthen customer satisfaction and loyalty.

### **6 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES**



*Figure 3 -Bar graph of customer perception on Sustainable Tourism Practices*

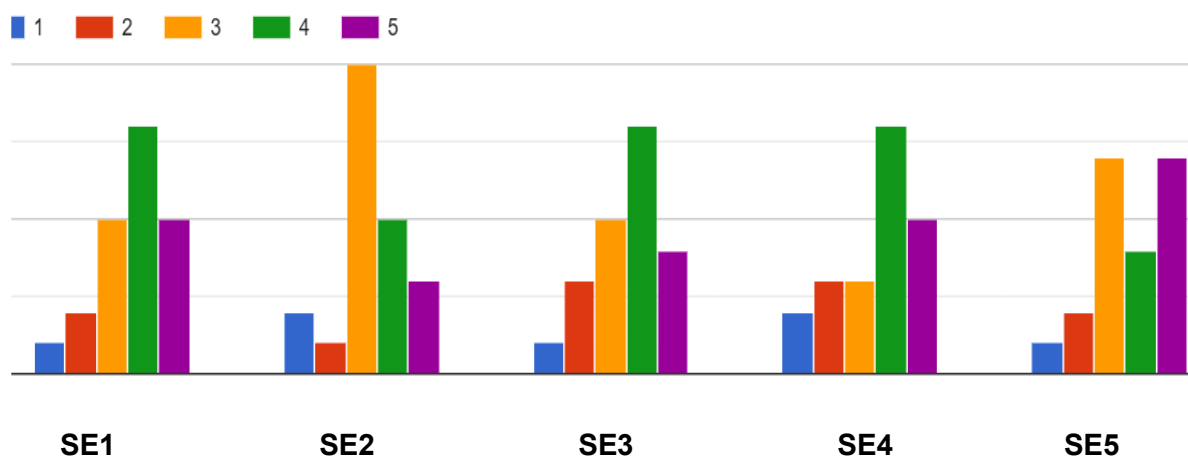
- **ST1** -The platform promotes eco-friendly travel options (e.g., green hotels, responsible tours).
- **ST2** -Information about environmental sustainability was clearly communicated.
- **ST3** -The online travel agency encourages responsible tourism behavior among travelers.
- **ST4** - The platform supports local communities and local tourism businesses.
- **ST5** -Sustainability initiatives influenced my choice of this online travel agency.

The findings related to Sustainable Tourism Practices indicate a moderately positive orientation of respondents toward the sustainability initiatives of the online travel agency, though with noticeable variation across specific dimensions. A substantial proportion of respondents selected the neutral category, particularly for items related to the promotion of eco-friendly travel options and the influence of sustainability initiatives on platform choice, suggesting that while such features exist, they may not be sufficiently visible or compelling to strongly shape customer perceptions.

Regarding the communication of environmental sustainability information, responses were largely concentrated around neutral to agreement levels, implying that sustainability-related information is available but may lack clarity, depth, or prominence within the platform interface. The item assessing encouragement of responsible tourism behavior shows relatively higher agreement, indicating that the platform does make some effort to promote responsible travel practices, such as ethical conduct and environmentally conscious choices, though these efforts are not perceived as highly impactful by all users.

Support for local communities and local tourism businesses received comparatively stronger agreement responses, reflecting a more favorable perception of the platform’s role in promoting local engagement and inclusive tourism. However, the limited number of strong agreement responses across all items suggests that sustainability initiatives, while present, are not yet a dominant differentiator for the platform. Overall, the results highlight that sustainable tourism practices are acknowledged by users at a moderate level, but greater visibility, clearer communication, and stronger integration of sustainability features could enhance their influence on customer choice and satisfaction.

**Sustainable Management and Ethical Practices**



*Figure 4 -Bar graph of customer perception on Sustainable Management and Ethical Practices*

- SE1 -The online travel agency demonstrates ethical business practices.

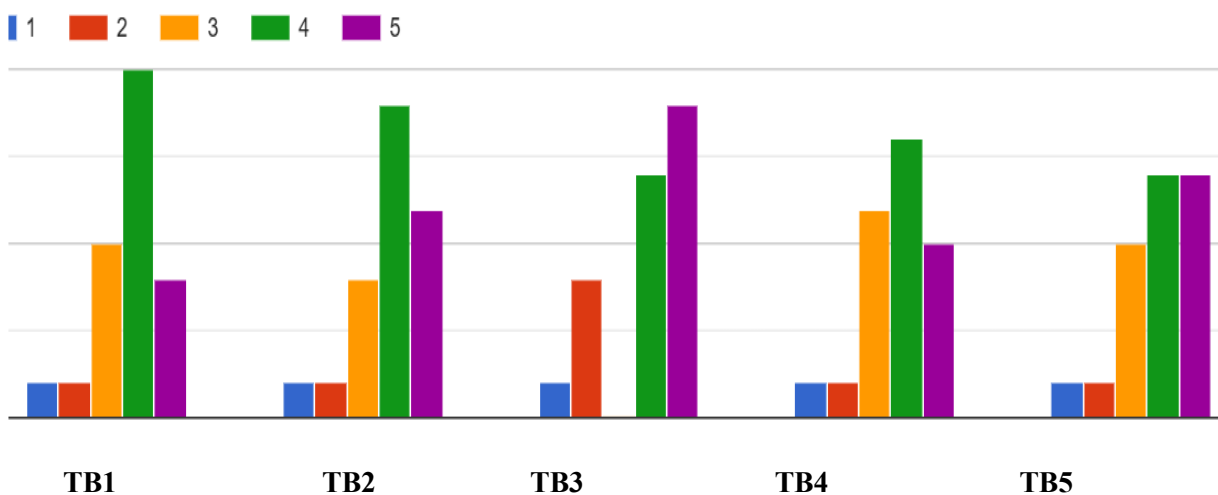
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- **SE2-** The platform shows transparency in pricing and sustainability claims.
- **SE3-** I believe the company is committed to long-term environmental sustainability.
- **SE4 -**Data privacy and digital security are responsibly managed by the platform.
- **SE5 -**The agency balances business growth with social and environmental responsibility.

The results for **Sustainable Management and Ethical Practices** indicate a generally favorable perception of the online travel agency, with respondents showing moderate to high levels of agreement across most items. A large proportion of respondents agreed that the online travel agency demonstrates ethical business practices, suggesting that the platform is perceived as fair, responsible, and aligned with acceptable business standards. Similarly, responses related to transparency in pricing and sustainability claims are concentrated mainly around neutral to agreement levels, indicating that while users recognize efforts toward transparency, there is still some ambiguity or lack of complete clarity in how pricing structures and sustainability commitments are communicated.

With respect to long-term environmental sustainability, most respondents expressed agreement, reflecting a belief that the company is committed to sustainable development beyond short-term marketing initiatives. Data privacy and digital security received comparatively stronger agreement responses, highlighting user confidence in the platform’s responsible handling of personal and financial information, which is a critical element of trust in online travel services. Lastly, perceptions regarding the agency’s ability to balance business growth with social and environmental responsibility were largely positive, though a noticeable proportion of neutral responses suggests that users may not be fully aware of the platform’s broader sustainability strategies. Overall, the findings suggest that while ethical and sustainable management practices are positively perceived, enhanced transparency and clearer communication of sustainability goals could further strengthen customer trust and credibility.

## 7 TRUST, LOYALTY, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION



- **TB1** -I trust this online travel agency for future travel bookings.
- **TB2** - I am likely to reuse this platform for my future travel needs.
- **TB3**- I would recommend this online travel agency to others.
- **TB4** -Sustainable practices increase my loyalty toward this platform.
- **TB5** -Positive experience satisfaction motivates me to choose sustainable travel options.

Referring to the **Trust, Loyalty, and Behavioral Intention** graph, the findings reveal a strong and consistent positive orientation of respondents toward the online travel agency. The majority of respondents reported agreement and strong agreement with the statement that they trust the platform for future travel bookings, indicating a high level of confidence in the agency's reliability and service quality. This trust is further reflected in the intention to reuse the platform, where responses are predominantly concentrated in the higher agreement categories, suggesting that prior satisfactory experiences significantly influence repeat usage behavior.

Moreover, the intention to recommend the online travel agency to others exhibits a notably high proportion of strong agreement responses, highlighting the presence of positive word-of-mouth intentions and attitudinal loyalty among users. The findings also indicate that sustainable practices adopted by the platform contribute positively to customer loyalty, as most respondents acknowledged that such initiatives strengthen their long-term association with the agency. Additionally, the results demonstrate that positive experience satisfaction motivates customers to opt for sustainable travel choices, implying that experiential satisfaction not only enhances loyalty but also promotes responsible behavioral intentions.

Overall, the graphical analysis underscores the critical role of trust and experience satisfaction in shaping customer loyalty, reuse intention, and advocacy, while simultaneously emphasizing the reinforcing influence of sustainability practices in fostering favorable behavioral intentions toward the online travel agency.

## **8 MANGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Based on the findings, several important managerial implications can be derived for online travel agencies aiming to enhance customer experience satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and sustainable behavioral intentions. First, since high levels of trust and reuse intention are evident, managers should prioritize maintaining service reliability and consistency, particularly in booking accuracy, customer support responsiveness, and post-booking services, as these elements directly reinforce customer confidence and repeat usage. Strengthening secure payment systems and transparent policies will further consolidate trust and reduce perceived risk in online transactions.

Second, the positive influence of sustainability practices on loyalty suggests that managers should integrate sustainability more strategically into the core service offering rather than treating it as a

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peripheral feature. This can be achieved by clearly highlighting eco-friendly travel options, responsible tour operators, and local community-based services within the platform interface. Improved visibility and communication of sustainability initiatives can help convert neutral perceptions into stronger agreement and enhance customers' emotional attachment to the platform.

Third, given the strong recommendation and advocacy intentions observed, managers should actively leverage satisfied customers as brand advocates through referral programs, testimonials, and user-generated content. Encouraging customers to share positive experiences and sustainable travel choices can amplify word-of-mouth effects and strengthen the platform's reputation. Additionally, personalized recommendations aligned with customer values, including sustainability preferences, can further enhance perceived value and engagement.

Finally, as experience satisfaction motivates customers toward sustainable travel behavior, managers should focus on designing seamless and engaging user experiences that make sustainable choices convenient and attractive. Simplified filters for green hotels, sustainability badges, and informative content on responsible tourism can guide customers toward ethical choices without increasing cognitive effort. Overall, the findings imply that aligning customer experience management with trust-building measures and clearly communicated sustainability strategies can significantly enhance long-term loyalty, competitive advantage, and sustainable tourism outcomes.

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